

Col. Larry Wilkerson: Why This War Ends the US Dollar

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#Nima

What happened yesterday, because of this Operation Freedom being announced by Donald Trump and trying to do something in the Strait of Hormuz. And here is what Pete Hegseth said, describing what happened, some part of what happened.

#Guest

Commercial ships, along with American destroyers, have already safely transited the strait, showing the lane is clear. We know the Iranians are embarrassed by this fact. They said they control the strait. They do not. So American ships led the way, commercial and military, shouldering the initial risk from the front, as Americans always do. And right now, hundreds more ships from nations around the world are lining up to transit.

#Larry

Yeah. Which way? In or out? I mean, there's about 2,000 that are waiting to go in. So I'm curious as to which way he's talking about. And I'm also curious, Nima, I've been here before. We did this, as I've said many times, we did this back in the closing year of the Iran-Iraq War, when Iran had a lot less capability than they do now, and we had a lot more capability than we do now. And it was really extremely difficult to do it even in 1988, 89. And the reason it's difficult is the geography, the size of the passages, the density of the water.

You know, I could name all manner of maritime features that make it extremely difficult to operate there. But it's a situation where, for example, we probably had three times as many ships then, maybe even more than that. If I went back and looked, I'd probably see we had even more than that. Not only that, we had ships which were more fit for escort duty. The ships we have there now, like, for example, I heard someone talking about Canberra being there. Canberra is an LCS. It's basically an anti-mine ship converted from being the boondoggle it was, a close combat ashore ship.

And so that's not a ship you want escorting either, unless your purpose is to go ahead or behind or in the middle and clear mines. You're not looking for that ship to be an escort. You're looking for that ship to be the mine clearer. So I don't know what we're talking about. We simply don't have enough ships to do what Hegseth insinuated in that little piece you played there, where he says we're prepared to escort people through. Well, there are 2,000 ships out there going north. How many are there to go south the other way? I don't know, but I suspect it's a considerable number. So how are we going to escort these ships and make sure they're safe?

How are we going to make sure there's a cordon sanitaire, if you will, around the axis of movement? And I would even say you'd almost have to do it per six or seven ships, almost like a convoy, in order to be effective. And you'd have to do it with at least 30 or 40 ships. Hell, that's the whole total we've got, including carriers. So how are they going to do this? I mean, it sounds to me like—I don't know if you saw that article in *The Atlantic* a couple of days ago, at least that's when I read it—it says essentially that Vance has been very skeptical of what the Joint Chiefs and the military in general, and Hegseth in particular, are telling Trump.

I don't know the accuracy of the piece or not, but it sounds like it might be pretty accurate. And it might be a leak. I don't know. Maybe it's a leak because they want to forge some way to say that someone in the administration, at least, was telling the president the truth. On the other hand, maybe it's just made-up stuff. But I can see Vance being this way because Vance seems to be the one member of the administration who questions, with some skepticism and forethought, some of the braggadocio that's coming out of the Pentagon and particularly out of the president himself. So I would say he's right if he's questioning this problem operation, if that's what we want to call it, because it's nonsense.

There's no way you can do this and do it effectively. So what does that mean, Nima? That means that ships, both freighters and tankers, are going to, if they do bite, they're going to take us at our word and they're going to start moving in quantity. Because it isn't going to make any sense if they move one at a time. I mean, you're going to escort one ship at a time with 2,000 of them waiting outside to go? You're going to make the situation worse than it already is. So you've got to start moving them fairly rapidly, and you've got to start moving them both north and south, both channels. That makes it even more difficult.

For example, with far less capability on Iran's part and far more capability on our part, in 1988, as I recall, in Operation Earnest Will, we essentially moved one at a time. We didn't have a whole lot to move. We didn't have 2,000 ships standing off the strait waiting to go and having been there for, what now, 60 days? So this is just logistically crazy. I don't understand what they're doing. And they're telling the American people, because I'm hearing it here, that this is Operation—what is it—Freedom Will, or whatever the hell they're calling it, and that we're going to escort these ships and make sure that they're sound and safe as they move through. Well, it only takes one, and they'll stop. They'll stop, and they won't insure, and they won't ship.

