

Lawrence Wilkerson: Rogue State America - Decay of a Superpower

Colonel Lawrence Wilkerson discusses the moral collapse of the US as its hegemonic position faltered. Wilkerson is a retired Colonel in the US Army and the former Chief of Staff to the US Secretary of State. Follow Prof. Glenn Diesen: Substack: <https://glennDiesen.substack.com/> X /Twitter: https://x.com/Glenn_Diesen Patreon: <https://www.patreon.com/glennDiesen> YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/@GDiesen1> Support the research: PayPal: <https://www.paypal.com/paypalme/glennDiesen> Buy me a Coffee: buymeacoffee.com/gdieseng Go Fund Me: <https://gofund.me/09ea012f> Books by Prof. Glenn Diesen: <https://www.amazon.com/stores/author/B09FPQ4MDL>

#Glenn

Welcome back. We are joined today by Colonel Lawrence Wilkerson, who used to be the Chief of Staff to the U.S. Secretary of State. Thank you, as always, for coming back on the program.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

Thank you for having me, and thank you for that introduction. It signals the fact that we did, once upon a time, have diplomacy.

#Glenn

Yeah, I'm missing the diplomacy as well. Again, with Iran, it seems to have been fraudulent from day one. With Russia, it's been either absent or fraudulent. But yeah, overall, I miss the days of diplomacy when diplomats considered it part of their job description. I wanted to start off with what's happening now with Iran because I see that Donald Trump has put his Project Freedom on pause. That is, he was supposed to open up the Strait of Hormuz by force. It didn't go as planned, so again, it's on pause, while Marco Rubio said that Operation Epic Fury, as the war is called, has already met all objectives and has therefore been concluded. I was wondering, what do you make of these statements? Are they trying to walk back this disaster in terms of returning to war? Or do you think this is just a deception, a temporary retreat before they ramp up again?

#Lawrence Wilkerson

Well, the latter would come to mind as a matter of practice of the Trump administration, including the Secretary of State slash National Security Advisor, Marco Rubio. The statements he made yesterday were just egregiously wrong. The Secretary of State of the United States of America says categorically a blockade is not an act of war. What the hell book is he reading? A blockade has been

an act of war for about a thousand years, codified as such post–World War II in international law. That's the reason John Kennedy in 1962 was instructive to the EXCOMM committee, the group that helped him figure out the Cuban Missile Crisis, particularly Bobby. And in this case, if memory serves, McNamara actually offered him the alternative. Kennedy ruled out a blockade of Cuba and was searching for some other mechanism, if you will.

And I think it was McNamara. It might have been Bobby, might have been both of them. But if memory serves, it was McNamara who said, how about “quarantine”? A good medical term. And Kennedy liked it. And so it was a quarantine. It was not a blockade, because a blockade, again, is an act of war, Mr. Secretary of State. And then we get Kain and Hegseth discussing kamikaze dolphins. How absurd can you be? I just don't understand this leadership at all. I can't crawl in their heads because their heads are not like mine. Their heads are not like yours either. They're not like anything I've ever encountered. But to your question, it failed objectively. And what Rubio has suggested, and what I think Trump is suggesting more and more, though feebly and often incoherently, is “I want out. I need a way out.”

I've got to find a way out. And if you won't give me a way out, I'll carve myself a way out, and I'll make it look like it's a successful way out in terms of what I did to Iran. That's all I can judge this by, because on the surface, on the surface of the sea, it is not successful. And the only way the Strait is going to be successful, if there is a potential for that, is if the Omani-Iranian consortium, I'll call it, is allowed to control the Strait and to do what they want to do, which is to charge, in terms of the commerce, a modest fee for people passing through. That's the only way they're going to get the Strait open, the only way. I was marveling at the fact that they were talking about the Strait being open and people could go places. And there are 2,000 ships in the North Arabian Sea.

What are you going to do? Peel them off one at a time with an escort? Ooh, you don't have that many ships, do you? No, you certainly don't. So the whole thing, Glenn, was cocked up in some place where they don't think very much. And I've got to figure it was in the Pentagon with Pete Hegseth supervising. So now we see glaring proof of the fact that neither General Kain—I'm increasingly of that mind—nor Hegseth, we all thought that, I think all along it's been confirmed now, know what they're doing.

