

# Iran ATTACKS US Warship & UAE in DIRE Warning to Trump | Johnson & Wilkerson

Larry Johnson and Col. Lawrence Wilkerson join the show to discuss Iran's retaliation in the Strait of Hormuz, hitting UAE's top oil port and numerous cargo ships as Trump's Project Freedom goes up in flames. <https://sonar21.com/> Larry Johnson's blog LIKE the video and Subscribe for more in-depth geopolitical analysis Leave your thoughts in the comments below! Support the Channel: Patreon: <https://www.patreon.com/dannyhaiphong> SUBSCRIBE ON RUMBLE: Rumble: <https://rumble.com/c/DannyHaiphong> Follow Me on Social Media: Twitter: <https://twitter.com/DannyHaiphong> Telegram: <https://t.me/DannyHaiphong> Support the channel in other ways: <https://www.buymeacoffee.com/dannyhaiphong> Substack: [chroniclesofhaiphong.substack.com](https://chroniclesofhaiphong.substack.com) Cashapp: \$Dhaiphong Venmo: @dannyH2020 Paypal: <https://paypal.me/spiritho> #trump #iran #iranwar

## #Danny

Welcome, everyone. Welcome back to the show. It's your host, Danny Haiphong. As you can see, I am joined by good friends of the show, former CIA analyst Larry Johnson and former chief of staff to Colin Powell and retired Army Colonel Lawrence Wilkerson. Gentlemen, thanks so much for joining me today.

## #Larry Johnson

Yeah, looking at us, it looks like there's been an escape from the nursing home.

## #Danny

Youthful spirits always, though.

## #Larry Johnson

Look at these old guys running around. I certainly feel that way. Yeah, but Larry's good colonel is much better preserved. Yeah, right.

## #Danny

Well, we got a lot of wisdom here in the room today, and we need it. We definitely need it because we need help, gentlemen, understanding what has just transpired in the last several hours. When I

woke up today—maybe we can begin with you, Larry—I had reports coming in from Iranian media saying that Iran had struck, or at least fired upon, a U.S. Navy patrol boat that had violated the navigation rules of the Strait of Hormuz, the new mechanism that Iran has implemented.

And then not some hours later, we have reports that in the UAE, there's a cargo ship burning off the coast. And then there have been reports from the UAE itself of the port of Fujairah and its petroleum industrial zone reporting a massive fire that was caused by a drone attack. And some others say maybe it was cruise missiles and drones that were fired there. And so, a massive warning, it seems, and Iran has said as much—that it is warning the United States that what it has declared Project Freedom, Donald Trump's Project Freedom, is a violation of the ceasefire. So maybe, Larry, help us understand what's happened in the last 24 hours and whether you believe the war has officially restarted given these developments.

## **#Larry Johnson**

Well, I'll answer the last first. Yes, it's restarted. It's just, this is all a ruse by Trump. So, you know, on Friday, the end of the 60 days of the War Powers Act, at which point Congress would have to vote to approve continuing the war or say, okay, bring the boys home, and they'd have up to 30 days to do that. Instead, Trump preempted that by saying, hey, war's over, we won. So Operation Epic Fury, man, it was epic. We're done. We're no longer furious. Thirty-six hours later, oh, we got a new operation going. It's called Operation Project Freedom. This one, we're going to establish freedom of navigation in the Persian Gulf. No, completely, entirely new. Now, this is a travesty. It's not even an intelligent way to try to get a workaround on the War Powers Act, because the War Powers Act stipulates that when you start deploying the troops, that's when the clock starts.

Well, these troops have already been deployed there now for 64 days, 65 days. Take that back. So it's Trump playing games. The Iranians, they've revised their 10-point plan up to a 14-point plan, and the 14-point plan is now tougher. And it shortens the deadline for the U.S. to agree to it. It says that they're not going to talk about anything related to nukes and enrichment until there is a solid peace agreement in hand. In fact, they reserve the right to basically do whatever they want to do in accordance with their rights as a signatory to the Non-Proliferation Treaty and to their openness to accepting IAEA inspectors. So, you know, Trump's notion that he's going to put U.S. Navy ships into the Strait of Hormuz to, quote, open it up.

I'm not even sure what the hell that means. Because if we want to define what it means to open the Strait of Hormuz, that means you've removed every potential threat that could damage a ship. That means you've removed mines. You've removed underwater drones. You've removed the mini-submarines which fire torpedoes. You've eliminated the surface drones. You've eliminated the air drones. Then you've eliminated the coastal defense cruise missiles that are stored away back in caves. And you've eliminated short-range ballistic missiles and intermediate-range ballistic missiles. Well, newsflash, the only way you can do all of that is you would have to deploy a major land force along with a major naval force that would end up taking significant casualties.

And the land force would be of such a size that you would have to be able to penetrate anything about 150 to 200 miles into the interior of Iran in order to scoop up all the potential sites where they could fire drones, cruise missiles, and ballistic missiles from. That ain't going to happen, okay? Ain't going to happen. So the Strait of Hormuz is not going to be open no matter what the United States does. The only way to guarantee it's open, other than the military option I just laid out, is Iran says, "Come on through. We're not going to shoot. And with our buddies here in Oman, we're going to divide up the money. It's going to be a nice cash-making opportunity." So that's where we stand.

## **#Danny**

Yeah, Colonel Wilkerson, your reaction to these developments?

## **#Lawrence Wilkerson**

Well, I got some information. I don't know how reliable it is. It makes sense to me, so I assigned it a little bit of reliability. J.D. Vance vouchsafed the view, a very sound view, that why are we doing this? Because we had traffic about to flow, if it weren't already, slowly through the Strait of Hormuz under essentially Iranian guardianship or overwatch, if you will. And what we have done is declared something we can't possibly fulfill. And we'll find that out forthwith, very swiftly. And that is going to be to our disadvantage majorly because it is going to impact the global economy seriously. It's going to impact the price of oil, et cetera, et cetera.

