

Iran DOWNS \$600 Million Drone, Trump's Hormuz Blockade COLLAPSES | Wilkerson

Former Chief of Staff to US State Department and retired colonel Lawrence Wilkerson discusses the major developments surrounding the disastrous US blockade of Iran over the Strait of Hormuz and the game changing response from Russia and China. PATREON.COM/DANNYHAIPHONG Support the channel in other ways: <https://www.buymeacoffee.com/dannyhai...> Substack: chroniclesofhaiphong.substack.com Cashapp: \$Dhaiphong Venmo: @dannyH2020 Paypal: <https://paypal.me/spiritofho> Follow me on Telegram: <https://t.me/dannyhaiphong> #iran #trump #russia #china

#Danny

Welcome, everyone. Welcome to the show. It's your host, Danny Haiphong. I'm joining you from Wuxi, China, and I'm here with Colonel Lawrence Wilkerson. Good to be with you, Colonel Wilkerson. Thanks for joining the show again. I know you're having some internet connection problems, but everyone, bear with them, and let's have a great show. How are you, Colonel?

#Larry Wilkerson

Good to be with you, Danny. I'm fine.

#Danny

Well, let's get right to it. Hit the like button, everyone — that helps boost the show in YouTube's algorithm. We're going to get started right away here. I wanted to ask you, Colonel Wilkerson — the U.S. Navy just confirmed that an MQ-4C Triton unmanned surveillance aircraft crashed in the Persian Gulf on April 9th, and Iran is saying it was responsible for downing it. This came after, of course, the much-vaunted ceasefire. We're also, of course, in the midst of this blockade that the Trump administration has instituted.

And as of today, Iran was also saying that its ships were going in and out of the Strait of Hormuz — the key one — because the blockade is primarily, or at least to a significant degree, about ensuring there's no docking at Iranian ports. So, Colonel Wilkerson, you know, this drone — and I know you have some knowledge of drones — their estimate is around \$200 million in value, maybe even \$600 million. What's your assessment of where the war stands now, and how the developments of the blockade and this kind of edging toward kinetic war after the ceasefire — where all of this is leading?

#Larry Wilkerson

Let's start at the top of what I'll call the assessment spectrum — the very top. Donald Trump is doing his best, and I think this was to be expected by those who knew the idiocy of this war of choice — doing his best to extricate himself from it. He's trying desperately, in some ways, to get out of this war. I think you're going to hear all manner of protestations as well as declarations of victory — if you haven't heard enough already to be nauseated — from Donald Trump and, to a certain extent, from J.D. Vance, although he seems to be very busy lecturing the Pope over his right to do theology, which is absolutely preposterous.

I can't believe a vice president of the United States actually said that to one billion people on the face of the earth, let alone to the Pope himself. So Trump is trying to extricate himself, and you have to parse everything he says — even though some of it is obviously nonsensical — with that fundamental truth in mind. I think he's even willing at this point to extricate himself without Netanyahu's total permission to do so. And I think he arrived at that decision about 24 hours ago, and I'm trying to ferret out exactly what happened and why. But that means he's going to be doing all manner of things to paint this picture of a victory and an exit.

How he's going to do that, I can't even begin to tell you. But I think you're going to hear this increasingly from him and from his lackeys in the White House — especially Pete Hegseth. That's the top picture, if you will, I think. And then underneath that is this business of tactical exceptions that are created on the spot, as it were. The Chinese are going through. Trump was saying there was going to be nobody going through the Strait. Well, the Chinese are going through — they've given him the extended middle finger. They're plying the Strait with oil tankers, I'm told, and this comes from a pretty reputable authority in the oil network. And others are, too.

So one wonders what is actually being stopped in the Strait of Hormuz. Now, we know that some people have left from that compilation of—what was it—3,200 ships that were lying off the Strait, just gone because they can't afford to sit there any longer. Where they're going is anybody's guess. Maybe over to the Bab el-Mandeb. I don't know. Don't think they'll fare any better there. So we still have this choke point that is a choke point not because of what the U.S. Navy is doing, or what Iran is doing—except indirectly—or what Oman or any other state power is doing. It's because of the confusion.

And the confusion is as bad for MARAD. It's as bad for Lloyd's. It's as bad for AIG, all the insurers, and for the shippers, because in confusion they usually make a decision on the side of security and don't go—or they turn around and leave. So that's where we are right now. And that brings me back to the top level of discussion again. By June, most economists say if this continues—and that's not very far away—we're definitely going to be in a global recession. And if it goes on in this indeterminate way we're dealing with trade and commerce in general, if it goes on to August, the globe's going to be in depression.

And Trump's ability to ride that out—because he's sitting on excess LNG and oil—and Putin's ability to ride that out for the same reason is irrelevant, because the rest of the world will be cascadingly

going down and into depression, as I indicated. And that's going to affect everything from rare earth metals to, you name it, things we can't get our hands on but need. So this is a disastrous situation, even with Trump now, as I said, I think trying to extricate himself any way he can and make it look like a victory, because I don't think he's going to be able to do that. So where are we? I'll ask you—where are we, given that that is the tapestry of what's happening right now?

