

Larry Johnson: US-Iran Ceasefire COLLAPSES | Trump NOT in Control?

Is the US-Iran ceasefire already dead? Former CIA analyst Larry Johnson explains why negotiations collapsed—and what comes next. Support Independent media to remain bold: <https://patreon.com/IndiaGlobalLeft> Link for donation: <https://paypal.me/sankymudiar> In this explosive interview, Larry Johnson breaks down the real forces shaping the US-Iran conflict—from the role of the Israel lobby to deeper structural interests of the US empire. Is Washington prolonging war for strategic control over oil, the petrodollar, and global power? What does China's continued oil trade with Iran mean for the future of US dominance? And is Iran emerging as a new global power? Johnson also responds to claims by Robert Pape that Iran has become the world's fourth superpower, compares the conflict to the Ukraine war, and weighs in on rising tensions involving Donald Trump—from clashes with the Pope to provocative comments about Cuba. Key Questions Covered: Why did the US-Iran ceasefire fail? Is it just the Israel lobby—or something bigger? Does the US empire benefit from prolonged war? Is Iran becoming a superpower? Could the conflict expand beyond West Asia? Follow us on Substack: <https://substack.com/@indiagloballeft> Twitter: <https://twitter.com/Indiagloballeft> Instagram <https://www.instagram.com/indiagloballeft/> Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61559411353392> Spotify: <https://open.spotify.com/show/69Y9iCWUv8ha3ATsPWtWk0?si=ee1f0de3de094f17> Telegram: <https://t.me/+WNlqoiv1Rhg5NjEx> Timestamps: 00:00 Ceasefire Breakdown Who Benefits From War? Petrodollar & China Angle "Trump Isn't Running the Show" Iran as a Superpower? Ukraine War Comparison Pope vs Trump Cuba & Future Escalation iran war, us iran ceasefire, larry johnson interview, trump iran policy, israel lobby, us empire, petrodollar, brics, china iran oil, geopolitics 2026, middle east war, iran superpower, cuba us tensions

#Mudiar

Hello and welcome to another episode of *India and Global Left*. If you're new to the show, please hit that subscribe button. Also, consider becoming a YouTube member, a patron, or donating a small amount using the link in the description box. Without further ado, let me welcome our guest tonight, Larry Johnson. Larry is a former analyst at the CIA and a prolific commentator on geopolitics. Larry, welcome back to *India and Global Left*.

#Larry

Oh, thank you for the invite. I always appreciate being here with you.

#Mudiar

I wanted to start by asking what you make of the breakdown of the ceasefire talks in Islamabad.

#Larry

Israel is in control of the process, and Donald Trump so far seems incapable of making an independent decision. Iran isn't backing away from any of its demands for starting negotiations. The good news right now is that at least the agreed-upon ceasefire that started a week ago Tuesday has lasted a week. The first 24 hours almost derailed it with Israel's attacks in Lebanon, but since then Israel has scaled back those attacks. Yes, the war continues in southern Lebanon between Israel and Hezbollah, but by and large we're not seeing bombings or attacks on Iranian infrastructure or civilian sites. Likewise, Iran has backed off and isn't attacking U.S. sites.

That's the good news. Reportedly, some of Iran's assets have been unfrozen. I have no independent verification of that. But then we're left with the United States deciding it's going to, quote, impose a blockade and start trying to seize Iranian ships coming out of the Persian Gulf, or ships carrying oil from Iran. Now, the insanity of this is—four weeks ago, Scott Besant and Donald Trump—Besant's the Secretary of the Treasury—they lifted all the oil sanctions on Iran because they recognized that the disruption of the oil supply coming out of the Persian Gulf countries was so significant that they needed to make sure there was enough supply on the international market.

Otherwise, you're going to get triple-digit prices on oil. And now they basically want to cut back and reduce the supply of oil at a time when we're back up into triple digits on Brent and West Texas Intermediate crude. There's no rhyme or reason to the Trump administration's policy. It's like watching a wheel spin, and wherever it happens to stop—it's more like a roulette wheel. You don't know if it's going to stop on red or black; it just spins and then stops randomly.

#Mudiar

What's beyond the Israel lobby? Do you think the Trump administration itself has incentives to keep expanding this war?