We've all heard these arguments. J.D. Vance is right. You had a situation, and that situation could have been spun off into some real talks instead of these silly things that they've been doing on the U. S. side—silly things to this point. It could have been spun off into maybe some serious talks. Instead, what we've done is claim we're going to do something we can't do, which has caused the Iranians to do something that they essentially can do, which is going to block traffic in the Strait, which makes absolutely no sense. So you see why I say I believe J.D. Vance probably did say something like this.

## **#Danny**

Yeah. And Larry, what does it mean for Iran? You know, usually I'm used to, especially during this February 28th strike and the 12-day war—but let's just keep up every 20th—I'm used to waking up and hearing that the United States and Israel have made the first move. But here, Iran has essentially made a major response in reaction to what it says are violations of its terms for the Strait of Hormuz and its mechanisms. What does it mean for the broader picture here, for Iran to take this step and make good on its warnings like this?

## **#Larry Johnson**

Well, actually, Iran again is reacting to what the United States did. The United States imposed the blockade, and then it illegally boarded ships that were even outside the territorial waters. They're in international waters. The United States had no authority, no legal right to do that. So the United States, as Trump admitted, committed an act of piracy. And so now Iran's retaliating, and they're daring the United States: if you want to keep up and escalate the retaliation, we're ready. They're ready to climb that escalation ladder. And as Colonel Wilkerson correctly noted, the one that holds the cards here is Iran. You know, Trump likes to pretend that he holds all the cards.

There has been some genuine delusion going on in terms of, and I think it stems from Israel, that the CIA is passing on liaison intelligence to— you know, the CIA doesn't have any good sources within Iran. So Israel said, oh, we got these excellent sources, we got the inside skinny on what's going on in Iran. And the reality is there is great disarray in the leadership. The leadership doesn't agree, they don't know who's in charge. Well, that's a lie. And the reason I say it's a lie is when you consider that Raisi, when you look at the period 1980–88, the Iraq War against Iran, in that war, Raisi, the president, he was a medic, he was assigned to the IRGC. You have Araghchi, foreign minister, IRGC. Qalibaf, the head of the legislature, IRGC. The Ayatollah Khamenei.

IRGC. These guys are all part of sort of the same overall unit. Now, I'm not saying that they were all fighting together, but as Colonel Wilkerson knows, when you're with a group of Army officers and you all fought in your formative years as young lieutenants or captains in Vietnam, then when you're later on a bunch of old farts, you know, there's a bond there. There's a bond there that doesn't exist just from civilians in general. That's what's going on in Iran. I would argue right now in Iran you have a stronger, united leadership than at any time in their 46-year history. You've never had a cadre of leaders that all came out of that formative experience of a war with Iraq.

## **#Lawrence Wilkerson**

Yeah, Benny, I listened to John Mearsheimer earlier this morning, and I think John was spot on with regard to what Larry just said. I think the question was asked of him by an Australian interrogator. OK, the Wall Street Journal says this. The Wall Street Journal says this. GDP has just tanked. Inflation is off the charts. There's no money. There's no way to purchase things that you need to survive and so forth in Iran. And FDD, the Israeli think tank that's taken over from AIPAC in many respects, was amplifying this message. And John just said, and I think John is right in this regard, it doesn't mean anything to the Iranians.

They have shown you that they are willing because you are presenting an existential threat to them. And what Larry just said is how that existential threat is interpreted by people like Araghchi and Parzeshkian and others in Iran who've been through this kind of thing before. What do you think the bloodiest war in the region in 100 years was for the Iranians with regard to the Iran-Iraq war? This is even more in their face existential. And it's after 40-plus years of our doing that periodically and Israel doing it pretty much full-time. So you are not going to break these people's resilience.

## **#Danny**

Larry, is there any factual basis to the U.S. right now claiming that they have hit six Iranian fast ships in this skirmish? Because, you know, oftentimes what we have is CENTCOM reporting things with very little evidence for them. And then often, CENTCOM, especially on X, claims that anything Iran says is false. So what's the truth here with regard to this development? Because this seems to be the U.S. attempting to look strong here in the face of this retaliation.

## **#Larry Johnson**

Well, how could the United States destroy six boats since the Iranian Navy was already obliterated? Air Force, Navy, everything. Yeah, yeah. So, okay, right off the bat. But we can acknowledge that the United States has engaged in a massive propaganda effort, not so much to deceive the enemy, but to deceive the American people, you know, convince the American people that, you know, this new Coke, it's really good, it tastes good. And people are going like, "Tastes like horse piss," you know. "No, no, the horse piss is good for you." Look, no amount of marketing is going to change the reality on the ground.

And so let's just look at the reality. Can a U.S. naval vessel, a destroyer or a cruiser, sail effortlessly through the Strait of Hormuz? I say no. And let's see if that can happen. The Pentagon and CENTCOM have been routinely lying throughout this entire 65-day adventure. You know, we're told that no drones or missiles hit the Abraham Lincoln. That turned out not to be true. That 30-hour fire on board the Gerald R. Ford from too much laundry lint—yeah, that makes a lot of sense. The fire on board this one destroyer that knocked out its navigation system, the whole thing.

You know, as Andrei Martyanov noted, he goes, that sounds like that may have been something more like a missile hitting it. That would have disabled it. So we're not admitting to casualties, we're not admitting to losses, and we're doing a little bit like what we did in the early days of Russia's special military operation, where we had this "Ghost of Kyiv," this amazing fighter pilot for the Ukrainian Air Force who downed six Russian jets, and then it turned out he was a character from a video game. And I think we're getting a lot of sort of video game spillover here that is exaggerating what has taken place. We'll know in the next few days if they open the strait up. And we'll find out, no, the United States cannot, does not have the ability to open up the strait. And the only one that can do that is Iran. And it'll be up to Iran to decide who gets to go through and who doesn't.