#Danny

Yeah, it certainly is a mountain of contradictions, because on the one hand, you have Trump saying—and I'm going to make sure to keep everyone in the audience, Colonel Wilkerson's bandwidth, as low as possible—so I'm just going to be summarizing the sources I've pulled up today. You know, on the one hand, we have Donald Trump, in the last 24 hours, saying the next few days are going to be amazing, that talks with Iran are going to lead to something. The war is not over, but it's close to being over. This is after Fox News said it was over, according to Trump.

And then, on the other hand, you have this blockade, which is a serious situation in the sense that even if it's not 100% effective, even if there are many challenges the U.S. is facing with it, it's creating a situation where Iran is saying it will have to retaliate because it's a violation of the ceasefire. It's going to have an economic impact on them and their trading partners—a violation of the terms of the agreement they had settled on in the interim period before an actual peace settlement.

#Larry Wilkerson

So, Colonel Wilkerson, what do you make of that contradiction?

#Danny

Because again, you know, Iran is also threatening that if the U.S. continues to go after its ports, it's going to target the Bab al-Mandeb Strait, the Persian Gulf, the territory around Oman—all of their ports—and shut them down. A lot of this is about the oil markets and shoring them up. That would be a major disaster for the global economy. What's your take on this, and why is it all happening now? Like, what is the impetus for all of this?

#Larry Wilkerson

I think it's all happening now because of all the errors that we, the empire, have made up to this point—and in particular, that Donald Trump has made up to this point. If you look at the talks as positive just because they're talks, because it's some form of diplomacy, I think you're wrong. I don't think these talks are any form of diplomacy. I think they're another attempt by him to find a way to wiggle out of this war and declare victory. I don't think the talks are going to produce anything. I hope I'm wrong, but I don't think they will. Just the fact that the people the Iranians abominate

most thoroughly showed up—Jared Kushner and Steve Witkoff, again posing as diplomats—is proof positive as far as I’m concerned.

We're not serious about these negotiations, because we sent two people the Iranians have already said they don't even want to talk to—they don't even want to listen to them. We sent them nonetheless. So I don't think the talks mean anything other than a cover for, as I said, what Donald Trump is trying to do: extricate himself from this conflict without too much damage, politically or otherwise, to himself and to the Republican Party—if he's even thinking about the Republican Party now. So I don't know where we go from here, other than, as you just pointed out, an economic disaster if he doesn't do this—whatever kabuki he's going to pull off—faster rather than slower. And I still don't understand what he's doing with the forces he's marshaled there, and thus far has only barely used.

And they're sitting there around the region, wasting time, wasting money, wasting effort. And Danny, I don't know if you know this—NPR did a really good show on this yesterday. In fact, I stopped the car and pulled over to the side of the road because I was using my cell phone too, but I wanted to listen to it. It was a really good show about unrest in the American military—about the enlisted, flag officers, and mid-rank officers being unhappy with this conflict. There are a lot of other things probably affecting them too—excess Christian nationalism now. For 13 months he's been holding prayer meetings in the Pentagon, prayer meetings to which everyone's invited, of course.

Flag officers sit in the front row—those seats are reserved for them. I wonder what they're looking at in those front rows, just like they did at Quantico in that bizarre meeting they had some time ago. So there's this unsettled feeling in the American military, at all ranks, about what's going on right now. And the more troops he alerts—and this was a sidebar in the NPR discussion—they went out and interviewed people. Of course, they didn't identify themselves or where they were; it would've been death for them if they did. But they went out and talked to people and found that various folks were trying to—here's one example—the conscientious objector pipeline was fuller than it's been in years. In other words, people, including officers, were exploring what it takes to get out of the service by becoming conscientious objectors.

Now, it wasn't high enough that it would be difficult for them to replace those people. But nonetheless, it was an indicator that it was bigger than it had been in a long time—more people doing it. And there are other things they identified, too, showing the unrest of people who are saying they're not going to go if they're told to deploy. This is not good. This is the same kind of thing we've been saying in the All-Volunteer Force Forum would happen if we had to partially or, God forbid, fully mobilize and implement conscription. We—the experts in the All-Volunteer Force—have been following it now for 25 years, thoroughly and in detail for the last 15. We think that probably 50% of the 18- to 24-year-old age group in the United States would go somewhere if we implemented a draft.

That is to say, Mexico or Canada—would you like to have a whole lot of new people? Because we don't think a draft would be answered in this country. General Leitch, our head, says it like this: "What if we gave a war and no one came?" Well, we're looking at Trump giving a war that many troops are beginning to say, "I don't want." Imagine trying to conduct conscription in that environment. And yet there are rumors that Hegseth is thinking about everything from activating the Individual Ready Reserve—that would be a disaster—to maybe looking at conscription, maybe looking at using Selective Service again. This tells you that this is not going very well.