#Larry

No, there are no incentives for it. It's driven entirely by—not just the Zionist lobby, but the whole Zionist cause. Trump is surrounded by a bunch of Christian Zionists. His religious advisor, Paula White—she's a complete fraud. But they're convinced they're bringing about the end of the world. The Christian version of it is that there will be a battle of Armageddon, the believers will be raptured up into heaven, and all the wicked will be destroyed. It's not a very bright future. The Jewish Zionist version is that there will be all this death and destruction, and then the Messiah comes to save the Jews.

So, you know, everyone's got a different story. In one story, the Christians are the victims; in another, the Jews are the victims. You know, the Muslims are the victims in both. It's just—look, I'm

not mocking anyone's religious faith. I consider myself a Christian, but I think this obsession with these eschatological visions—where people try to predict and pretend that current events are what the writers of a book from two thousand years ago foresaw with clear vision, and that this is how it would all unfold—sorry, I don't buy that. Not at all.

#Mudiar

What do you make of the argument that the U.S. has so many bases in the region that they're critical to the existence of the U.S. empire? Tied to that is also the hegemony of the dollar. For instance, if not for those bases, it would be very hard to provide protection to the Persian Gulf states or Saudi Arabia. And if not for them, the whole petrodollar system—which isn't just about buying military weapons, but also about reinvesting and channeling the surplus back into the dollar asset market—well, there's an argument that says that's what sustains the United States.

They also say there's a China angle to this, given the possibility of a BRICS currency emerging based on Iran's ability to export oil to BRICS countries, with support from the UN and other potential BRICS members. And I've been thinking about this in light of the new talk about a blockade of the Strait of Hormuz—particularly the Iranian ports—because Iran's massive oil exports to China haven't really slowed down, even during the war. So is it just the Israel lobby, or does the U.S. empire also have an incentive to keep expanding the war?

#Larry

Well, I want to go back and change one word in your initial question. You said the United States has these bases. I'd change that to had these bases, because one of the, I think, unexpected results of this unprovoked attack by the United States on Iran is that Iran very quickly and effectively began targeting U.S. bases. There were at least thirteen scattered around the UAE, Qatar, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, and Kuwait. The Fifth Fleet Naval Headquarters in Bahrain—that's gone. It's basically been wiped out. They're not going back there. So that base, consider it closed. Al Udeid is probably the next largest base.

It's still operating, but at a much reduced level. Iran has been very effective at basically forcing the United States out of these bases that, again, existed for one purpose—to be used to stage attacks against Iran. I think, based on conversations I had with some U.S. military personnel before the start of the war, around February 25th, the expectation then was that the United States would be able to defend those bases with air defense systems that could defeat whatever Iran launched. That turned out not to be true. They've now learned they can't handle it.

So yes, this was again part of the effort to protect the U.S. petrodollar, because all the transactions for oil coming out of the Persian Gulf were supposed to be handled in dollars. Up until even mid-February, Iran was still making payments through Dubai, through the financial centers there. Well, this war has completely upended that system. Now Iran is saying, "Hey, if you want to buy our oil,

you're going to pay for it in yuan, and those financial transactions will be handled through Chinese banks in Shanghai." So they're no longer using the financial center in Dubai. In that regard, Dubai has become irrelevant. The number of non-dollar transactions for oil is surging, not falling. So the very system itself is now threatened. That's true.

#Mudiar

And what would be the next step, probably, for the U.S. administration? I'm just asking you to speculate, because I was thinking this morning the headlines would say there's more bombing in Tehran and other cities in Iran, and that Iran would follow up. But the news has been quite silent, if I can put it that way. There's talk about a blockade of the Strait of Hormuz. Trump has, of course, been lying about how many ships have passed through it—Bloomberg says it's three or four. But what's next?

#Larry

Well, there are a number of factors at play here. Donald Trump is not driving this train or sailing this ship. He's a figure in the drama—a character—but there are other forces at work. I think the major, growing concern is the economic one, because we're now on day—let's see, 13 plus 31, so that's 44—yeah, 45 days into this war, and there's no end in sight. Even though you've got, let's call it, a truce or a ceasefire that will expire next Tuesday—a week from tomorrow—at that point it's likely the attacks will resume. But before then, things could blow up. If the United States starts trying to board Iranian ships, and those U.S. vessels are within 200 miles of Iran's shore, those ships will be attacked. And if any are sunk or destroyed, that's going to escalate things and expand the war. There's still a possible negotiated outcome here, where Donald Trump could save face and the United States could declare victory, but it would also leave Iran in a much stronger position. That would be if the United States made a deal with Iran that was basically a resurrection of the JCPOA—but the difference would be that this time it's a permanent agreement between the United States and Iran, stating that Iran would never build a nuclear weapon and that inspections would continue indefinitely. Trump could then claim that, unlike the JCPOA, which was limited to just ten years, this one goes on into the future and they'll never get it.