I mean, that's all it takes. We saw that with Bridgeton in Operation Earnest Will. Now, we cleared that up, got the ship out of the way, and began movement again. And the Iranians didn't have the capacity to impact the ships that were moving through the Strait—far fewer ships. And we were really using firepower on the command and control position, which was in an oil area, as I recall. And when two Iranian old World War II-type destroyers sortied out, we sank one of them, and we were getting ready to put another 500-pound bomb down the stack of the second one when Ronald Reagan, the president, called us off. It's a very different situation today. So I can't figure out what they're talking about.

#Nima

Yeah. Yeah. Axios reported that a senior Trump administration official said the United States warned Iran on Sunday that it would initiate a freedom of navigation mission in the Strait of Hormuz, urging Iran not to take any disruptive action. What was the outcome? What we learned yesterday was that Iran struck three commercial vessels. And together with that Canberra that you just mentioned, they call it an American warship. They tried to, you know, warn the Canberra with two ballistic missiles, and the Canberra, you know, turned back to its first position.

#Larry

It's a very small ship, really. It's a very small ship. It was in the LCS class. You may remember that's the one that Lockheed made, and the very first one that came off the ways, as it were, broke apart and sank. And then the Navy searched desperately for a mission for this ship, of which there are quite a few already allocated and bought. And one of the missions they found was escort duty inside places like this, close to shore. And they converted several of them—I think LCM, I think. Canberra is one of those. She's in a long heritage of Canberras, so I think there have been two before her. But they were different kinds of ships. She, I think, has been converted to a mine warfare ship. So that makes some sense, to put her with ships that might hit mines. But she's not a protector in terms of firing missiles and all that. She has a few armaments, but not a whole lot.

#Nima

Yeah. One of these vessels was, you know, from South Korea that was hit by this attack. And the other important incident yesterday was the attack on Fujairah, in the UAE oil industry zone, which was so important. You know what the UAE is trying to do with the case of OPEC and the GCC countries. They're getting out of everything. They want to do whatever they have in their mind. They're getting closer to Israel. Even they're trying to connect. They said after this attack on Fujairah, one of the UAE officials said, Iran should remember this is going to be May 4th, going to be October 7th. As Hamas did to Israel, this is the May 4th for us. We promise that we're going to, you know, respond to what has happened.

#Larry

UAE speaks out of their pants all the time, all the time. Little Sparta. "We're going to join Saudi Arabia. We're going to defeat the Houthis. We're going to knock them off their feet. We're going to defeat them." Several years later, they leave the whole conflict because they're getting licked. The UAE bats way below its mouth. Let's put it that way. Go ahead, try it, Little Sparta. Iran will wipe you out.

#Nima

Do they really believe that if something happens, Israel will help them?

#Larry

I think it would be really difficult for Israel to do anything much right now because Israel is hard-pressed in three or four different theaters—certainly hard-pressed in Gaza, hard-pressed in the West Bank, actually hard-pressed in East Jerusalem now where they've gone wild, and hard-pressed to the maximum in Lebanon where they're getting defeated. And they're getting ready, I'm told, to help us follow me right again. You can't make this stuff up. These people are insane. They're insane.

And so is the UAE insane. This is just rhetoric. This is just, oh, OK, I'm going to send a bunch of terrorists over and attack Iran. That tells you something, as Larry Johnson is always saying, and he's right. The greatest state sponsors of terrorism in the world are over there on the other side of the Gulf. And we think that calling it the Arabian Gulf now will somehow give us a greater imprimatur for this war. Jesus. You know, if I didn't think I was watching a war and people were dying, I'd think it was a cartoon show.

#Nima

Here is, Larry, what Donald Trump said moments ago before coming to us live.