It's not going very well in ways they probably never contemplated, because they don't think about things like that. They're just absolutely devoid of the kind of knowledge one should have to be secretary of defense, to be commander in chief, and to advise those people. So I think we're in deep trouble in this country—not just because of the war, but because of the domestic situation that's developing around what I just described, plus other things like Epstein and such. I just picked up the paper this morning and looked at Ro Khanna and others and what they're doing right now to push articles of impeachment, even before we get to the midterms. So... we are very, very unstable right now in this country, and this war is making us even more unstable.

#Danny

Yeah, no, those are great points, Colonel Wilkerson. I wanted to ask you, given what you just said about the military—the army side, the human side of war—earlier I mentioned this drone. I wanted your impression of what this tells you about the war when you have a ceasefire that was called, and then suddenly, on April 9th, there was this very advanced drone—maybe one of the most advanced aircraft the U.S. military has—the MQ-4C Triton. So expensive. And it essentially disappeared over the Persian Gulf. Of course, Iran said it was the one that shot it down, and the U.S. Navy wasn't acknowledging that anything happened up until today. So, what does this tell you in the broader breadth of the war? Anything you can tell us about what this drone is and how it ended up being used in this way—during a ceasefire, no less?

#Larry Wilkerson

First of all, we don't know what the word "ceasefire" even means. I think we learned that trade from Bibi Netanyahu—he doesn't know what it means in Hebrew, English, or any other language. Let me give you a little background. My son is very much involved with Reapers. He's been both active Air Force and in the Tennessee Air National Guard, and he's flown them for both. You have to fly them when they kill people for the active component, because you cannot kill people unless you're brought on active duty—you cannot fire munitions unless you're brought on active duty. One of the things I've determined is that my grandson is now following in his father's footsteps.

One of the things I've learned about systems like Predators, Reapers, and Tritons, and so forth, is that they're not very well defended because we expect to fly them in either benign zones or areas

where—take Somalia, for example—what's on the ground, whether terrorists or state powers, isn't capable of reaching them. So we can fly these things over the territory and use their full capabilities. We actually have, Danny, agreements now all across the world. I'm talking about places like Charles de Gaulle Airport in Paris—places all over—where we're authorized, and we pay a certain fee, to land our drones at that airport. We have facilities there for maintenance, and in some of them, with special agreements, we have facilities for armament.

That is to say, Predator and Reaper can be armed there, basically with Hellfire missiles. So we have a reach now—as long as these contracts continue, we have a reach that's unparalleled. I mean, we don't need the 750 military bases we have around the world. We actually have all these civilian airports in strategic locations under contract to accept our drones, both for landing and takeoff—and, as I said, in some cases, rearming. But what's happened here is we've run into an enemy. And here again, the Trump administration, Secretary Hedges, the generals—I don't think General Cain, being an Air Force general and coming from the Pacific arena, would fit in this category; he must have said something—who think that all of this billion-dollar capability is usable against an enemy that actually has some wherewithal.

They're not. They simply aren't. And when I say "wherewithal," I mean missiles that can go up, reach them, and bring them down. There are quite a few entities in this world—outside of China and Russia, of course—that have that capability, Iran being one of them. And we saw it with the Houthis. We had Reapers shot down by the Houthis—I think it was six or seven of them, finally—that were actually taken down by the Houthis, al-Ansar in Yemen. So we're using these—I'm going to use a term here that's not really applicable anymore, people tell me—but we're using "third world" militaries as what we're measuring our capability to use these very expensive instruments against.

And that's not right, because they're going to shoot them down if they have the capability—as Iran is proving. So that's what's happening, I think. We're losing this very expensive equipment, which we basically designed for either a benign environment or one where the people on the ground—Somalis, for example—don't have that capability. And you don't know what we're doing in Somalia right now. We're killing people in Somalia virtually every day of the week. And we're not paying attention to the technology that's developing in places like Ukraine, and now in this war with Iran, or already developed and now being used.

And what it can do is give us these very expensive instruments that we've grown so accustomed to using, and through them we get a full picture of the ground beneath—a much more detailed picture than we'd have otherwise, except maybe from some of the most sophisticated satellites we have when they're in, you know, "zoom mode." And those are very narrow, very telescopic. These drones see all around, 360 degrees. As my son said to me, when I'm flying that drone, I'm actually seeing more than I would see in the cockpit of an Air Force airplane—he used to fly C-130s. I see far more from that drone, in all directions, up and down and around, than I would in an actual airplane cockpit, and certainly more than I would see in an F-15E, an F-16, an F-22, or an F-35 cockpit.

Now, the F-35 gives you a little bit more detail because it's supposedly—if it's working and operational—seeing in a number of different modes. It's even seeing what the drone is seeing, for example, or what the surveillance radar on the ground is seeing, because if it's hooked up to everything, it becomes an interconnected node for battlefield intelligence to be shared across the spectrum. It's not working that way often, because it's barely able to maintain full mission capability for any period of flight time. But that's what it's supposed to do. So, all to say, these things are really not applicable to a hot battlefield where people know what they're doing—and so they're going to get shot down, at great cost to the empire.