#Glenn

No, I think, yeah, the Iranian control of the Strait of Hormuz will probably be the only possible outcome. I think it's a shame because it didn't have to be this way. The ultimate goal of the Strait of Hormuz, I mean, for the Iranians, I think it's a means to an end because they've been asking for a proper security architecture in the region, which gives them security as well, because they can't live another 47 years under these crippling sanctions and perpetual threats by the bases that surround them. I think the Strait of Hormuz, given that there is no diplomatic path toward a sustainable peace with the U.S. and Israel, is just a means to an end.

It's a way of putting essentially higher tolls on countries that sanction it, that threaten it, possibly by hosting bases or actually attacking it. So I think it will be a way of reasserting Iranian security in the region, and it will probably be successful. But again, it's a bit like the war in Ukraine. I mean, the Russians didn't have to take their territories. If there was a security architecture to restore Ukraine's neutrality and take into account Russian security concerns, this could have been done through diplomacy, not by taking territory. But again, as you started off saying, we don't have diplomacy anymore.

So it's very difficult to achieve anything through talk, and instead everything has to take this very hard format. But at the same time, as the U.S. is indicating it wants to walk this back, if this is genuine, we also see that the French are sending the Charles de Gaulle aircraft carrier strike group. I think it's currently in the Red Sea — I might be mistaken — but how do you assess this? Are they planning an operation? I'm not sure what the Europeans can do if the Americans couldn't pull it off. Or is this just to have some show of strength, you know, the last hour to prove to Trump that the Europeans are a force amplifier and not a deadweight?

#Lawrence Wilkerson

A brave and meaningless display of Gallic fervor. It won't add anything to the combat power. In fact, it may detriment the combat power to a certain extent because, let's face it—and let me back up and give you some facts here if I can recall them—we have two aircraft carriers on the ways, so to speak, right now. One of them is getting ready for completion and testing, and the other one is getting ready to start up. I suspect the first is going to come in somewhere between \$20 and \$21 billion when all the cost overruns are calculated, and probably be delayed at least a year beyond, maybe two, if history proves anything, its acceptance date. The second one, Kennedy, I believe, is going to come out and probably cost \$22 or \$23 billion and be suitably delayed also.

Both are obsolete as they sit right now in the ways. Every carrier on the high seas is obsolete with regard to really first-tier warfare. We have not had that demonstrated by Iran, which they could do. I think they could do it, but they don't want to because they know, on their side of the coin, being better thinkers than we, they know that if they were to do that and put 5,000 Americans in Davy Jones' locker and a \$16 billion aircraft carrier there with them, that would probably get the American people thinking a little differently about the Iran war. They're very comfortable with the way the American people are despising the Iran war right now. So they're obsolete.

And the French carrier is obsolete, obsolete. So, I mean, this is no addition to combat. It's a French, as I said, it's a Gallic display of French puissance. But it doesn't add anything to the materiel at sea that could do anything other than sink. Now, let's look at something else that's happening right now that is in stark contrast to all of this—the French effort, Ukraine, you name it. I got to get this straight, so I'm going to look at my notes here. The 18th BRICS Summit is going to be in September in Delhi. Modi will be the presiding person; he's president of the group now. Listen to their subject matter title: quote, "Building for resilience, innovation, cooperation, and sustainability," unquote.

That's their purpose. That's their announced purpose. That's the announced purpose I would have given in 1991–92 to what George H. Bush and Brent Scowcroft and Colin Powell were talking about in terms of not primacy, not the number one power in the world, bar none, or we'll sanction or bomb you, but cooperation, comity. That's what they're doing. So contrast that. Oh, incidentally, it happens to include the number one economic power in the world, China, soon to be the number one financial power in the world if they do what Xi Jinping just mandated. It's them doing it instead of us. We're the ones fighting that. We are the recalcitrants in the world. And while I'm at it, let's just define us properly.