## **#Danny**

Well, I'll just add this back up here. Donald Trump posted this in the last 12 hours or so on his Truth Social. Essentially, the United States—everything is 100% operational, while Iran has been completely destroyed. This despite all of the activity that has occurred, what CENTCOM is calling the Arabian Gulf. But, Colonel Wilkerson, to you, any reactions?

## **#Lawrence Wilkerson**

Well, that's always been a huge argument, even within military channels. All the way back to 1984, when I first got introduced to the region at U.S. CINCPAC. Now, whatever the hell they're calling it—INSCOM, Pacific Indian Ocean Command, whatever.

## **#Larry Johnson**

Indo-PACOM.

## **#Lawrence Wilkerson**

Indo-PACOM, yeah. Certain people, even within the U.S. military—and I wouldn't call them Arabists; there were a few of those—but wanted to call it the Arabian Gulf because that's what Saudi Arabia wanted, and after all, they were our ally. And others said, no, it's historically the Persian Gulf. It's going to be the Persian Gulf. Well, that's the people on the other side of the Gulf—terrible people. It sort of sums up the stupidity with which we've dealt with the region for over half a century. If you look at what is happening, what Larry just described, for example, what Larry said, maybe going back to a previous podcast—the only way you could do what Donald Trump is saying, with all this bullshit he's putting out, is by landing forces on Iran and marching through the country and doing what you say you have done, which you haven't done.

And they're not going to do that. God forbid if they do, because there'll be a lot of dead Americans. Some dead Iranians too, but a lot of dead Americans. So all this posturing, all this beginning again and stopping and beginning again—the War Powers Resolution is part of it—but it is also because, Danny, he does not know what to do. He doesn't have a clue. The other thing that came out of the reliable source about J.D. Vance's weigh-in was just that very thing. Now, Vance did not say that to the president's face, but the implication in this meeting was that you want out, we know you want out, but we don't know how to get you out.

And we don't know how to get you out, in particular because you keep doubling down, in a sense, and making things worse. Now, I don't know if it happened in that kind of trenchant way, but I think the president is becoming a bit desperate because he can't fashion a way out of this. The more desperate he becomes, the more of this kind of stuff he puts out. But the bottom line is he doesn't know how to get out of the mess that he has let Bibi Netanyahu get him into. And at the same time you say that, you have to say, look at what Bibi continues to do—not just on the West Bank, not just in Gaza, but in Lebanon—to the extent that now you're having Haaretz run headlines that are just purely racist. Bull.

I mean, you've got a headline this morning that, okay, I've given permission for the IDF to shoot Palestinians, kill them dead, but don't shoot any of those settlers. In fact, when you go in there, make sure you're with the settler and you're killing the Palestinians. Kneecap them at best, but kill

them if you want to. These are orders going out now in the West Bank, and I'm sure it's worse in Lebanon. So that's where we are. We're in this messy situation in Lebanon and Gaza and elsewhere. And Trump knows not how to get out. And even if he were to figure out a way to get out, what would Bibi Netanyahu do? His damndest to pull him right back in. So he's got himself in a royal mess.

## **#Danny**

And we're hearing reports out of CNN, Larry, that this royal mess might get worse, as the U.S. and Israel are supposedly planning strikes within the next 24 hours on Iran—at least, that's coming from, I think, sources from the UAE to CNN.

## **#Larry Johnson**

Well, they've got—look, the war plans, they've been in place. They've got the targets all lined up. They've had that in place now for two weeks. So it's just a matter of waiting for the decision to launch. But within that, they haven't, I think, fully taken into account the upgrades that Iran has made in its air defense system. Iran has done, over the last three weeks, they've done two separate—what I call live-fire tests of their air defense system. So, you know, clearly they've got something new, and their ability to engage planes that will be flying over the Persian Gulf, I think, has increased. So, you know, as soon as... Iran has not yet started to pepper Israel or the other U.S. bases with drones, missiles, but that's coming. And they've also promised they've got a new surprise in store for the West.

I have no idea what that is, but they've been pretty adamant that, yeah, they've got a new kind of weapons system that they have yet to employ. So this is, you know, the United States is now—we're caught. The only way out is for Trump to do what Trump will not do, which is admit error, admit defeat, try to put the lipstick on the pig the best they can and walk away. But no, they're going to keep doubling down. It's the old sunk cost fallacy. And, you know, like the blackjack player who keeps borrowing money from the house to keep losing hands. But Iran, you know, it got a voice, a strong vote of endorsement, both from Russia and from China. You saw what China did yesterday, you know, instructed all of its banks and refineries, "Hey, for those U.S. sanctions, tell Donald Trump to shove it up his ass. No, we ignore him. We're not paying attention to it." Oh, that should be an interesting conversation if Trump decides to go to China.

## **#Danny**

Right, if he gets there.

## **#Larry Johnson**

Yeah, and I don't think he will. But the Chinese now, they're done playing the U.S. game. They're not going to kowtow, as it were, to Washington, D.C. and to Donald Trump. Similarly, it was Putin that took the initiative. He called up Trump and basically said, you know, you better not invade, put ground troops into Iran. If you do, it's going to create a much bigger problem, and I don't think you want a much bigger problem. You know, it wasn't so much a threat as just a warning to, hey, be aware that if you do this, something bad—you know, it's like if you touch the hot stove, you're going to get burned. So Iran enjoys that advantage. And then you've got Biden. God, what a dummy.

I mean, really, this man is purported to be this real smart intellect running our economy. The guy is a moron. He keeps indulging himself with all these fantasies that, oh, we've crushed the Iranian economy, they have no other option. Dude, they've got six lanes of traffic coming in from Pakistan, okay? They've made more money in the past two months off this war than they did in the previous year. So just enough with your nonsense that he thinks he has isolated Iran and hasn't, but has convinced Trump, just a little more effort, we got him. That's all, just a little more. That's why Trump is caught. He doesn't have anybody other than J.D. Vance who is willing to tell him the truth.