#Danny

Yeah, yeah, and that's exactly what we're seeing. It's exactly what we're seeing. And, uh, Colonel Wilkerson, I wanted to get into the blockade—where we're at in the war right now. It's becoming quite clear that the aggression against Iran, especially the U.S.'s role in it, had a lot to do with China. We're hearing this from Secretary of the Treasury Scott Besson, who literally said that the big reason for this blockade is to make sure China doesn't get Iranian oil. And now Donald Trump has just given this grandiose statement on Truth Social, saying that China is very happy that he's permanently opening the Strait of Hormuz and that he's doing it for them—for China. He said the situation will never happen again, that they've agreed not to send weapons to Iran, because there was a report this week that China was getting ready to send weapons—MANPADS—in the next few weeks to Iran.

So China is coming up a lot now, and there are many who believe that one of the strategies—or at least one of the plot points—for this blockade isn't even about the Strait of Hormuz itself, but rather about interdicting ships heading to China and trying to cut off trade and shipping routes to it. What's your assessment, your analysis of China's role here? Because China is pushing back, saying it's not going to stop trading with Iran and that if the U.S. or its allies approach Chinese ships, they'll respond in kind. Now I'm hearing they're even considering cutting off the solar industry from the United States, which would be a big deal. Your thoughts on all of this?

#Larry Wilkerson

Well, I've always thought that if there were a real geostrategic purpose for this conflict in Iran—and I don't for a minute think Donald Trump recognizes this, he's too stupid—but there are people around him, not Hegseth either, he's too stupid, but there are people around him and in the Pentagon who realize this vividly. China and its Southern Belt and Road Initiative railroad is a point of concern of great magnitude to the United States of America. And Israel and the U.S. are bombing that railroad. I'm told it's incessant. I'm told it's around the clock.

This is the railroad that comes out of China's Pacific ports and runs all the way along that periphery to the vicinity of Bandar Abbas and Chabahar, then up the Persian Gulf as intended, and into Azerbaijan, Armenia, and ultimately Georgia and the Caucasus in general. It connects with the other

three railroads coming across Russia and Central Asia. By the way, two of those railroads had to stop because of the Ukraine war. That gives you an idea why Joe Biden wanted the Ukraine war—it had absolutely nothing to do with Russia—because they've stopped. They were supposed to go all the way through to Bremerhaven, Le Havre, and other ports on the Atlantic, but they've been pretty much halted.

They allow China to move that Pacific port produce in sixteen hours into the heart of Europe, rather than the two to two and a half days it takes to go by maritime route through the Suez Canal or around the Horn or wherever. Much cheaper, and therefore eliminating the maritime mode over time. This is very historic. This is what empires did in the East in the past. For example, they put the Portuguese Empire—small as it was, but a maritime empire—pretty much out of business by building these overland routes and making the maritime routes obsolete. That's what China is doing right now. And guess who it's impacting the most in terms of power? Because who's the master of the seas, supposedly? The United States of America. And we're going to see that mastery at least fifty percent or more negated.

So you're right. This is a very strategic theater for us to oppose China—not just because of the railroad, but also because of what you were saying about the contacts China has with Iran, the oil it gets from Iran. So China's not going to back off this if it really gets serious. I've said before, I don't think China wants a war. I'm almost positive China doesn't want a war. They're winning. They're winning in almost every category—economic, technological, cultural, military. You name the category of state power, they're winning. And now they're going to win in the financial realm of state power, because Xi Jinping has said he's going to substitute the renminbi for the dollar. Over the next decade or so, we're going to see the dollar go away as the world's transactional and reserve currency.

Woe to the empire when that happens. So we're doing everything we can in Ukraine. I didn't even mention the Arctic, where we're trying to keep China out. Russia is trying to give China an opening into the Arctic, and we're trying to keep them out. We're making a very bad situation up there north of Murmansk because of that. So we've got a global conflict, for all practical purposes, and those are the ones that matter—going from the Arctic all the way down to the Arabian Sea. It's incredible what we're doing, but we're trying to block China at every point in that arc that we can. And right now, the hot point is in Southwest Asia. So this is—with purpose, if you will—more so than anybody in the administration is presenting it. And as I said, I'm not even sure Donald Trump is aware of this.

#Danny

Yeah, well, Donald Trump has this history where he's had moments of incredible hostility toward China. But he's always lacked focus in many ways and tends to go from one arena to the next without much continuity. But now, there's a big contradiction in the way he talks about China. Sometimes he talks about China as a partner. And now it's being revealed that perhaps one of the most monumental wars we've experienced in generations, over the last month, is in large part concluding with this blockade that's directly targeting China. But as you said, China has not only the

huge Belt and Road Initiative, but it seems like it has a lot of other areas it can rely on—not just its massive reserves of energy and coal, but also, of course, the renewables—to brave this storm.

While the United States, Colonel Wilkerson said, has to hope that the damage to the global economy they're going to cause by manipulating the oil markets by force will somehow be sustainable—short, medium, or long term. So I'm curious what you think about this. Russia has already said they'll step in and help China with any shortfalls in oil that might come about because of this. So it seems like there's a coalescing around Iran, even, around the potential consequences of this aggressive economic move by the United States, while the U.S. has to contend with being a pariah. This doesn't look very good, Colonel Wilkerson.