#Speaker 04

It's been amazing. It's like a piece of steel. Nobody's going to challenge the blockade. And I think it's working out very well. We're going to see. I can say this: Iran wants to make a deal. They're very proud. Maybe you won't see a white flag, but essentially that's already what they are. They need to, they should wave the white flag of surrender. In hockey they say "uncle," right? When are they going to cry uncle?

#Nima

I would love to see who's the director of Trump's brain, because the guy is doing an amazing job.

#Larry

That's all Trump has he can do now, really. That's all he has. He's desperately trying to find a way out. He makes up talks that aren't even happening. He comments on talks that aren't even happening. He makes up things the Iranians said that aren't even being said. He makes up scenarios that aren't even true, and he weaves a tapestry that is false as hell. And he thinks, and I've become convinced that in some respects his mind works this way, and it is working more viciously this way now. He convinces himself that what he's saying, tentatively, is true. And he lives on that. And what we're looking at here is a patent disaster. Just look at what he said. We're escorting ships, we're blockading. He doesn't even know what blockade means.

Blockade doesn't mean to escort ships. Blockade means you are keeping the enemy's ships in port. Or if they come out of port, you're destroying them. Well, he's already destroyed the Iranian Navy. What else is he going to do? He's already destroyed the Iranian Air Force. What else is he going to do? The only thing he hasn't destroyed is that which is going to bring pee upon his butt, and that's the ballistic missiles, and pee upon the UAE and everyone else's too if Iran decides to unleash another wave. So I don't even know if he knows the terms he's using. Who's he blockading? He's not blockading the Strait of Hormuz because that's not his purpose. His express purpose is to allow ships to get through the Strait in both directions, north and south.

Now, the Strait happens to be fairly narrow, so it's pretty inconceivable that if there are hostilities of any sort, mines suspected and so forth, then any more than one ship is going to go. Maybe two ships, if one's going north, one's going south in the inward channel and the outward channel. Then you could say two are going through. If you're blockading, you're saying nothing's going through. If you're escorting, you're saying those that you escort will get through. So why the confusion in terms? You're not effecting a blockade if you're escorting. We never used that term in 1988. Never used that term. We said we were escorting reflagged ships, Kuwaiti ships, and we did one at a time. And when we escorted them, we risked our warships. One of them actually hit a mine and almost sank.

Another one got hit, as I recall, by Saddam Hussein, who sent not one but two Exocet missiles out there and hit them, supposedly in error. So I don't understand. He's not even using the right terminology. He's expressing something that doesn't exist — a blockade escort, an escort blockade. You're either escorting the ships through the strait or you're blockading the strait. If you're blockading the strait, there are no ships getting through because your blockade keeps them from getting through. Now, if he's trying to say, "I'm blockading and escorting, and what I'm blockading is the Iranian ability to impact the ships that are being escorted," that's a different matter altogether. That's sort of a combination of the two, but I don't see that happening. And if I do see that happening, I think what I'm going to see is some ships getting hit and some ships maybe getting sunk.

#Nima

Not only blockade. Larry, you mentioned blockade, but something different. It's clear that Donald Trump has the same interpretation of "ceasefire" as Bibi Netanyahu. They're cut from the same cloth. They don't know what the word means.

#Larry

Now, I know Netanyahu knows what the word means. And what it means for Bibi Netanyahu, Nima, is that under a ceasefire, I can kill more people more efficiently. That's what it means. And that's what he's doing in Lebanon right now. He's not doing that in Gaza. And Naftali Bennett and others are angry at him for not doing it because the IDF won't go down in those tunnels. And that's where Hamas is now. They're in those tunnels. And the IDF has told him pointedly, we're not going down in those tunnels. So Bennett and others are really angry with him because he's not finished — in their view, he's not finished eliminating Hamas in Gaza.

#Nima

Looking at the situation and the way that we've learned that more than 30 refueling jets are in the region, and the activities you're looking at right now, you know, they're moving the fighter jets, refueling tankers, and the weapons getting into the region. I think putting all of that together, it seems like a 10-day, 12-day war — they're preparing for something like that, not more than that. What is your estimation of that? If they're preparing for a new round of war, how long does it take, in your opinion?