## **#Lawrence Wilkerson**

I think he's got a few in the Pentagon now. That's another thing I'm hearing, a little bit more solid now, who are saying, this is stupid. This is really stupid. You need to figure out a way to get out of this. We need to figure out a way to get out of this.

## **#Danny**

Yeah, well, how about we look at some data? You know, what's so interesting is, with all the developments that have happened in the last 24 hours, it appeared what Donald Trump was trying to do in the beginning of all of this was to lower oil prices, which actually temporarily went down for, I don't know, some hours. But this announcement by CENTCOM came before all the reports of the ships being hit and the Fujairah port being hit by Iran. CENTCOM says that they had guided missile destroyers currently operating in the Arabian Gulf after transiting the Strait of Hormuz in support of Project Freedom. American forces are actively assisting efforts to restore transit for commercial shipping as a first step, blah blah blah. But anyway, this is actually the data which shows that, if you look at the map here, there were absolutely no ships that were transiting the Strait of Hormuz over that period.

So maybe some actual lying going on. But, you know, Larry, your reaction to this, because if the United States goes through and Israel goes through with strikes, and you just said that there are surprises up Iran's sleeve, they have a lot more gas in the tank to continue fighting. The economic situation is really bad right now. I mean, it's the numbers across the board—gas prices, prices for everything. And of course, you know, the impact politically it's having on the U.S. administration is set to get much worse, I believe. So why then go through with this at this time and in this way?

## **#Larry Johnson**

Yeah, well, that's where the real failure of the Trump administration comes in. They are not taking into account the massive economic collapse that is coming to your neighborhood soon. Right. We're not just talking about the contraction, you know, loss of 20% of the world's oil supply over the last 60 days. You know, so that's gone, and that hasn't been replaced. So you've got to subtract that. Subtract the urea that was for fertilizer, you know, upwards of 35%. Again, that's not replaceable. The liquefied natural gas, 25%, not replaceable. The loss of helium, not replaceable. Same with sulfuric acid, not replaceable.

The problem is that with the cutoff of the Strait of Hormuz that took place starting February 28th, there were already ships on the ocean sailing filled with these products that there's now a shortage of. So not everybody was immediately affected. And I've described, you know, if you use the tsunami imagery, you're sitting on the beach, you're sitting there, and the waves all of a sudden, the water starts running out to the ocean, opening up this massive expanse of beach. And you go, oh, that looks pretty good. That's your sign from God to run for your life, okay? Get your ass out of the beach chair, head for the high ground, because there's going to be a flood of water coming back in.

That flood has started this week. It's starting to flow back in, and we're seeing it down where I am. Gasoline has gone up 50 cents in the last five days, and it keeps going up every day. In fact, on Saturday I checked and it was at \$3.96 a gallon. And then I drove by the station yesterday. As I drove by, there was one of the employees out on his knees putting up, now it's \$3.98, just adding two cents. And that has an effect. My wife, when she was filling up, said she heard a lot of the people at the pumps around her bitching about it. So Trump has got himself a major problem, and we're not as bad off here in Florida as some folks are up in the Midwest.

## **#Danny**

We're on the West Coast.

## **#Larry Johnson**

Oh yeah.

## **#Danny**

Horrible.

## **#Larry Johnson**

Yeah, so when the full impact of this economy hits, all of the lies that have been told—because we've seen it in the spot market, the spot market for oil, the paper, they call it the oil futures paper—

they've been lying their ass off about that for 60 days. Go back and look at what they said. The oil futures, what the oil was going to cost in May, they were saying was like \$80. Well, what is it now? \$140 if you're actually buying it off the ship. Because the paper means nothing. It's part of market manipulation to get people lulled into, "Oh, this isn't as bad as it is." Folks, it's worse than what it appears. Much, much worse.

## **#Lawrence Wilkerson**

And that's what the Wall Street Journal is all about. They're trying their damndest to deflect some of this and to convince people it's not happening. Sorry, people are going to tell you it's happening pretty soon.

## **#Larry Johnson**

Yeah, this is like that scene out of the movie *\*Police Story\**. Frank Drebin is standing there, behind him the building's in flames, explosions and rockets are shooting out. There's just complete chaos, and he's standing there saying, "Nothing to see here. Move along. Nothing to see here." That's where we are.

## **#Danny**

Yeah, I've seen prices as high for gas in California—northern California, southern California—upwards of \$6.60. Here in New York, I took pictures on consecutive days out here in New York City of a gas station near where I live. It went up from \$4.23 the day before to \$4.45 the next day. So we're seeing massive increases just by the day, which, Larry, I totally believe you that there are many people who are very angry about this, who don't necessarily get heard. But, you know, Colonel Wilkerson, I want to ask you, what's the rush right now for the United States and Israel?

Because if I were to think in terms of realpolitik, given the balance of forces situation, both on the battlefield and in terms of the worldwide economic situation, it would seem to be in the U.S.'s interest, and even in Israel's interest, to maybe take a pause like they did during the 12-day war—take an actual pause like they claim to be doing during this recent ceasefire. But it doesn't seem like we're headed in that direction, and it seems like we're actually now fully back on. So what's the rush here for them?

## **#Lawrence Wilkerson**

I think Netanyahu is like a man who is running toward a precipice, and he leaps, and he's hanging in the air above the precipice. Maybe it's 500 feet down to the rocks in the ocean below. And that's where he is politically. In terms of war in Lebanon, he's losing his rear end. I think I heard the other day from a friend who used to be in the IDF, now lives in this country, and he said some of the people he still knows in the IDF who are in Lebanon are really kind of amazed that they haven't

done something differently, because they are still trying to do the same kinds of things, using their forces in the same manner, getting worse every day with regard to that use. And they're not making any headway, and they're losing people. And I said, well, how many people are you losing? He said, well, just look at the official figures and multiply it by three.