#Larry Wilkerson

No, it doesn't. And China is so worried about its oil that it just offered to help Manila with its oil needs—trying, of course, to pull the Philippines away from the United States. And they may succeed in that, because I'm told the Philippine government has said, "Come talk," because it needs oil. And you're right about Russia. If you look at those pipelines, they don't just run east and west now; they run north and south. So if Russia and China are compelled into this energy alliance, they're going to be able to take care of their needs whenever they need to.

And if you want to talk about someone who rivals the United States in terms of untapped assets, Russia probably has more oil and LNG than the United States could dream of in the next 300 years—because they haven't even tapped it yet. They don't even know where some of it is. They've got inklings, but out in Siberia and places like that, it could be the greatest windfall on the face of the earth. And underneath the Caspian Sea, you have enough oil, once it's exploited—and gas too—for a hundred years for every one of the Central Asian states. So they're not lacking in any of this, and they are furiously building, or projecting the building of, pipelines—both north-south and east-west—that will take care of this and keep it off the water.

And one of the reasons they're doing that is because of what's happening right now in the Strait of Hormuz, just like with the railroads they're building. So I don't think China or Russia are worried about this situation. What they're worried about—and Xi Jinping has said this guardedly—is a berserk empire in its last days, if you will, screwing the world up so badly that they have to spend a lot of money, time, and effort fixing it. That's what they're worried about. China doesn't want a war. They're winning. Why should they want a war? But if they get one, they'll take it, and they'll destroy us—or we'll destroy the whole globe. Because I think that war, as you know, will ultimately go nuclear.

And we'll be the ones to initiate the use of nuclear weapons, because we'll be the ones losing. I've been in the war games, and that's what we do. Usually there are civilian leaders in those war games who say, "Stop it right there and don't let it go any further." So this is not a win-win situation, as it should be for the two most powerful countries in the world—the declining one, the United States,

and the rising one, China—with Russia on her side, considerably more powerful than she would be alone. It's not a good deal. And coming back to what we asked, and what I talked about in the first moments of this interview—the business about Donald Trump wanting a way out, extricating himself—and why I said he doesn't even understand this geostrategic rationale. He doesn't. But do you think the powers behind the throne are going to let Donald Trump get out of this war?

And I'm not so sure that Bibi's not one of those powers behind the throne—a despicable one, a murderous one, a homicidal one, a genocidal one—but nonetheless a smart one. And I'm not so sure he doesn't know that, understand that, and that he has connections with the Davos crowd. So they're not going to let Trump get out of this war until China is severely damaged. And I don't see any way in the world that we severely damage China anywhere in this war without severely damaging ourselves—in fact, more so than we damage China. So where does this go? Even if it has a geostrategic rationale that makes sense, where does it go? And especially with a Trump who wants out by any method he can get out, and a declaration of victory, right? It's a nightmare, Danny. It's a nightmare. Encore, as the French would say.

#Danny

Yeah, yeah. I mean, it seems to boil down to the United States, as this empire, not really having the capacity—for a myriad of reasons—to bow out when it's time to bow out, when there is, you know, a defeat essentially handed to you. The United States empire does not have that capacity. And what you said about Israel, I think, is Netanyahu's, because just in these talks that happened in Islamabad—who was interrupting in the middle of the talks? Who was being consulted by J.D. Vance? It was Benjamin Netanyahu.

And for all the debates about the dog wagging the tail or the tail wagging the dog, at the end of the day we have to not only consider but acknowledge the fact that if Benjamin Netanyahu has the ability to communicate with the U.S. side during some of the most important talks that have happened around the war in generations, then that means he has a lot of—whether it's leverage, power, influence—or maybe the entity he leads is just that important. Whatever it is, that's the reality. So I think people—I don't know—I think it's a big part of war now. It's a big part of the way the U.S. does war. Israel seems to be a major consideration in everything the United States does, even up to this point right now, where the options are becoming more and more limited, and they're all going from bad to worse.

#Larry Wilkerson

And interestingly, one of the countries of middling power—if you will, but nonetheless power—that's caught in the middle of this and seems to not know what to do is Turkey. And I don't just mean Erdoğan; I mean anyone who might replace Erdoğan—Fidan or whomever it might be. I don't think

they know what to do. They have a number of directions they could move. They could just say, "To hell with NATO, and to hell with the American empire," and move decisively into BRICS and join China and Russia.

Or they could try to maintain a studied neutrality and gradually distance themselves from NATO. Or—and this is the least likely option—they could stay in NATO, anchoring the southern flank, a flank that's falling apart even as we speak, and try to make that work. But I don't think that's a viable option for them. So where do they go? And where they go could make a real difference in this great struggle between East and West, because they're sort of, as they've always been, you know, the Hellespont—the route between Europe and Asia, and so forth.

They're very key strategically, especially if Russia completes its closing off of Ukraine, takes Odessa, and controls that entire southern coastline for its own use—making the Black Sea even more of a Russian sea than it was before. Turkey is the only arbiter of that, and probably in no way wishes to challenge Russia. We're looking at the whole scene of the world changing right now, and I don't think anyone in the United States government of consequence has a clue. They're batting with a bad bat, hitting 90-mile-an-hour fastballs and fouling them off into the stands. That's about all they're doing. There's no way they're going to get a base hit, let alone hit a home run—and none of them know that.