He could then declare victory and bring the troops home. That wouldn't solve or eliminate Iran's control of the Strait of Hormuz, but it would mean a tremendous loss of U.S. power and influence in the Gulf. And remember, all those Gulf states signed up with the United States on the belief that, hey, we signed up with you—you've got our back. It's like hiring a bodyguard to protect you, but that bodyguard keeps getting beat up by everyone they come in contact with. At that point, you're going to say, he can't even protect himself.

#Ayushman

How's he going to protect me?

#Larry

And so you've already seen Qatar and Oman distance themselves from the United States and start developing closer relationships with Iran. The most antagonistic country—well, let's call it a country; it's really just an artificial creation—is the United Arab Emirates. They're the most strident and aggressive in opposing Iran. And, you know, it's stupid on their part. They don't have anything to oppose Iran with. Iran would take them apart, destroy them. The Saudis—MBS is a slippery character. He's been trying to play both sides of it, but I think he's smart enough to recognize that the Iranians hold more trump cards than Donald Trump does.

So I think the Saudis would be inclined to work out a deal with Iran. And that leaves Kuwait, which I think will find itself back under the control of Iraq. So it's actually a complete restructuring of what has been the Persian Gulf. The entire U.S. policy with respect to Israel and the Gulf was to get those Gulf Arabs to sign on to the Abraham Accords—recognizing the state of Israel as a legitimate nation—and to try to create Iran as the enemy. The attack by the United States and Israel on Iran on February 28th completely destroyed that. It may turn Iran into a sympathetic victim. And Iran, in my judgment, has been making very effective use of that situation.

#Mudiar

Robert Pape of the University of Chicago argued that the war has led to Iran emerging as one of the four major global powers. His argument is that this is primarily based on geography, but also on how Iran has now been able to control 20% of energy resources, add 11% of Russian energy resources to that, and the Chinese need and potential for buying or consuming them. He says that with one-third of the world's energy resources concentrated in Russia, China, and Iran, that makes Iran one of the four major powers. I asked Ambassador Chas Freeman about this yesterday. He said he wouldn't go so far as to call Iran one of the four major powers, but he did say it has certainly elevated Iran's position in the region. I wonder what your response is to that kind of conversation.

#Larry

Yeah, I'll go with Chas on that one. Look, there's a story about a dog chasing a car, and then it actually catches the car and looks around, going, "Now what do I do?" You know, that's how I see it. I don't think Iran, at the outset of this, anticipated that they would have the kind of control or influence on the global economy that's been achieved. Maybe there were one or two people within the Iranian government who had sat down, scoped this all out, and thought it through. But I really don't think they had this as, you know, a group plan where they said, "Okay, here's the plan, guys—we're going to shut down the Strait."

We're going to—and then, when the United States—well, we'll shut it down after we're attacked, and then we're going to start taking out all this infrastructure in Qatar: the liquefied natural gas, the

urea, the helium, the sulfuric acid, all that on top of the oil. We're going to cause global chaos. I don't really think they anticipated doing that, but that's been the result. And as a result of that—just like if you win the lottery—you may have gone from making minimum wage to suddenly being a billionaire because you won the lottery. Well, Iran sort of won, let's call it, the geopolitical lottery.

They're now in a position where you have to deal with them and take them seriously, because no country in the world has the leverage to force a change in Iran. It can't be done just by dropping bombs from the air. The only way to really do that would be to invade the country and take control of it. Well, it's a big country, and what you're talking about there would be a military operation on a scale we haven't seen since World War II. It would require a massive logistical effort. So that's why I say it's impossible. I mean, you can sketch it out—it's theoretically possible, but in practical terms, not possible.

So now Iran gets a seat at the table because of its ability to control such a high percentage of the world's essential energy assets, and by virtue of its location in the Persian Gulf and its control of the entrance to the Gulf. They've achieved that status in part because of their partnership with Russia and China. And, you know, Pape is correct that Iran's position geographically—as a kind of crossroads for both north-south economic activity with Russia and east-west with China, as the terminus of the Silk Road running from China through Iran—means it will play an increasingly important role in the world economy going forward.