It's that bad? Yeah, it's that bad. And it's in equipment, it's in personnel, it's in morale in particular. And what's happening, of course, is you have—when you have a force that's been on garrison duty as long as that force has, some 20-plus years—and you suddenly confront conflict. And a lot of these people are just confronting it seriously in Lebanon because they got called up in the last tranche, and they haven't had any experience of real combat in a long time, if ever. And so the post-traumatic stress is off the charts. The suicide rate is off the charts. They've even quit reporting legitimate figures to IDF headquarters. In the past, they were giving everything pretty accurately as to how this was occurring and how much it was debilitating their ability to prosecute the war.

Now they're kind of obscuring it, just like they're obscuring the damage above ground in Israel from Iran's constant barrages before now. And that's another point. They're going to go back to that again very shortly if Israel doesn't. There is no ceasefire in Lebanon. There is no ceasefire. The Iranians are absolutely right about that. Israel violates the ceasefire every stinking hour of every stinking day. So Iran's going to go back to hitting them again if they don't do something different in Lebanon. And if this starts up again, if we, in fact, Israel and the United States hanging over the precipice, as it were, go back to bombing again, Iran's going to go back to what they were doing before, probably times three or four. So we're looking at the state of Israel being wiped out.

## **#Danny**

Hmm. Yeah, well, Larry, maybe you can help us understand what that would look like then, because we already have the impact of what transpired in the hostilities that Iran was a part of—the retaliation—which many are saying, the impact of that, especially in the energy realm, is just starting to be felt. And now we're kind of catching up to it. But the United States appears ready to absorb, or at least maybe not ready but willing to accumulate, these costs. What kind of costs are we talking about here? Donald Trump is willing. Yeah, Donald Trump. The warmongers in Washington seem more than willing. Everyone else, no.

## **#Larry Johnson**

Well, we've got to look at what's happening to U.S. debt under Donald Trump. When he took office January 21st, 2025, the total debt was \$37 trillion. And in the next 11, 12 months, that figure went up another trillion dollars, to \$38 trillion. Then in the ensuing 77 days, it went up another trillion. When you are losing aircraft, like on that day when they effected the rescue of the colonel who was riding in the back seat of that F-15, the U.S. lost almost half a billion dollars in aircraft that day.

They've lost, as CNN detailed, the damage done to the various military bases, not counting the radars. You know, it was literally multiple billions. And when you count the radars, again, at least two radars that cost more than a billion dollars apiece went out.

Then they've now deployed the new cruise missile, or a new hypersonic missile—the only hypersonic missile in the U.S. inventory—called the Dark Eagle. That runs for a cool \$44 million apiece. And what's so great about the Dark Eagle is it's half as fast as the Russian Kinzhal, and it's eight times more expensive than the Russian Kinzhal. So, picking up a pattern here: we make it worse and make it more expensive. And so they've been able to produce, I think, close to 10 of those. So we're up now another half billion. So half billion here, half billion there—pretty soon it adds up to real money. And to top it off, the United States—one of the motivations that I think Colonel Wilkerson's referring to among the officers at the Pentagon—they're saying, don't do this anymore.

We need to stop. We need to back away, because we have depleted critical weapons systems, and they are not able—and I'll say this—they cannot replace them now because they use rare earth minerals that China controls, and China is not sending us the rare earth minerals. Therefore, you can't build the weapons. And they're also misrepresenting—I guess another word for that is lying—about the actual extent of the loss. For example, they said with the Patriot missile battery, they're down 50%. Nonsense. They're down 90%. It may be as high as 95%. It's that high, because the math on it just doesn't work. When you start off with, let's say, the grand total produced as of the end of 2025 was 6,420.

## **#Larry Johnson**

So strip 2,000 of those away. Those went to foreign military sales. Strip another 1,000 away. That went to Ukraine. That's gone. Then figure out what number. So that leaves you with roughly half—3,310—from what we started with. And then when you realize that 3,310 missiles, or let's just call it 3,400 to make it easy, those PAC-3 missiles, you've got to shoot two of those to take down one incoming threat. So you've got 3,400. That means you can handle 1,700 ballistic missiles, cruise missiles, or drones.

Well, how many—and this is as of last June—how many missiles did Iran fire during the 12-day war? We know how many they fired during this latest one: 4,000. So please explain to me how, when you've only got enough missiles to shoot down 1,700 and they're shooting 4,000, guess what? The math doesn't work. And that's where they're lying. And it's not a matter of saying, well, let's just encourage the factory to churn out more. They don't have what they need to build it. God, this is not complicated, but the lying about it just goes on and on and on.

## **#Danny**

Mm-hmm. Yeah. And now we have, you know, this—look, Colonel Wilkerson, you said earlier, you used the word “desperate.” These are Donald Trump's latest musings on Truth Social, literally as

we've been speaking here. Iran has taken shots, he says, at unrelated nations with respect to the ship movement, Project Freedom, including a South Korean cargo ship. Perhaps it's time for South Korea to join the mission. We've shot down seven small boats, or as they call them, fast boats. It's all they have left. Other than the South Korean ship, there has been, at this moment, no damage through the strait. Secretary of War Pete Hegseth and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Dan Cain will have a news conference tomorrow morning. Thank you for your attention to this matter. So what do you make of it? I mean, this feels like desperation. It feels like an attempt—a really, I think, sad attempt—to cool things down as social media and, of course, news reports start to heat up about the activity happening here.

## **#Lawrence Wilkerson**

Well, now the South Koreans can say, well, give us our dads back and we'll do something for you. This is a fruitless cry for allied help in a mission that everyone—I mean, even the elementary school students in greater metropolitan Seoul—know this is a stupid war, a war of choice, an idiotic war, a war begged by Bibi Netanyahu. And by the way, Bibi doesn't have a very high standing in the world right now, even in places like Korea and so forth. So everybody knows this now. I mean, it's common knowledge that that's what's happening. The idea that any ally is going to come to our assistance in what is a fruitless and ultimately idiotic war in this region is nonsense. So he can tweet and twist arms behind backs and everything else.