If you want to define the empire properly right now, you have to go back to some examples of previous-type organizations. Take Hitler's Third Reich, for example. Take Tojo's Japan. Take the Rape of Nanking and the Japanese invasion of China. Take all of those things together, and what you have is a historical example of what you have now in the empire. Where else could you hear a Secretary of War stand up before the podium and utter war crimes? Say war crimes. Say that they are his policy. Say that they are the way he is going to confront the world. He's going to send Iran back to the Dark Ages. He's going to destroy the entire place. He gives no quarter. These are all war crimes. Dwight Eisenhower isn't rolling in his grave, he's spinning in his grave. These are—let alone our founding fathers—these are war crimes.

Everything that rolls out of Hegseth's mouth, virtually, and much of what comes out of Trump's contorted mouth, is a war crime. So look at the contrast here. We are setting ourselves up as the next victim of whatever Nuremberg tribunal these countries want to hold eventually. And they're setting themselves up to be our counterpart in terms of what we did post–World War II for international law, for human rights, for human dignity, you name it. However imperfect it was, we did it. One of the main instruments in doing it was one of the main instruments in waging the war, Dwight Eisenhower. And he said one of the reasons he moved the way he did, very much in favor of the United Nations, very instrumental in helping the United Nations get going, was because he had seen war for what it really was — 100 million casualties.

We're on the other side of the coin now, Glenn. Americans have to wake up and confront that. We are the bad guy in the world. The other side are the good guys. If we don't figure that out and somehow change what we're doing, alter what we're doing, we're going down. I mean, there's no question in my mind about it because they are dedicated to what they just said. They're dedicated to this comity and cooperation and innovation and resilience. And by golly, they're good at it. All of them. So what are we doing is my question to Donald Trump this morning. What are we doing, Donald? What are you doing? What is your government doing? What is the Congress doing? What is the Supreme Court doing? What are all the sinews of power of the empire doing? Because you're driving us into a wall, over a cliff.

#Glenn

Well, the great irony, as you and I discussed a bit before we started this recording, is that Trump initially appeared to be the candidate who, well, without stating those words, was making the case for why the US should walk back the empire in order to shore up and save the republic. And instead, it appears to be going the other direction — that is, gambling the republic in order to... But I was wondering, though, what happens now if — well, not if, but when — the United States will have to roll back a bit? What does it mean for the wider region and the future of Israel and Iran?

Because when I read the Israeli media, be it the Jerusalem Post or Haaretz, you see that they're quite pessimistic themselves — and also on many levels: the war with Iran, but also the stability of Netanyahu's political position. And the media reveals a lot of infighting, suggesting that Netanyahu risks the survival of the state itself. So I think everyone recognizes what's being gambled here. But how do you think, given that the U.S. looks like it has to walk this back at some point, as you said, just carve a way out of this? What does this mean for the region, for Iran, for Israel?

#Lawrence Wilkerson

One of the unique things about the description that I just gave, however briefly, of how we resemble the powers that we fought in World War II, is the fact that we have Israel — the fact that Israel is sort of the Reinhard Heydrich for Trump's Hitler. And that's, as you just indicated in the nature of your question, a true problem and challenge. Picking up Haaretz this morning online and reading, just reading down the headlines, was like reading an indictment of Israel from one of its series of editorial writers and other journalists who have a brain and who feel like they have some freedom. But at the same time, when you go into the articles, you find out that there is hardly an iota of deviation in support of the Israeli people for what Bibi Netanyahu has done, Reinhard Heydrich has done, and what he might do.

And instead of being called off because you're destroying the state of Israel, it's "do more." Because if you don't do more, you will destroy the state of Israel as we conceive it. And that's the real secret here — as we Jews in Israel conceive it. Because the other citizens, almost 50% plus of Israel's population, don't feel this way. Or if they do, they're too scared to say it. They'll be, you know, taken out of the shot. So we've got this unique ingredient in this reality — a reprise, if you will, of a Hitlerian Tojo in the world, in the role that Israel is playing. And right now they're playing it really violently and blatantly in Lebanon — so much so that the president of Lebanon has said he's not sure he wants to meet with Netanyahu as long as Netanyahu is still doing what he's doing in his country.

I don't blame him. I suspect he probably will, because they'll bend his arm behind his back. But I don't blame him for not wanting to meet with the man who's raping his country and not going after Hezbollah so much as he's going after every single person or thing he can find in Lebanon to rape, pillage, and plunder. So that's an additional ingredient to this ignominy, this awful situation the

empire has gotten itself into, that it seems to have no wherewithal, no courage to extricate itself from. And so that's the reason I'm so pessimistic. I don't think we're going to get out of this. I don't think Trump's going to get out of it. I don't think Israel's going to get out of it.