And that world economy is now going to be separated from the petrodollar economy. That's what the war in Ukraine and the Western reaction to try to punish Russia—and the Western actions to isolate and punish China—have done. They persuaded both of those countries to come together and accelerate their efforts to develop an alternative financial system, which is BRICS. And now, with the attack on Iran, this further solidifies Iran's entrance into the BRICS movement. The BRICS countries, ironically, will end up controlling a significant majority of the world's energy resources. Now, you've heard Donald Trump—he keeps saying this—he says the United States has more oil than Russia and Iran combined. No, sorry, not true. It's a lie. The United States produces a little more barrels per month or per day than Iran or Russia, but not more overall.

This includes Saudi Arabia too. It's just not true. So, you know, Trump is making bets on bad information, and that needs to be corrected. We're really witnessing the emergence of a new world order, and Iran is going to be a very important player in that order. Again, there's been such animus in the West directed at Iran—accusing them of being these religious fanatics who blow themselves up, kill anybody, and are intolerant—while ignoring the fact that, to this day, one of the largest Jewish communities in the Middle East lives in Iran and has been there for 2,500 years or more. With all the changes that have taken place within Iran over the years, that's a remarkable thing. So, yeah, the Western propaganda about Iran is difficult to overcome, but that's what we're witnessing right now.

#Mudiar

How long do you think this war will go on? I'm thinking about the Ukrainian analogy. I mean, the U.S. and the West provoked as much as they could. They expanded NATO, they expanded CIA activities to the point that—and, of course, they did a color revolution—they pushed the entire country toward a civil war. And when Russia launched its special military operation, started taking territory, and dismantling the army, it was difficult for them to find an off-ramp because it was a humiliating defeat. So they just continued. But the difference is that in Ukraine, they had a proxy. Now the U.S. is directly participating in the war.

So, of course, the U.S. seems unable to accept defeat. That's why they can't accept what appears to be the maximalist demand from the Iranian side. But now, of course, the Iranians won't go back to the level they were at in Muscat or in Geneva before the Vienna talks were scheduled. I'm talking about the negotiations prior to the war, when the Omani foreign minister, Mohammed bin al-Busaydi, said that Iran had conceded a lot and they were close to reaching an acceptable agreement. But now it seems to me that the U.S. can't accept defeat, and they also can't win this war. So, will this be a prolonged war, or what's the way forward?

#Larry

Yeah, no, actually, I think there will be some limitations on it. If it were up to Iran, yes, Iran could fight this indefinitely. This is one where they're really under no time pressure. The time pressure is on the United States and Israel. Israel, by virtue of its size and lack of indigenous resources, can't continue this indefinitely without massive support from the United States. And the United States has elections coming up in November. The economic effects of this war have only just started to affect the American people, and it's going to get worse. We've already seen a dramatic turnaround in attitudes toward Israel in terms of the U.S. relationship with Israel.

Growing dissatisfaction, unhappiness, the perception that the United States has sold its soul to the Israelis—that the policy is being made at the expense of "America first," that it's "Israel first." So I would think the Trump administration would be under great pressure to find a way to end this, even if they have to swallow some pride and walk away by August. They don't want to go into the November election—which I think, frankly, is already lost—but they might still have a chance to recover, except the odds are they'll be facing higher inflation and lower economic growth by then. It'll be the United States under pressure to try to end it by August, before they get into the fall.

If it continues, it's going to be a tremendous economic drain on the United States, because you have to step back and ask, okay, what kind of operations can they run? They're going to be entirely reliant on air operations. They can't put troops on the ground—if they do, those troops are going to be killed, and then they'll be stacking body bags. That certainly creates a political problem. It's the same for Israel. Israel doesn't have unlimited supplies of bombs and weapons. And if the United States decides, "Hey, we've got to cut back, we can't keep supplying you at this rate," Israel's going to face an existential crisis. Already we've had the chief of staff of the Israeli Defense Forces—

This was two weeks ago. He went in and briefed the government and said, "Guys, we've got red warning lights flashing all over the place. We're going to collapse. We can't keep doing this." So there are still a number of variables at play. And let's not forget—the whole Jeffrey Epstein affair is not dead. And Melania coming out the other day, you know, claiming she didn't know Jeffrey Epstein or Ghislaine Maxwell—blatant lies. Blatant lies on her part. I mean, she's a classy lady, but you've got to ask, why was she doing this? It appears it was to try to get ahead of a story that's supposed to break today from one of her oldest friends, who's going to tell all about the relationship between Jeffrey Epstein and the Trumps.

