

# Larry Johnson: DIPLOMACY FAILED: Why Pressure Backfires

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## #Nima

What's going on right now with the case of the war in the Middle East? The latest news is that in, I don't know, a few hours, J.D. Vance, together with Jared Kushner and Steve Witkoff, are going to land in Pakistan. They're going to be there. So far, from what we've seen from the Iranian side, they said no, they have not decided to go there yet. Yeah, and one of the main reasons for that is the attack on this Iranian-flagged commercial vessel. Biden and others say they have breached the ceasefire by attacking this vessel. So yesterday, they said they're going to respond. I don't know what the response will be on their part. What is your understanding of the current situation?

## #Larry

Well, again, there's no foundation for negotiations in light of Trump's statements on Friday. Remember, Trump, when he announced the blockade, that's an aggressive act against Iran. And initially, it was just words. But then the targeting of this cargo ship that was coming from China, you know, that's an act of war, period. And so I know that there were some behind-the-scenes negotiations between Iran, Pakistan, and the United States, and I was told on Friday that they had actually reached, through J.D. Vance's efforts, an agreement with Iran that accepted Iran's preconditions, and they were moving forward, and then Trump sabotaged it and blew it up.

So then on top of that, when he added in the blockade, that, you know, from Iran's standpoint, okay, what is there to talk about? This is, you know, the United States continues to be the aggressor here. So I anticipate they're going to attack a U.S. ship. And, you know, I think it's going to take something like the sinking of a U.S. ship to wake the United States up that, you know, we can't continue down this path. We continue to have what I call cost-free wars. We suffer very, very few casualties, or at least they're doing a good job of covering up the casualties there, and inflict harm on other people and hope that, you know, our bullying will make those others come, you know, come to heel like a dog. And, you know, Iran's not playing along.

## #Nima

It seems that Pakistan is doing its best to talk with the Trump administration. Donald Trump himself, as the Pakistani sources are talking about, is considering the removal of the blockade. What does it mean, Larry? Because the whole concept of attacking an Iranian commercial vessel—what does it mean? How is that going to bring leverage to the United States and to the sort of argument in the negotiations?

## **#Larry**

Well, they see it as part of it. All they have to do is collapse the Iranian economy, and then that will force the Iranians to surrender. But, you know, it's misguided. It's based upon some false premises. But that's their thinking. If we just blockade them—again, having learned no lessons from the past. I mean, for God's sake, we've had an effective blockade on Cuba for 66 years, and that hasn't worked out well. I mean, the people of Cuba have suffered, but it hasn't compelled them to change their government or to surrender to the United States. And here, Iran's got a lot more options. You know, they're not an island. It's one thing to surround an island country and blockade them, but it's an entirely different thing when you've got open borders to the north and to the east for Iran, that they can get whatever they need over land. They don't have to worry about it coming over water.

## **#Nima**

I think because of the nature of the issues that the United States and Iran are trying to negotiate on—which in a minute I'm going to bring up—but the nature, the whole concept of the ceasefire is based on this war. They wanted to put an end to this war of attrition, the United States at least. And this new game that they were starting, it's some sort of a war of attrition. And the moment that the ceasefire is over, they're not going to be able to stay that close to the Iranian shores, to the Iranian coast.

## **#Larry**

Well, not only that, but the other factor that's going to kick in here is weather. And, you know, Professor Morandi's talked about it. I don't know if you've ever experienced what it's like to be in, say, Qatar in May, but it's like being in a damn pizza oven.

## **#Nima**

It's not as harsh as Qatar, but in the southwest of Iran, we have the same sort of weather. It's going to go over 50, 60 degrees, something like that.

## **#Larry**

Yeah, Celsius. Celsius, Celsius. I understand that, Celsius, because Fahrenheit, it's like 120 degrees. Yeah. I mean, and that's just in May. You know, I couldn't believe how hot it was. And then on top

of it, the sandstorms that come in, you know, that's a whole other dimension. So the U.S., if it's going to do something on the ground, so to speak, you know, trying to launch ground operations, they've got sort of a short window for it. It has to be in the next three weeks. But then after that, they'll be dealing with some serious weather issues. And the heat—people think the heat just affects the soldiers. No, it affects aircraft. The maintenance issues on that increase. So, I mean, again, it forces the United States to move its air operations being launched from, say, Cyprus or from Jordan or from Israel. And, you know, that adds more wear and tear on this machinery. And these machines, they break down.

## **#Nima**

Yeah. Could that, you know, you mentioned the situation with the weather. I understand if Donald Trump was telling us with his new sort of posts on Truth Social that he's going to attack the power grids together with bridges, all of this, and the response from Iran is going to be the attack on the same sort of plants in other countries. As you mentioned, the weather factor is in the game that is hugely problematic for the region. And how is that going to put pressure on the parties, all parties involved in the negotiation, in the talks?