He's not going to get anything out of it. I doubt very seriously, as Larry intimated, and I think he's right, I doubt very seriously he's going to go to Beijing. And if he went to Beijing, I think he would get a pretty frosty reception, and it wouldn't be a good deal for Donald Trump. So in any event, I don't think he's going to go. I hope he does, because I feel like he might actually get his eyes opened to a certain extent as to how much the most powerful country in the world is opposed to what he's doing in private meetings or whatever. The same thing, for example, that Putin delivered, but up close and personal, in his press conference that he had immediately after his meeting with Foreign Minister Abbas Sargai.

I think what we're looking at is total isolation for the United States and Israel. They're alone. And if they start this up again, if they do go ahead together and bomb targets and run again, that isolation is going to be just deep. They're going to find themselves on the world stage without a single solitary person giving a crap about what they're doing, or otherwise very much opposed to what they're doing and getting further and further away from Donald Trump and his nonsense, um, and further and further away from America too. And that's not good for us right now because we are, as Larry has said, we're getting ready probably to plunge into not just recession, but depression.

## **#Larry Johnson**

Yeah.

## **#Danny**

Yeah, and with regard to this meeting that is scheduled, or at least has been surmised to be scheduled around May 14th, you know, Larry, China likes to treat their guests well. They often roll out the red carpet, especially for partners in countries they believe are going to engage in some kind of mutual benefit between the two countries. But now Trump and The Hill and all kinds of other mainstream media outlets have talked about Trump holding very few cards. Well, Donald Trump seems to not understand what cards are. He posted this on – actually, this was on the White House Twitter – this AI-generated image of him holding up UNO cards, not understanding that all of those cards essentially mean you're losing the game.

But they're wild cards. Wild cards. Very typical of Trump to get these kinds of things wrong. But maybe you can talk about this, because Donald Trump in the United States is often talking about how they hold all the cards against Iran, basically on the world stage. But now as we head up, lead up to this meeting, most observers, even those elite observers, are saying that actually the United States under Trump right now does not appear to have very many cards when they go to China. And Iran could be a big part of why that is. So maybe you can help us understand this.

## **#Larry Johnson**

Well, let's just make it very simple. What is it that the United States makes, produces, manufactures that China needs? The answer is nothing. There are things that China wants, but does, you know, soybeans? Yeah, you know, they'll buy some soybeans. But you know what? Brazil can give them more soybeans at a better price, perhaps. Same thing with wheat, corn, some agricultural products. But again, it's not essential. Whereas, flip the question: what is it that China makes that the United States absolutely needs? Oh, boy. Well, you start with the rare earth minerals. You start with magnets.

So there are a lot of critical items in industry. I think generators and transformers are another area. So the United States actually needs some things that China has. So they've got leverage right off the bat. Some of the memes that are popping up online that the Iranians are making are just hilarious, and they're brutal. They've got one that features Donald Trump sitting on the floor wearing adult Depends, and he's playing with toy soldiers while Pete Hegseth, in a military uniform, is passed out on the couch and then, in the midst of it, throws up.

So, you know, the Iranians are sort of sending a message about exactly what they think, not to mention all the different Lego videos that keep popping up. They've got rap versions, they've got rock and roll versions. I'll tell you, these guys, I'm stunned at their abilities. It's just really remarkable and talented. They've got a whole new business area. They can hire themselves out to the Russians and to the Chinese and to the United States. I guarantee you, none of those big three

are doing anything like this in the realm of information operations. I mean, this is some powerful stuff, and it resonates, and it reaches kids. It reaches the youth, and it even reaches old farts like me.

## **#Danny**

Yeah, and all of this is having an impact. I mean, the recent polls right now, Colonel Wilkerson, have Donald Trump barely registering 30 percent approval ratings. I believe it's as far down as 32 percent in the last Ipsos poll. And these numbers keep dwindling and dwindling ever since the February 28th strike up until now. So this is May 4th now. So things are looking very bad for the Trump administration, the GOP. Some will say this doesn't matter, of course, because we have a bipartisan war machine and all of this. But at the same time, there is validity to the need for legitimacy around these things. And the United States and Donald Trump and the administration don't have any right now. What do you make of this?

## **#Lawrence Wilkerson**

Well, if you watch the hearings, particularly the ones with Hegseth, it was sort of a Republican-Democratic pile-on. The Democrats piled on a little harder than the Republicans maybe, but I didn't see anything going down that looked like there was a comfort level on the part of the Congress or the people asking the questions that resonated in any way positive. So whether you were Republican or Democrat, if you were Republican, you were kind of looking for some comfort, maybe. You were looking for some rationale, some reason, some excuses that made sense or whatever. And I don't think Hegseth was forthcoming with any of that.

I don't think Trump has been forthcoming with any of it either when he has tried to address these issues that are tearing him up, as you just indicated, with regard to the polls. Epstein being one of them. And if you think that this was supposed to get the American people's attention off Epstein, well, you gave them something that's even worse than Epstein, and that's their pocketbook, which is going to be increasingly impacted in adverse ways. So I don't see how he gets out of this internationally, globally. I don't see how he gets out of it domestically. And that really worries me because I think the man has plans. I think there are people around him like Bannon and others who have similar plans.

And I don't want to see those plans unfold domestically, but I think we're getting to the point where we might see them unfold. And what do I mean? I simply mean we are going to see a real rise. We're going to see a real brownshirt Praetorian Guard. We're going to see an effort to cancel the midterms. We're going to see an effort to, if they can't get them canceled, to twist them in ways that we haven't begun to dream of. I'm watching what they're doing with redistricting here in my own state. Look at what just happened in Virginia. We overwhelmingly in the northern part of Virginia, but by 51, 52 percent in the state. And that combined, as Jim Webb used to say, those morons who live down there in southwest Virginia.