I've said many times, I'll say it again, I'll reinforce it here: Israel will not be a state in the Levant in its present configuration. It will not be an apartheid state like it is now. It is not a democracy. Were it to return to being a democracy, a genuine democracy, with all the flaws that democracies have nonetheless, it could exist and it could persist and maybe survive. I don't know. It's created a lot of enemies now that aren't going to forget very quickly. But it could make its way into the future were it to be a genuine democracy and accept all comers — Christians, Arabs, Jews, others. So that's a special ingredient here that you can't find an analogy for in that period I was describing we have returned to. We're on the other side of the Nuremberg Tribunal now. We're in the docket. We are in the docket. We're being accused, and we will be accused in the future.

I don't know who's going to do it. I don't know how they're going to do it. But somehow retribution will be obtained. It's like when Lot turned around and looked at Sodom and Gomorrah and turned into a pillar of salt. It's that sure. But I don't know how we're going to extricate ourselves from the immediate circumstances in any way that affords a platform from which we can begin to alter this situation. We're not even giving him a new commander in chief, a new president, if we have one. We're not even giving him a platform to stand on to do this. We're leaving him with such horrendous debt, such horrendous situations in the world with our allies, all of whom must think we've lost it, and such a horrendous situation with regard to those in the world who, through our own perfidy, are having to oppose us now and hold summits in India.

#Glenn

You mentioned that the allies are horrified, but to some extent they do toe the line, though. You mentioned, for example, what's happening in Lebanon. But I saw just today that the German foreign minister said that Israel has every right to be in South Lebanon. And, of course, this is the same Germany that backed the atrocities in Gaza. It's the same country — Germany, who said that Israel is doing our dirty work for us in Iran. So they might complain a lot about Trump, but they seem to be on board with many of the worst impulses of Trump. I'm wondering if this is part of the legacy of the hegemonic era after the Cold War, because some key problems when you have a hegemon seem to be that, well, not only would it be hubris, but also when you can absorb a lot of cost from doing stupid things, you end up doing a lot of stupid things. Also, the death of diplomacy.

Why talk to your opponent when you can dictate the terms? And that tendency to overextend, the arrogance. I mean, it's easy often to point to the U.S., but if you look at the Europeans, the way they ignored, for example, the security of the largest European country, Russia, for 30-plus years, this makes no sense unless there's some hegemonic hubris. And I'm wondering if it's the same with Israel, because in the past 30-plus years, they pursued, I would argue, this clean break doctrine — that is, let's just stop doing diplomacy, stop making compromises, let's just impose our will by force.

We have the world hegemon standing behind us, ensuring that no one will go against us. Possibly it hasn't been good for America's allies either to have the big bad U.S. standing behind them, because we don't have to make any compromises, and the arrogance has just reached ridiculous levels.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

My feelings on that, I've stated them before, but let me restate them. One, I do not think a single one of the European leaders in power right now, even some of those that might have been just freshly elected, is going to be around very long. Certainly not Meloni, certainly not Macron, and certainly not Starmer and the ones we throw out each day. But I think a lot of other leaders, too, are going to be gone. My concern is, why are they going to be gone? Are they going to be gone because of the legitimate populace that says, wait a minute, this has really been bad for us, and you have been the leader during this bad-for-us period? Therefore, we're throwing you out, and we're going to try to find someone else.

Whether they find someone else who is more interested in some comity and cooperation among European countries, including Russia, or someone who wants to create a Europe individually that's very, very like the 1930s Europe and can't get along and is constantly in turmoil, economic and otherwise, is a matter of history determining it. I can't predict that. I've not got my feet deep enough in Europe to predict that, and I'm not sure I could even if I did, because I'm not European. I think it was Maggie Thatcher who said the problem with Europeans is we visit; they live there. That's a really good way of summing it up. So I don't know how Europe is going to come through this, but I know damn well they're not going to come through it if they keep hanging on to the tail of the United States' shirt.