I don't think so. The question in my mind is when, and at what juncture in this struggle, the people who are really behind it—by which I mean people whose names everyone would recognize, like Elon Musk and Peter Thiel, and so forth—decide to act. But there are quite a few others behind it who don't have American names. They're waiting to see when to jump ship, and where to jump ship to. And I don't mean that in terms of rats; I mean it in terms of the people who really run the world—the Rothschilds, the J.P. Morgans of the present day. Where are they going to go, and where is their flag going to rest after they go?

I don't know. Maybe we should be watching some of these extremely wealthy Israelis who are leaving Israel, never to return, and see where they plant their flag most prominently. In any event, it's going to be interesting to watch how this plays out—or they could just jump off the ship and drown, some of them anyway. It's happened before, when we've had crises like this, where the whole world shifts, where everything about state power changes dramatically. Think about Spain, for example. After being corrupted by the New World, the Spanish Empire essentially disappeared.

In about 15 to 20 years, the entire Spanish guild system—everything that made Spain a really powerful country—was so corrupted by the gold and silver that flowed in, in quantities unimaginable to the empire, that it corrupted the whole thing. So we're looking at those kinds of things happening again. They don't happen often in world history, but when they do, they're traumatic, and they change the entire alignment of power in the world. That's what's happening right now. And we have an administration that's completely and totally ignorant of that, just standing up there trying to hit foul balls into the stands. One wonders where we're going.

#Danny

Yeah, I want your comments too on this report, given that we're talking about this changing world—and in large part, this war on Iran has really accelerated it to a dramatic degree that I don't think many people, many Americans, Westerners, or people living in the so-called hostile countries and entities, realize. I don't think they understand just how much the world has changed. There was a report that came out from the **Financial Times** saying that one of the reasons Iran has been able to be so precise and accurate in its strikes over the course of, what, five or six weeks before the ceasefire, was that they had actually acquired a Chinese satellite. This satellite, the TEE-ONB, is relatively new—it was launched into space from China—and essentially, China was giving them information access and, of course, all the targeting data that came with it. I mean, it's a new world, Colonel Wilkerson. You know, it's hard to verify the accuracy of the reports China has.

#Larry Wilkerson

You mean, sort of like what we were doing for the Ukrainians, vis-à-vis the Russians?

#Danny

Yeah, exactly. But your comments on this—because, yeah, it's a much different world now, from February 28th onward.

#Larry Wilkerson

No, I agree, and I wouldn't doubt that at all—that the Chinese have given the Iranians some satellite capability that makes what's happening even more deadly than it would have been otherwise. I can't explain, without something like that, the incredible precision they used in what I call their first tier of targeting. They were just incredibly successful in destroying things like the oldest refinery in the Gulf, in Bahrain. They hit the place they'd hit before a number of times in Kurdistan, where they knew the Israelis, Mossad, CIA, and MI6 had a very sophisticated intelligence operation, somewhat underground. They'd hit it a couple of times before, just to let the Mossad people in particular know they knew where it was.

They'd just hit it with, you know, surface rockets that didn't really do anything to the installation underground or to the people—but it let them know that they knew where it was. Well, this time they destroyed that sucker. And they've done that systematically across the region. I'm told, and I think with great confidence, that there's a second and third tier of targeting—and you just mentioned something, the Chinese provision of the satellite, perhaps—that I think would be very critical to this kind of targeting and the precision of it. That makes me think what you said is accurate, and that their second and third tiers of targets will be, at least in part, orchestrated by this satellite capability, because they have a devastating target list.

It's everything from Ras Tanura—the major Saudi port—other than Yanbu, I think, up the coast from it, where there's a concentration of about seven percent of the world's oil, some of its very best oil, light sweet crude, the kind that used to come from Libya. You hit those targets, and other targets in Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates. Maybe you take out Al Udeid altogether, along with the aircraft there from the United States, if they're not flying. And you hit the other targets that I understand are on this tier, which basically includes wiping out Israel—just wiping Israel out—without a nuclear weapon. Wiping Israel out. And you've put this war in a whole new dimension. And you've probably put the world into a global depression.

#Danny

Yeah.

#Larry Wilkerson

Yeah, I think that's one reason the Iranians are very, very reluctant to carry out that tier of targeting.

#Danny

Right. And, uh, not to mention, when Israel is the target for a massive, you know, just incredible amount of damage that Iran could lay upon it, you have to consider the Palestinian people are sitting right on top of that. When it comes to Israel, that's the reality of a settler colony. But, uh, Colonel Wilkerson, I was thinking about this today as I was reviewing the lay of the war situation in the world, and I was wondering what you think of this notion. Because a lot of people—I mean, this has happened now twice—where Iran was attacked, and then there was a pretty significant phase of active war, and then a ceasefire, or at least a so-called ceasefire, maybe a fake ceasefire. And people who watch this program might get angry, or have gotten angry, about that.