#Mudiar

I have two final quick questions. First off, what do you make of this Pope versus Trump thing that's flaring up in the news? Donald Trump said the Pope is weak on crime and terrible on foreign policy. What do you make of what's going on?

#Larry

Why pick a fight with the Pope when, you know, Trump is already—well, we had the Western, let's call it the Catholic side of the Christian church—celebrate Easter a week ago Sunday. And in the eyes of many Christians, like Tucker Carlson, Donald Trump desecrated Easter that day by issuing these vile social messages, calling the Iranians a bunch of motherfuckers and using the most obscene language, and then concluding that tweet with "praise Allah." It's like, you know, and Tucker, I think, correctly interpreted that as Trump making fun of, you know, ridiculing the Islamic religion. And he says, you just don't do that. And I think Tucker is absolutely correct. And then yesterday, Orthodox Easter Sunday—what does Trump do? A, attacks the Pope. B, puts out this image on his social media page presenting himself like he's Jesus.

You know, with everybody looking up at him like he's some angel descended from heaven, healing a sick man on a bed. And Trump posted that himself. That wasn't some staffer doing it. Now, sure, a staffer clearly had to put it together, but Trump had to tell them, "Yeah, here's what I want—let's put this together." And then he puts it out. I really believe he goes back to those two assassination attempts and believes he's now ordained by God to accomplish a great mission for Israel. I mean, that's what's driving him. So, in attacking Pope Leo, Trump just created another group of political enemies he didn't have the day before. It was so unnecessary, so wrongheaded. But, you know, it's going to resonate—and many Catholics I know are just livid about it.

#Mudiar

My final question: Trump also said today that the U.S. may stop by Cuba after it deals with Iran. Of course, I have a special interest in Cuba for reasons I'm not going to elaborate on here. I've been reading Cuban history for a very long time because of my interest in what kinds of economic systems actually work for humanity. But given Cuba's proximity, and given the kind of assault and

sanctions regime that the U.S. has kept on Cuba for more than 50 or 60 years, do you see a direct military attack on Cuba coming soon?

#Larry

No. You've got to step back and say, okay, let's say we put military forces in to seize control of the island. We'd then face guerrilla attacks, because there would be insurgents. And so, again, the United States would get bogged down trying to control the country. It's close to our coast, but it doesn't have natural resources that are essential to the United States. I mean, they have great cigars, good rum from sugar cane—but really, beyond that, it would just be another Caribbean island that, if invested in properly, could be a great vacation spot. You know, historically—particularly starting in the 1920s—Cuba played a major role as a site for organized crime and for moving liquor into the United States to get around Prohibition.

The mafia—the Italian mob, but also the Jewish mob—set up operations in Cuba for gambling and such. So gambling, prostitution, drug trafficking—Cuba played an important role there. When the revolution came and the leadership, the dictators, were overthrown by a, quote, communist uprising, it was a popular movement; this wasn't something manufactured by the Soviets, right? The Soviets did see it and said, "Hey, we'll support it." But Cuba became this defiant little country that wouldn't bend to the United States and has paid a terrible price since then. So again, I try to walk through it in my mind: okay, we seize it—then what? Are we going to start putting U.S. taxpayer dollars into Cuba to improve the lives of the people?

I mean, the Cubans will appreciate that up to a point. But you'll have former government operators who'll go underground, and they'll conduct an insurgency that'll be costly to the United States. That would put the U.S. in the position of having to start killing Cubans we thought we were saving. I mean, it's just—there's a way out of this: lift the sanctions on Cuba, have free trade, and then, all of a sudden, the people will be free to decide what kind of country and government they want, without the pressure of the United States feeling it has to control every aspect of it. But, you know, we're too stubborn to do that. We keep insisting we have to control everything.

#Mudiar

Well, in 1959, the people did decide what kind of system and country they wanted for themselves. The U.S. didn't like it much, and we came very close to a nuclear holocaust. But Larry, we'll leave it there. Thank you so much for your time—I really appreciate your answers.

#Ayushman

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