No way. Because one, we're going to withdraw that tail. And two, it's not very formidable anymore, other than its nuclear stockpile. And that brings me to my favorite subject. The only thing that makes this situation remarkably different—existentially different—from that previous period I was describing and comparing it to in the '30s and all other previous periods in the last 5,000 years of human history is nuclear weapons. And that's frightening when you think about it, because the empire is not going out without using everything in its arsenal to try and prevent it. So you look at this summit that's taking place in India, you think about the genuine nature of their subject matter in terms of what the world needs, whether they're going to go that way or not, at least they've said they are.

And when you say something like that and you have powers behind you like China and increasingly like India, then you have some weight. You have some gravitas. And much the same way, I would say—and again, I'm going back to that analogy, which I think is a pretty good analogy—that we had gravitas in 1945 and '46 and '47 and so on. Not just because we had the nuclear weapon and nobody else did until the Soviets exploded their bomb, but because we were actually acting as if we cared about what happened to those 100 million people who died. And we cared about all the other things that we supposedly put much effort into defending. We cared enough to go to the tribunals.

We cared enough to go to the conventions, to the Geneva business, to all the things that we did with regard to diplomacy that, as Eisenhower said multiple times, would keep this from happening again.

He lamented the League of Nations and the lack of success that it had. And one of the reasons he was very powerful behind the scenes, if you will, with regard to the UN, was because he knew the League had failed so miserably. And that was part of why we got into the second iteration of the World War. I think it was Chapter 1, Chapter 2. And he didn't want that to happen again. All those people were gone. I take you back to what Powell told me in 1989 when I first joined him: "Larry, Europe is not going to be the same much longer. They're gone. Mitterrand, Kohl, Thatcher, Major—they're all gone. There's no one going to be left who has his feet in the turmoil, in the dye, in the blood of World War II, even as a 12-year-old or a 13-year-old. No one. When that happens, Larry, Europe's going to be a different place."

We can only pray that it's a better, different place. It could be a much worse, different place. I think we're seeing that under fruition. But to repeat, I think the Europeans are smart enough to throw most of these people out. The question becomes, how do their particular political processes, which are very different from ours in many cases, if not all cases, and very different from one another in most cases—how do their political processes, democratic as they pretend to be, just like we do—how do they produce the kind of leadership that Powell was saying would be necessary if Europe were to get through this post-Cold War period without too much damage? And us too. I don't think he ever entertained the idea of the transatlantic link being utterly severed.

And mainly because—and here we come back to those horrible weapons again—the nuclear weapons and the need for Europe to have that cushion to lie back on in case something were to happen, or to provide a deterrent for them against whomever, because there are a lot of these things in the world: China and Russia combined, India, Pakistan. We're building back out again to where our program is as robust and dangerous as anyone's. We're building back out to those 30,000 warheads we had when the war came to a close—the Cold War—and we went down almost to 2,000. I mean, that's a pipe dream now. I mean, we're going to build twice the number of weapons we have right now, with three or four times the lethality we have right now, so we can have a first-strike capability and ride out any retaliation and come out the winner. That's what we're looking for. So this is a very dangerous world. And I'm happy to see what's happening in India, and I wish them every success.

#Glenn

With all this talk of gaining first-strike capabilities—not just the capabilities being built, but also when I see what has been done toward the Russians, their attacks on the early warning radars, their nuclear triad—it's as if we forget that any successful first strike still can't ignore that we all reside on the same planet. It's very hard to bomb our own planet over and over again without affecting all of us.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

What would the Indians be building the Agni-5 for? I'm building it—hell, it's deployed now. A 30,000-kilometer-per-hour missile. No golden dome is going to get this dude. And it carries MIRV warheads. I just found that out yesterday. It carries MIRV warheads, so it can carry multiple nuclear warheads in its nose cone and deploy them, I'm assuming, the same way we deploy our MIRVs, with pinpoint accuracy over a ballistic missile silo or whatever. Why would the Indians want a 7,000-kilometer containerized road-mobile ICBM? Do they smell something in the wind? I don't know. We just keep doing this, and we're going right back to the point of danger we were at—and breathed a deep sigh of relief about being out of—at the end of the Cold War. But that's gone. We didn't hold it for more than four years.