But we combined to have a 51% plebiscite, as it were, a vote that was clear and fair, as far as I could tell, everywhere I looked. And guess what? The judges are already reversing that. And the Republican states like Texas and—what was the other one? Montana, I think. Idaho, maybe. They're all redistricting or planning on redistricting themselves. So everyone's right now just moving fast to counter each other in this business of midterm elections. So you've got that going on, too. And that's an effort to essentially, in my view, uh, compromise these elections. And then you've got the fact that, uh, we're looking at a president who I don't have any doubt whatsoever would, you know, declare the Insurrection Act for some god-awful reason and try to take over the country.

So we're at a period like we were in 1850, 1851. And it's looking, uh, rather desperate domestically as well as internationally. And they feed on each other. The one feeds on the other one. Um, look at what we just did in Germany. 5,000 troops are coming home. And I understand he made a statement the other day that maybe he would double that. And Merz is trying his best to deal with it. This is not, if you want to come home, come home, but don't do it in this fashion. So we, Danny, we don't have a single domestic or international initiative right now ongoing on this planet that makes any freaking sense in terms of our real interests.

## **#Danny**

Mm-hmm. Yeah. I mean, Larry, when it comes to the current situation, too, I've heard some even positing that the U.S. and Israel are kind of creating a Gulf of Tonkin situation in their straightforward moves now to justify escalation. But as Colonel Wilkerson just said, this is a disaster. So unlike the Gulf of Tonkin, which was an attempt to expand and escalate in Vietnam in the hopes of actually achieving victory there—which was not going to happen—but nonetheless, that was at least the vision, there doesn't seem to be any such vision here, nor any prospects. So... why set up this trap for themselves, essentially?

## **#Larry Johnson**

You have to have some force.

## **#Lawrence Wilkerson**

Yeah, you have to have some military force.

## **#Larry Johnson**

I mean, look, when the Gulf of Tonkin was passed, there was still at least majority support in this country for the war in Vietnam. Yeah. The anti-war movement really hadn't come to full fruition yet. And there were still, you know, there were still many willing to support the idea that we were fighting communism and this was stopping the dominoes from falling, all of that nonsense. But Trump is already at the stage where the anti-war movement had become the majority movement.

So he doesn't have the benefit of the doubt. And this is his own fault. He could have gone out and tried to construct a lie that people would have bought and gotten them on board.

Man, we got to do this. And, you know, he might have gotten away with that. But he didn't do that. He listened to Bibi. And so Bibi has walked him into an ambush. And, you know, Colonel Wilkerson earlier was talking about how Bibi's run off the cliff and he's caught in midair. Yeah, that's Wile E. Coyote, okay? That's Wile E. Coyote from the Road Runner series. And with the difference being, I think Wile E. Coyote is far more clever and intelligent than Bibi Netanyahu. But just from a cartoon character standpoint, it's anything but a joke what's going on in Israel right now. They've doubled down on, "Hey, I got a great idea. Let's see how many Christians we can attack."

Let's really alienate the Christian world. And that is not playing well here in the United States. They attacked a nun. This one settler attacked a French nun the other day from behind. They burned and destroyed a Catholic church in Lebanon. They have been desecrating icons and other representations of Jesus. And then they shut down the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Israel is building a reputation for being anti-Christian that is starting to resonate in the United States. And they're losing their appeal. There's a Democratic Senate candidate up in Maine, an Army veteran. Looks like he's going to sweep to victory. And he's, you know, AIPAC shows up and he tells them, get lost.

I'm not interested in your money. So there's more and more of that. Thomas Massie, he'll win easily in Kentucky. And sort of on the good news front, you've got Ben Shapiro and his group, The Daily Wire, man, they're going down the toilet. They've had to lay off 50% of their staff. Their audience has just shrunk to nothing. Because people are sick and tired of saying, we've got to put Israel first. No. Israel can get in line with all the other countries. If it serves our interests, fine, we'll do it. But if it doesn't, get lost. And that's where Israel—they can't sustain themselves without the United States being fully committed to their survival.

## **#Lawrence Wilkerson**

The majority of Americans are against this war, and the majority of Americans who are against this war know who got us into it.

## **#Danny**

Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

## **#Larry Johnson**

Yeah.

## **#Danny**

Well, in the last couple of minutes or so, gentlemen, I've gotten a lot of flak on here for talking about the decline of the United States empire, now that even the New York Times is saying it in their opinion pages. But I don't think—your final comments on this—the way that the U.S. is restarting this war alongside Israel also seems to signal not just desperation, but even an inability to competently move forward on what few options they have at their disposal. Maybe you can help summarize if there's any reflection here of an empire being in decline, Colonel Wilkerson, and then, Larry, you can get the final word.

## **#Lawrence Wilkerson**

Well, I think Larry summed it up in very graphic terms. I've listened to so much—pardon me if I got into this wrong. Yeah. We don't even have enough ships to do what Donald Trump wants to do. We don't have enough ships. We couldn't possibly escort all these tankers. We couldn't possibly open the Strait of Hormuz in an effective way. We couldn't possibly do what this enterprise is supposed to do. And that's how stupid this is. It's absurd. So if you want to talk about the American empire, I'm reading a book by Jim Carrey right now. It's a marvelous book.

It's called Missouri Mule. It's about Harry Truman. It's about how Harry Truman created the committee in the Senate that saved so many taxpayer dollars during World War II. But the thing that really struck me about it—and you just look at the footnotes and look at Harry's own comments and look at the comments that FDR makes from time to time when he's angry with Truman for going too far—he realizes we have become a contractor, corporate-based entity that makes shitty products and charges a lot of money for them. And it starts here.