## **#Larry**

Well, let's go with the assumption that Iran succeeds in knocking out the power to the majority of the people and cities in the United Arab Emirates or in Saudi Arabia. People are going to have to abandon those cities. I mean, it will be too hot to continue living there. There will be some generators here and there, but overall it's not going to be livable. So, you know, the movement of populations at that point, that's going to really bring some political pressure. Because, again, their argument is to the United States, well, you promised you'd protect us. Instead of protecting us, you made us vulnerable. You've made us a target. Of course, those countries have made themselves a target because of their cooperation with the West and allowing the military operations to be conducted from their territories. Iran has every right in the world to punish those countries for that.

## **#Nima**

I think the issue is that I told you it would be important to talk about these zero-sum nature issues when it comes to the Strait of Hormuz. There is no cooperation between Iran and the United States in the case of the Strait of Hormuz. No, that's right. They're not going to accept anything of that sort. What is Trump trying to achieve with the case of the Strait of Hormuz?

## **#Larry**

Well, he wants it open. I mean, it's very simple. And he wants Iran to stop exerting control. I've heard, you know, there have been some other, and I'll put quotations around it, "analysts." You know, this Professor Jiang, have you seen this guy running around? He's everywhere. And I'm

listening to it, and it's like... I don't get it. You know, there's really no substance there. But, you know, he's brought on and he was talking about, oh yeah, they could block the Strait of Malacca. Okay, let's understand why Iran is effective right now in blocking the strait. Iran doesn't need a deep-water, blue-water navy, right?

It has drones and missiles that are positioned inside the country to such a depth that it's not a simple matter for the United States to fly bombers over or launch missiles to take those sites out. Because the terrain is such, it gives Iran effective ability to control that strait. Now, on top of it, though, it does have maritime drones, underwater drones, surface drones, aerial drones on top of that. But that's not what gives it the power to control the strait. Its power is like, if you don't get our permission, if you don't coordinate with us in advance, we'll sink your ship. Real simple. Well, you can't do that in the Malacca Strait.

In the Malacca Strait, there's no military force or missiles, you know, a bunch of missiles, a bunch of drones inland. The military task of, like, if we said, okay, let's land and go inside and take over that part of Iran so that they can't fire those missiles. Now, that would be the only way to guarantee there would be no more interference with the Strait, but the problem is you're going to need about a million, two million men to do that. And then the fact that trying to get them ashore without getting them killed, good luck. So that's why I said these other folks are trying to draw parallels with the Bering Strait or the Malacca Strait. It's just idiotic. It really is stupid. But, you know, they get away with it and they talk about it as if they know.

## **#Nima**

Yeah. The second issue, Larry, which is a zero-sum game, is the enrichment of uranium on Iranian soil.

## **#Larry**

Right.

## **#Nima**

I think nobody in Iran can negotiate on that. It's impossible. It's impossible. It's not going to happen if Donald Trump decides to go in that direction because it doesn't make sense. For such a long time, Iran was sacrificing everything, Larry — the economy, the people who were involved in this program — to reach the point that they are at right now. And they have everything domestic when it comes to the nuclear program of Iran. And suddenly Donald Trump wants to remove that from the scene. Is it possible for Donald Trump to understand that it's impossible to do that?

## **#Larry**

No, well, in Donald Trump's current mental state, no, he can't understand that. The entire nuclear issue is just a red herring. It's not... Let's assume that Iran never had a nuclear program. Do you think then that the United States today would be saying, oh, okay, let's just live and let live, let's get along with Iran? Hell no. It's the Islamic Republic that drives us crazy. You know, we create this mythology in the West about Sharia law and the strict Islamic standards, you know, beating women in the streets if they're not wearing hijab, you know, that kind of nonsense. So the nuclear issue is an excuse. That's all it is — to try to destroy the regime. Regime change is the ultimate goal, destroying the Islamic Republic.

The United States cannot stand it that the people of Iran rose up in a popular revolution in the 1970s and 1979 and threw the Shah out, a leader that we, the United States, had installed through a CIA coup managed by Kermit Roosevelt, the son of Teddy Roosevelt, I believe. So we can't tolerate that. We've got to be in control. How dare the Iranians assert their own independence? And the fact that they chose to be an Islamic Republic, that was their choice. That wasn't imposed upon them from the outside. I do see some parallels with the American Revolution of 1776 — again, throwing off a colonial empire and trying to become a state independent of that colonizer. At the root of all this, that is what enrages the West — that Iran dares to be independent. Because it's not, you know, it wasn't a creature or creation of China or Russia or space aliens. It was organic to Iran. And while, you know, the West may not like that, that's the reality. And I think we all learn to accept that.