#Glenn

Do you see the US, since World War II, having become dependent on threat and conflict in order to preserve its current position? Because, well, George Kennan made this point in 1987, where he argued that if the Soviet Union were to sink into the sea tomorrow, then the military-industrial complex would have to invent another enemy simply because it was too much of the economy—too much of the economy was built into this military-industrial complex.

But one could also widen the argument further by pointing out that the entire structure of the international system has become too dependent on having enemies, because if one has an alliance system such as during the Cold War, or a hegemonic system after the Cold War, they only exist if you have a common threat. So once peace begins to break out, you know, the alliance systems begin to fragment, and essentially, if one maintains its power in the world through alliance systems, one has to perpetuate conflicts in some ways. Because as we saw when the Chinese were pushing this peace between the Saudis and Iranians, I think it created some shock in Washington because, well, if the Arabs are going to make peace with the Iranians, why would they be obedient to Washington? And also, who would help them weaken the Iranians? So, kind of, peace is not always a friend of the empire, if you will.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

You're absolutely right. And Kennan made those points as old as he was. He was just short of his death when he visited with Powell, as did Henry Kissinger in a different sort of way. And part of Powell's pushback—it wasn't real pushback. Powell had too much respect for both men to push back hard. But part of his pushback, though gentle pushback, was, "We're smarter than that now, and we'll figure out a way to deal with this military-industrial complex." I remember thinking to myself, yeah, right, probably not. If you're familiar with the report from Iron Mountain, they actually concluded in that. And there's a lot of controversy over whether that was an official analysis done at the behest of perhaps the President of the United States, if it was a reaction to John F. Kennedy's

speech at American University, June 10th, I think, 1963, right before he was assassinated, or whether it was just a big joke.

The New York Times carried all kinds of stories about it. Lewis Lapham and a couple of other people were accused. But it was a very titillating study. And what it said in the end, in no uncertain terms, was that what you just said was absolutely true, that we could not live in an empire. We could not live with coexistent empires, if you will, without all of them, but particularly us, having a threat like the Soviets presented. So whom would we construct? And the essence of that report was, and I think this is what was so titillating about it and disturbing about it—and it was a bestseller for a while—their conclusion was you can't.

Human society—doesn't matter whether it's Indian, Chinese, Russian, American—human society requires, for political rule, a threat that is judged by those who are ruled by those politics as existential. And it went on to say the only way you could relieve that as the foundation of society was to find some—don't call it a threat—some force that was equivalent in terms of being existential. And, of course, it hinted that for three millennia or so, we found one in religion. In other words, people believe that if you sin, you're going to hell. In a broad sense, nations believe that under their various guises of religion. So that was one way to do it, but the report concluded that that way was pretty moribund.

This is in the 60s, 70s. So the other thing you need is some kind of existential threat you can put in front of the people and tell them this will kill you if you do not stay cohesive, if you do not build your society, if you do not have warriors. Pete Heggseth said, you know. And what I said when I read that was, pick up the latest new UN report on the climate, and you have a quintessential example of a very lethal, existentially so, threat, but it's not military. It's not the traditional threat. So why don't we all come together? What was it they said in India? Building resilience, innovation, cooperation, and sustainability, and fight the climate crisis. Make that the cohesive element of world society that triumphs over man's bestiality, over man's desire for power, and so on and so on. People say, well, it's not a big enough threat.

It will be, ladies and gentlemen. It will be. Look at the temperatures in Europe this last year. Look at the newspapers and how they're reporting on those temperatures, especially in places where they were just off the charts—in Spain, for example. Give it another 20 years, give it another 30 years. And if we haven't killed ourselves with the other threat, nuclear weapons, the climate is going to show us that it is ready to kill us—every man, woman, and child. We need to get together and prevent that. And wow, there's a hundred years of being able to live in a reasonable, cooperative spirit. But will we do that? I don't know. I'm hoping a big element of this BRICS meeting comes out with that kind of conclusion. I do know that the Central Party School in China has come to that kind of conclusion and is advising the Politburo accordingly.