It starts right there with World War II. Thank God we had enough good people that we managed to get through it and supply lots of people and win the war. But now it's gotten to be exactly what we do. That's all we do. We make shitty products and charge a fortune for them. And people sending notes into your podcast or whatever saying, well, the empire has still got this, still got that—hogwash. And when you compare us with the countries in the world that do, increasingly China and Russia, then you've got a long, long road ahead to repair the broken economy.

## **#Danny**

Whatever. Larry, you want any final words as we head out of here?

## **#Larry Johnson**

You know you're in trouble when you go to somebody and say, hey, give you a choice: would you like to have dinner with me, or would you rather have a colonoscopy? And when they choose the colonoscopy, you know you've got problems, okay? And that's sort of the situation the United States is in right now. Was it Norman Vincent Peale that wrote *\*How to Win Friends and Influence People\** or something? You know, Donald Trump's writing the book on how to piss off friends and infuriate

your enemies, right? You know, so we're not people lining up saying, man, United States, we want to be with them all the way.

It is, you know, whether it's Merz in Germany, Starmer in the UK, González in España, Maloni in Italy, you know, it's quite a list—the Pope in Rome, you know. And then China, in the past, we can't emphasize enough how remarkable and unusual Xi's declaration was that, no, do not comply with these U.S. sanctions, tell them to go shove it. That shows you how irritated the Chinese are with this. And so, you know, they're fully backing Iran. So out of this, the United States, instead of establishing itself as where people want to buy and hold U.S. dollars, people are wanting to buy and hold U.S. Treasury bills—just the opposite, man. They're selling them off right and left.

These are all the symptoms of a country in decline, not in ascendancy. What is interesting, though, was Merz's desire to keep all. I published the other day a complete list of all the military bases in Germany. And the reason the Germans want to keep it is that's one of the few profit centers right now in the German economy. You know, the rest of the German economy is sucking wind. But, hey, you know, we've got Uncle Sugar over here to share some of his dollars. And it goes back to the point that Colonel Wilkerson also made, that, you know, pulling out 5,000—what's the strategy? I mean, have we come up with a strategic withdrawal plan? Absolutely not. This is more, oh, I'm taking my ball and going home.

**#Lawrence Wilkerson**

5,000 is not even a unit.

**#Larry Johnson**

Yeah.

**#Lawrence Wilkerson**

I mean, it's not even a thing that would be a unit.

**#Larry Johnson**

Yeah. It's just, you know, I've spent a lot of time.

**#Lawrence Wilkerson**

Right out of the ask.

**#Larry Johnson**

Right out of the ask. Well, I was at Stuttgart at both Patch Barracks, Kelly Barracks, a little, you know, working there with either AFRICOM or EUCOM. Yeah. You know, it's the U.S., but there really no longer is a good reason for the United States to have this presence in Germany unless we want to continue our world hegemonic activity of attacking other countries. If we're going to keep attacking other countries, then we need to be forward in Germany so that we can have a stopover place, resupply, as well as a place to bring our wounded after they get shot to shit, which is why they have Rhein-Main there. The right adjustment to Rhein-Main is Landstuhl Medical Center. So, yeah, we're witnessing the decline of empire. That's what we're living through. And this is not reversible.

## **#Lawrence Wilkerson**

Danny, I think I mentioned earlier about Xi Jinping's latest in the line of Deng Xiaoping all the way to Xi Jinping edicts. And what Larry just said is exactly what Xi Jinping said he's going to do. He's going to do it a lot quicker now, a lot quicker. He said, I've got everything I need in terms of state power, technology, culture, military, industrial base, shipbuilding. What I don't have is a major hand in the global financial system. I'm now going to have that. And between the lines, I hate those sanctions. The world hates those sanctions. How do we eliminate the sanctions? Let's take away the power of the dollar.

## **#Larry Johnson**

And who are the top ten banks in the world? The top four are all Chinese. Then you get J.P. Morgan, Citibank. Then you get a French bank, a Japanese bank, and maybe a German bank or a U.K. bank. That's it. So China is 40%. Forty percent now of the major banks in the world are controlled by the Chinese, and that trend is only going to continue.

## **#Danny**

Yeah, well, that's what actually developing industry and growing the economy can do. And I'll just end on this note. There are a lot of people who think that this consolidation of the oil trade routes, and even of oil itself, by the United States is some kind of smoking gun toward the U.S. being able to maintain its dominance. But I don't believe China, Russia, Iran, and of course any countries that are sane enough to begin aligning with them, more so outside of the U.S. orbit, are going to sit lightly and say, okay, well, the U.S. has this oil and has these routes, so we're just going to bow down now. I don't think that's how history moves and the overall trend. I believe that the more the U.S. bullies, the more the U.S. tries to starve the world, the more that we're going to see the trends that you guys just outlined here.

Buckle up, everybody. This was a great show. I want to make sure that everybody knows to hit the like button before we head out of here. I want to thank all the people who gave super chats, who

became new members. Sorry we didn't get to some of these questions, but be sure—also, I'm going to put it in the video description right now—you can follow Larry Johnson at [sonar21.com](http://sonar21.com). Also, check out—I just saw, Colonel Wilkerson, you were on Tucker Carlson's show—so you can head over to X and watch that. That seems like a great little intervention. Long story there. Yeah, yeah, yeah. I want to definitely watch that myself. Did that just come out? I think it did. I think it did. After three weeks. Yeah, yeah. Ay, ay, ay. Well, I definitely—everyone should check that out.

## **#Lawrence Wilkerson**

I can't imagine that anything I said is still irrelevant.

## **#Danny**

Oh, gee. I'm sure there's still a lot left—three weeks left of the interview.

## **#Lawrence Wilkerson**

Yeah.

## **#Danny**

That's how it goes sometimes, huh? Well, I appreciate both you guys for coming on. We're going to head out together. Hit the like button before you go. All the places to support this show, you can find Larry Johnson's blog also in the video description below. Until next time, I'll see you tomorrow at 12:30 p.m. Eastern Time with our mutual friend Scott Ritter. See you then. Bye-bye.