## **#Nima**

Larry, here is what CNN just reported — that the White House correspondents say J.D. Vance and the American delegation have not yet departed Washington, D.C. for Islamabad. It's contrary to what Donald Trump said. He said they're going over there and they're going to get there in a few hours. And, you know, it's so amazing, Larry, because Donald Trump — yesterday, it was yesterday — he said that J.D. Vance is not going to go there because of the security issues. You remember they had the same story before for the first round of negotiations. He repeated that. Then later on, we learned from Caroline Levitt that she said he's going to be there, he's going to lead the delegation. Right. There is something happening within the administration. Don't try to come out without talking with anybody, making these sort of arguments.

## **#Larry**

Yeah, we ought to update the George M. Cohan song — "Over There, over there, J.D. Vance, here he comes, over there." Sorry. This is absurd.

## **#Larry**

Trump is trying, you know, a lot of this is just manipulation of the market. You know, and it's still going on today. I mean, I cannot believe these people on Wall Street, they bought into this crap that, oh, peace is at hand. Oh, the Iranians are going to surrender any minute. No, they're not.

Newsflash. You know, Trump is caught. Trump is seeking an exit strategy. But he doesn't want to have to admit that he's wrong and has been wrong all along. But that's going to be the only way out. I don't see Iran doing anything. I would advise Iran not to do anything to help Donald Trump save face. Screw him. He brought this on for no other reason. The faces of those 168 little girls that were murdered on February 28th — that should burn forever in the hearts and minds of the Iranian people.

The United States must pay for that. And that means no concessions to the United States on that. They murdered those children. And it is the United States — whatever — they can't, the United States, in my view, cannot be trusted to make an agreement that will ensure Iran's security, short of eliminating all U.S. troops that are in the Gulf states. You know, that is, you know, you're asking about the 10-point plan. That's one of the demands — to have security guarantees — and they don't necessarily tie it to the troop presence. But once you eliminate U.S. bases, you're going to make it then impossible for the United States to attack Iran, unless they start building up on those bases. So that gives Iran some warning — okay, something, they're coming after us.

## **#Nima**

There was a phone call, Larry, moments ago between the Iranian foreign minister and the foreign minister of Pakistan. And they're trying to do it, as I told you — they're trying to do their best to convince Iran to go to Islamabad. And Donald Trump — here's what Donald Trump just said — that if the ceasefire expires, lots of bombs will be dropping on Iran. So we're literally getting back to war.

## **#Larry**

Yeah.

## **#Nima**

And I don't know what else do they have right now, because we've learned a new aircraft carrier is heading to the Middle East. Gerald Ford is getting back — we had that in the news. I don't know where that is right now.

## **#Larry**

But supposedly in the Red Sea somewhere, which I was surprised by. Because if I were them, I'd get the hell out of the Red Sea as fast as possible. Because when this goes hot — and it will go hot again, it's not a matter of if — then the Houthis have vowed that they will target the Gerald Ford. It's going to take some significant disaster, like the sinking of one of the aircraft carriers, even one of the destroyers, and the deaths of some U.S. sailors, that will finally, finally wake up the other

political leaders in the United States to tell Trump, "You gotta stop this now. You can't continue this," because the last thing the United States is in a position to do is to get embroiled in another war overseas that's going to last for months, if not years.

## **#Nima**

Donald Trump came out yesterday praising Israel for what they're doing in helping the United States. But do you see any sort of sign that Israel is doing something in that direction? It seems that they're so preoccupied with the situation on the Lebanese border that they're not that much involved in this war against Iran.

## **#Larry**

No, look, they're too busy destroying statues of Jesus. They're still too busy trying to destroy Christian symbols, Islamic symbols. I mean, it's disgusting. They are a despicable culture. This is... it is... And the good news is it's starting to awaken some outrage in the United States. You know, they went after, you know, three weeks ago on Palm Sunday, celebrated within, I'll call it Western Christianity as opposed to the Eastern Orthodox. You know, they shut, they closed the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Well, you know, that church has been around, let's see, 2,000 years. Or 1900, about 354 A.D., after the death of Christ. So it was built in the 4th century. So here we are 17 centuries later.

## **#Larry**

And they're attacking that. So it is the animus by these Zionist maniacs that is the heart of the issue. They continue to attack Palestinian Christians, Palestinian Muslims. Doesn't matter. They've been going after Palestinian Christians very intently. And Trump lets it happen.