#Glenn

Yeah, it would be good to find some, I guess, common purpose on, you know, saving this planet or discovering new planets, you know, something other than this tribalism and continuous warfare. I just had one last question. How do you see China and Russia playing into what is happening now? What looks like, well, it's been a failure in Iran, because often we address these conflicts as if they're three different ones. We have the economic war with China, the proxy war against the Russians, the more direct war with Iran. But as we've seen, well, for example, the Chinese, they consider themselves to be a key target in this Iran war. Indeed, you hear from Washington when they justified what they did to Venezuela.

They referenced, you know, China shouldn't have this oil. They make similar comments on Iran. So now the Chinese have banned their own companies from abiding by U.S. sanctions. We also see Russia stepping up, taking a more forceful stance in support of Iran. How do you think this will impact whether or not it ends in victory or failure, these relations between the great powers? Will they essentially find common purpose against the U.S.? Because this would be, I think, a disaster. You wouldn't want a multipolar system where the other great powers find common cause in balancing the U.S. either. So how do you see this group of great powers behaving?

#Lawrence Wilkerson

If we don't get out of the Rubio, Hegseth, Trump group leadership, what you just described is where we're headed. I think the councils in both China and Russia, India to a certain extent, Pakistan even—and Pakistan is getting it full in the face with regard to our inability to do diplomacy in any way, fashion, or form that makes sense. A lot of countries have already put themselves on the decision block, if you will, as to where to go with regard to this empire. All we're doing right now, and particularly in reinforcing their view of us with this insane war against Iran—and Hegseth makes it even more insane every day, as does General Keane with his comments about dolphins and such.

If we don't get off this—if we don't—it's not just the Strait of Hormuz and the global economy and such. It's the entire position of the empire in the world that is going to be, as you just insinuated, it could be in reality. That is to say, the world's going to be against us, and it's going to be a disaster for us. It's an absolute disaster. And when Xi Jinping fulfills his promise to obliterate the Bretton Woods system, to take SWIFT and trash it in the garbage can, to say to OFAC, for example, you have 2.6 billion people under sanctions—right now, you have no one under sanctions because we have just lifted them—then we're toast. We're toast. It's just a matter of time before someone puts a stake in our heart.

I hope that doesn't happen. I hope we don't have to come to that in the past. But in terms of history, and many of the empires that have expired throughout that history, that is certainly a way for it to happen. And I come back again. The one difference in all of that 5,000 years, 3,000 of which we know quite a bit about—in all of that time, there was no technological means that Nebuchadnezzar, that Cyrus, that, you name it, Genghis Khan, had to destroy the world. There is now. And that worries the hell out of me. It should worry the hell out of every sentient human

being. And I say sentient human being, realizing it's a tautology, because there are a lot of human beings that aren't sentient.

#Glenn

Well, that goes back to the initial problem you were discussing, that the World War II generation, as it has passed or is passing away, there's no one left, as Paul told you, with some healthy respect for war, and silly decisions will start to be made. The problem is, it's very hard to... If it's true that each generation has to learn the horrors of war on their own, we don't have that luxury anymore with the weapons we have, so...

#Lawrence Wilkerson

One would hope that diplomacy would... At the meeting the Eisenhower Media Network had out in Columbus a couple of weeks ago, Columbus, Ohio, one of the things we talked about in the margins was how, and General Leitch, who's the head of the network right now, made this point vividly, Americans haven't seen bombs since 1865. I mean, that's true. They have not seen armies walking on their front lawn since 1865. So we have lost all comprehension of what war, like we're waging against Russia right now, is like.

#Glenn

That's a great point. Again, another cost of hegemony, because often this ideal of security through dominance has a lot of problems built into it.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

Yes, quite a few. Yes, both Kennan and Kissinger would want to say to Powell at the end of their lives, or at least Kennan at the end of his life. He didn't live much longer after that visit.

#Glenn

Well, I know you've got a busy day ahead of you, so thank you very much for taking the time to speak with me. I'm cautiously optimistic that the recent efforts now by the U.S. to try to break open the Strait of Hormuz and restart hostilities, that it could have been a probing mission in which the U. S. is walking back, but... cautiously optimistic.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

I suspect I will be disappointed very soon, but there are some people here, one of whom I respect for his views, who say that we're just waiting for Friday and Israel and the U.S. are going to resume the incredible bombing of Iran.

#Glenn

That seems more likely, unfortunately. Anyways, thanks again, Colonel Hulikristen.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

Take care.