And some have even gone so far as to say that this leads to a kind of hesitancy and a capitulation by Iran that only allows the empire to regroup. But I'm curious—I had a theory I wanted you to address, if you would. I truly believe that Iran knows this is a long war, and that it's almost like a kind of—well, it's not really a war of attrition because it's stop, start, stop, start—but it is a kind of building up a strategy, it seems, to be able to outlast the empire. At a moment when it's quite obvious that the U.S. and Israel, unless they change dramatically from the inside and look very different politically and economically, are not going to stop trying to attack and destroy Iran for a lot of reasons. So Iran seems to have its eye on winning a war that's obviously going to go on for a while. I'm curious what you think about this and how it all ties into what's going on right now.

#Larry Wilkerson

I think you're right. I think the Iranians are too smart to have just one outcome they're after. I think *Haaretz* was absolutely correct a few days ago—maybe a week and a half ago—when they ran a

headline that said, "Iran, to win, must not lose." The United States, the empire, to win, must have a spectacular victory. Well, there isn't going to be any spectacular victory, no matter how Donald Trump uses his propaganda techniques to try and make it so. So Iran's already won. Now, in an incredibly asymmetric war—like Ukraine, but I think even more dramatically than Ukraine—it's proven how obsolete the United States military truly is: at sea, in the air, on the ground. And I say that with great reluctance, because I was a member of it for a generation. But I think they've proven just how obsolete we are.

And that's why they're going to win, ultimately, by not losing. What I think they have is a long-term objective, though. And this is punctuated dramatically by the fact—as you know, Ted Postol has pointed out, I think rightfully—that they could build a nuclear weapon at any moment. And what that means is truly dicey, I think, because if they do and Israel finds out about it, I'm wondering what Bibi Netanyahu is going to do, because that closes him off from any possibility whatsoever of doing what he really wants to do, which is to create chaos, or total chaos, in Iran. If they have a nuclear weapon, that total chaos could suddenly erupt and destroy Israel, because a couple of nuclear weapons on Israel would destroy it. You could hit Iran with fifty nuclear weapons and it would still be ticking afterwards. Not true about Israel.

So that's another dimension of this that I'm quite sure the Iranians are taking into consideration. You might say they have a plan A, a plan B, a plan C, a plan D, and a plan E at the end, which is nuclear weapons use. But all those other plans are iterations of the same kind of asymmetric warfare that we simply cannot win. We can't. And at some point, we've got to come to that realization, as does Bibi Netanyahu. My problem—and my dilemma—in this is that I cannot see us coming to that realization in any categorical or definitive way. So that means disaster, but the disaster will be ridden out by 93 million, 92 million, whatever the figure is, Iranians, much better than it will be by the 330 million or so Americans. In fact, I think we're looking at the beginning of an abrupt decline rather than a gradual decline of the United States of America.

#Danny

Yeah, no, I mean, that seems to be the roadmap.

#Larry Wilkerson

Did you see the piece in The Guardian this morning? I read it—read it quickly. She says it's over. I mean, this is a pretty good writer, normally, on international relations, and she just goes through it step by step as to why it's over. I remember what Ricardo Alicante told me in Cuba one day, outside of Havana, in a protocol house, when I was discussing this very thing with him. He was out of the National Assembly—he had no official position in the Cuban government—but he was still very much plugged in, of course. Raul was still alive at that time and still running the country. And he looked at

me and said, "Even a dying elephant can thrash a lot of grass, and we're close by." I mean, he agreed that *El Coloso del Norte*—the Giant of the North—was not a giant anymore, but he made that statement.

#Danny

Yeah, I mean, that's a—what are—what, uh, I think, an apt metaphor, you know, as we enter maybe the last two or three minutes here, Colonel Wilkerson. Yeah, the empire seems to be thrashing about as it falls. And I think that begs the question, too, of what you often pose when we talk—and I know you pose this on other programs too—where it seems like the United States, in each war it engages in, runs into limited options. Even when there's success, like in Venezuela, there are still limitations that are pretty stark, even in a situation like that where Trump can declare a kind of victory.

With Iran and then Ukraine happening at the same time—these are wars that carry incredible limitations. It seems that what's really going on is that the true rulers of the U.S. empire are reckoning with this in a very reckless, explosive, and violent way, to a degree that could lead to massive disasters. At the same time, though, it's also leading to a big shift—it feels like a race by a good segment of the human population to try to build something out of this that can survive and sustain whatever calamities, conflicts, and crises are happening, and of course, those still to come.

#Larry Wilkerson

Well, of course, the sad thing about upheavals like this—particularly global upheavals—and the last really tremendous one, in my mind, maybe I'm sounding a bit peevish here, but I'm not trying to, was the attempt by the British to end the slave trade and at the same time still keep their power. I think you can find in that effort, noble as it was, the beginnings of the unraveling of the British Empire. It took a long time to get to Suez in 1956, but nonetheless, you can see how the power and the discussion about that power changed dramatically between those who were for it and those who were against it. And that's just one little episode. What we're talking about now are global shifts. There are going to be a lot of people, unfortunately, who die in this.