#Larry

I think J.D. Vance, if that Atlantic piece is accurate or even partly accurate, J.D. Vance is right to be concerned, because one of J.D. Vance's deep concerns, according to this article, is that we are using munitions that we would best keep at hand for other threats that are more important than Iran — that are really threats. So I don't know how to parse this. I know Larry Johnson was saying he thinks they're going to mount another major assault, Israel and the United States. That could very well be, but I'm not sure that I believe that, because one, the markets aren't right, and Trump never attacks unless the markets are positioned for his buddies to make lots of money.

And secondly, and probably more importantly, I really don't see the constellation of forces and the disposition of those forces that would, on either side — Israel or the United States — make it a very effective attack. Now, they could just go ahead and attack anyway. I think they've proven time and time again that air power, and air power alone, is not going to do very much. I don't think they're crazy enough to put land power in there of any size. Maybe they might put some special forces in there. They'll get their ass handed to them just like before. So I'm not sure I agree with Larry that we're looking at an imminent attack. I could be wrong. I mean, this administration is stupid enough to prove me wrong, but I don't think we are.

I think we're looking at a lot of hullabaloo, a lot of threat, and Donald Trump being very desperate to get enough threat ginned up to where he does really get something of a concession out of the Iranians. To this point, I can see nothing, absolutely nothing, in the way of a concession that he's gotten out of the Iranians that would stick and that would satisfy them in terms of what he would give them back for that concession. Because you know what they want. And what they want, I think, is not transferable, you know, especially things like, we must get you out of the region, we must have both primary and secondary sanctions lifted. I don't think they're going to give up those things. They'll give up their lives before they give up those things.

#Nima

I think there is a reason behind that. That's why Iran put those points out. You know, the first point and the second point, they're talking about war being, you know, ending the war on all fronts. And together with the United States getting out of the region, they know that wouldn't happen. And they know that sanctions are not going to be lifted. That's why they're putting them out there, because they don't... Basically, we're getting to the point that we were before this war started. And nobody's doing anything for the other side. But this time around, we have the strength of our most totally under the control of the Iranians.

#Larry

And we have that, I think, very, very precedent-setting interview, if you will, with Vladimir Putin. We have a trip coming up by Donald Trump to the number one power in the world, which I think he's going to cancel. I don't think he's going. And we have a whole different situation in terms of the stacked allies against us in this conflict from the day we started it to the present time. I think it's very obvious that Russia is an ally of Iran that will do whatever it has to do to keep them from going down. And it's probably as obvious that China is angry about it and willing to do a lot in that regard itself. I don't know to what extent totally they will go. More satellites overhead. More diplomatic support. I don't know. But I think Xi Jinping is. And this is something I would not have said six or seven months ago.

Maybe not even today, maybe not even six weeks ago, Xi Jinping is mad. He's angry. He's angry with the United States of America. Not a good place to be if you're us. Someone said to me, we need to get our primacy back. I said, this was yesterday, I said, dude, our primacy went a long time ago. We are not prime in the world anymore. China is the number one power in the world, period, bar none. No discussion about it. Come on over, let's talk about the dimensions of state power. China is the number one power in the world. The only dimension in which they're not globally the hegemon, if you will—and they don't like that term—is financial. And Xi Jinping has just declared he's going to take over that one. And there's no question in my mind he's going to be successful.

Then there will be no sanctions, primary or secondary. There will be no banking system. There will be no SWIFT system. Eventually, there will probably be no oil consortium that consists of anything

other than China, Russia, and the assets appertaining thereto. You can take ours all day long. That fracked oil, \$50, \$60 to get out of the ground. Got to have the prices like now in order to make any money off of it and get it out of the ground, which Donald Trump is eating up. He loves it. The Permian Basin in Texas loves it because now their oil is viable on the world market. You get oil back down to where people can live with it again, where it's somewhere below \$50 a barrel, and you can't frack. It's uneconomical to do it. You can do it, but you're going to lose a fortune.