And then you throw the business of climate change into it, which all of our analyses at the Climate and Security Working Group—mostly DOD people, DOE people—show. And you say, okay, 2050 or 2060 is when we're really going to begin to feel the deadly crunch of the changing climate, including heat killing people all across the globe, especially in the Global South. And you look at how little we're doing to combat that right now, trying to get a leap ahead on it, and you say, combine that with this shift in power, and we're going to have a lot of people suffering. We're going to have a lot of people dying for no reason other than the stupidity of those who have the power in the world and the ability to do something about it. And here's another comment.

The country doing the most about this hugely existential problem is not America—it's China. It's China. They're leading in almost every possible way in the field of renewables. And we're causing that to be weakened somewhat by the fact that we're so commercially and otherwise opposed to what they're doing, because we see it as a threat to us. Now, the way to handle that would have been to accommodate them, to work together with them. And as my president, George W. Bush, did—though I rarely say positive things—he understood that if you couldn't beat China with capitalism as your tool, then why were you even in the fight? You had to stand up. You didn't fight them, you didn't start a war with them—you had to stand up and be counted in the world you had created. And you had to be better than they were.

You had to make better things. You had to make better development plans and all that. That was my president. The only portfolio he gave Colin Powell that was significant was China. And he said once that the reason he did that was because he understood the importance of Walmart to America. Of course, he was just using a metaphor, but he was right. The only way Walmart could succeed—the only way American capitalism could ultimately succeed—was by working hand in hand with the rising greatest capitalist power in the world. Capitalism with Chinese characteristics, maybe, but nonetheless capitalism. And he realized that to do otherwise was to cut your own throat. That was George W. Bush. That's the last president who realized that. That's the last president who treated China properly.

#Danny

Yeah, and that is saying something critical. As you said, it shows how much the world has changed and how far down the warmongering rabbit hole the empire has gone when what many credit as the presidential face of the war on terror—and all those wars that led to this Iran war situation in many ways—still handled things differently. But nonetheless, there was a lot, and this goes for Russia too. Of course, in both cases there were instances of hostilities, because this is a long history. But nonetheless, it was a very different time when dealing with these two rising powers.

#Larry Wilkerson

There was no need for that either. There was absolutely no need for that. We could have made an accommodation for Russia. We could have brought her slowly and surely into Europe. We could have even brought her into the NATO alliance. I think we'd have had to change the name and make it something else—Security Architecture of Europe or whatever. I'm looking at it right now, Danny. I'm looking at what the Europeans are doing. What they're doing right now is the same thing we were doing in 1991 and calling it a European Security Identity. It went all the way to the end of the Bush term and actually had some legs in Clinton's first term and his second term. And now Europe's doing that. They're doing it, but they're doing it with an extended middle finger to us.

#Danny

It's absolutely ridiculous. I mean, it's absolutely incredible. Well, to close, everybody—I'm in China right now. Tomorrow, actually... or today. Today, tomorrow—yeah, today. I'm going to be interviewing Zhang Weiwei, a very prominent Chinese academic. I've had him on the show before, and I'm hoping to go live with that. It's midnight here now, and I'm doing it at 9:30 Beijing time, which would be 9:30 p.m. Eastern. If it doesn't happen live for some reason, I'll have a recording. I just wanted to let you all know that. And I'm here now.

And what Colonel Wilkinson said about China leading the world in renewable energy and this kind of advancement in how we power our economies and our lives—you come here and it's in your face. It's not some private thing, not just putting solar panels on your roof or anything like that. It's a massive industry that powers every single part of China's economy in a very significant way. And if China decides to reduce the U.S.'s capacity to trade in solar power technology—which could happen if the U.S. keeps this blockade going and targets China—yeah, it's a big disaster.

It's a big disaster, and it will only lead to more of the catastrophes that the U.S. is laying at its own feet. Yeah. Something to watch, everybody. But I just wanted to make that comment. And Colonel Wilkinson, if you have any final thoughts, I want to thank you for coming on. We'll leave together. But yeah, any final word? No, just that you're right. Yeah, it's wild. I mean, it's wild to see electric vehicles everywhere. You know, coming here—I took the train from Beijing to, well, I'm in Wuxi right now, which is not by Shanghai, but it's a similar train ride—about four hours, high-speed. It's these things that we don't get to invest in.

#Larry Wilkerson

Clean trains, high-speed. Yeah.

#Danny

I mean, you know, we're going 350 kilometers an hour. Yeah. It's super clean, cheap, you know—and I mean, this is the future. China's living in it. But with the U.S. ruled by who it's ruled by, doing what it does with the imperatives that it has, this is what we end up getting deprived of. And ultimately, the world suffers a lot for it. So, yeah. I'll see you guys soon. Tomorrow I'm also doing a show, in about 24 hours, with—I believe it's with Larry Johnson, our mutual friend. So everybody, I'll see you again soon. Hit the like button as you leave the program. Go to the video description to find ways to support the show—Patreon, Substack, and more. I'll see you again very soon. Bye-bye. Take care, Danny.