

Larry Johnson & Col. Wilkerson: China JUST Said NO! Iran's Hammer Falls on Strait of Hormuz

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#Nima

Hi everybody, today is Friday, May 15, 2026, and we are here with two friends, two dear friends, Larry Johnson and Col. Wilkerson. Welcome back.

#Larry

Hey, just get the damn story straight. We're like your second fathers here, okay? We've gladly adopted you.

#Lawrence

Lorenzo and Lorenzo.

#Nima

Yeah. Let me start, Larry, with you. Just before coming on, you mentioned what the outcome was. I was asking you, what was the outcome of Trump's meeting or these two new delegations? Look at what has happened in China. Look at the people, the delegations — the two parts are significant. But what was the outcome? We know one of the greatest problems for Donald Trump right now is the case of the Strait of Hormuz and the Middle East, and he wanted to do something about that. But overall, when you look at the meeting, what was happening, and what was the outcome for Donald Trump?

#Larry

He got some more frequent flyer miles. You know, he got a chance to travel with a bunch of, you know, oligarchs, and then have them confined on his plane. But beyond that, you know, the Chinese didn't see this as an important meeting, and they sent several signals. You know, it started with the

fact that, like eight hours before Trump arrived in town, the Tajik flags were still adorning the light posts along with the Chinese flag. They hadn't made it a priority to go take those down and put up a U.S. flag. The China Daily, its main headline just hours before Trump was arriving, was about the Chinese talks with Tajikistan, and there was just a sidebar attached to the meeting with Trump. Then the biggest one I saw that sent the clear message—and the Chinese did this to Trump back in 2017 as well—they sent the second-level people out to the airport to greet him.

Now, all the apologists for Trump and the MAGA defenders, they keep saying, oh, that's just the Chinese following protocol. You know, no. When Vladimir Putin showed up, Xi was at the airport. In fact, he piled Putin into a Cadillac, you know, like a convertible, and they drove downtown together. When Kim Jong-un of North Korea showed up, hey, Xi's at the airport. So the fact that Xi decides this guy's not important enough to go to the airport for, you know, well, I'll see him tomorrow, sent a message. I did get a note from him because, you know, I had predicted at the outset this was going to be a nothing burger. And he wrote me back. He said, you were right. He said he just talked to somebody in the White House.

And this person I know does have that kind of access. And he said she basically told Trump, with respect to requests Trump made about Iran, to go pound sand. So Trump came away, he got some great photo ops, they got to see some beautiful architecture. I don't think he fell asleep on camera, so from that standpoint, it was a rousing success. And actually, since, you know, because Col. Wilkerson's got far more experience with this, any high-level meetings like that, you know, Colin Powell had as Secretary of State, there was always Sherpa work involved. And it doesn't appear, you know, Chas Freeman said his sources at State told him there was zero Sherpa work on this one.

#Lawrence

Which is typical for Trump. It's standard practice with Trump and standard practice with Rubio.

#Nima

Colonel, here's what Donald Trump himself said about Chinese support for Iran.

#Speaker 04

And you've been asked about it, and you've spoken about it, and that is China's support for Iran. How big a discussion was that today? We discussed it.

#Speaker 05

I mean, when you say support, they're not fighting a war with us or anything?

#Speaker 04

No.

#Speaker 05

He said he's not going to give military equipment. That's a big statement. He said that today. That's a big statement. He said that strongly. But at the same time, he said, you know, they buy a lot of their oil there, and they'd like to keep doing that.

#Nima

How do you find the tone, the way that he's talking about it? We know that China is not fighting the United States in Iran. Iranians are fighting. But when he was asked about the support that China is giving Iran, Colonel, what's your understanding of that?

#Lawrence

Well, first of all, listen to Dr. John Gartner, Johns Hopkins University, and he's gained some publicity of late because he's an expert in narcissism and an expert in the kind of afflictions Trump is increasingly demonstrating. And his latest one was he's far worse and he's going to get a lot worse. And I think he's probably right. I have no perspective educationally to say that, but he's convincing in the way he describes what this kind of megalomania, this kind of narcissism does to someone over time, particularly if they're hard-pressed over that time.

So I think we are dealing with that now, but let's back up to what Larry was talking about, which I'll add to in spades. The Chinese are absolutely superb in choreographing visits and other things, too. Even when Richard Haass and I went in 2003—well, I guess it was before 9/11, so it must have been summer of 2001—it was choreographed even for us at the level that we were. Well, the first thing that struck me about this choreography was that Xi was standing there, flat-footed, looking at Trump coming towards him. He made no effort whatsoever to advance and meet Trump. He made Trump walk across the intervening space and stick his hand out, and then Xi took it.

And I suspect that the rest of the choreography was much the same as Larry was indicating at the airport, for example, which should have been taken as an indicator by the party, including Marco Rubio. Most of all, I ain't doing things very well with regard to diplomacy and with regard to this number one power in the world in many respects. And so it flowed into more and more and more of that. And so it flowed into more and more of what the doctor was talking about—Trump making things up as he went along and reporting on things to the press in this country in particular, but also at different stops on the trip—that things were going swimmingly or were going better than they certainly were going, because what he was getting was a stonewall on everything he was asking about.

Now, he did get, for example, I'm told the Cargill guy got at least for him, and that's another thing. This was not a diplomatic mission—anything but a diplomatic mission, as Larry pointed out. There were no teams put together, no Sherpas, no working groups, no people doing the spade work beforehand, no people working out the details, for example, of what might happen between Cargill or whomever and the Chinese in terms of resuming buying U.S. soybeans. And footnote, footnote, I called my friend in Iowa and I said—he's a Republican, he's head of the most important farm lobby in the United States of America—and he's climate-conscious because he understands the climate crisis from a farming, from a visceral perspective.

Too much rain, too much heat, longer growing season, higher yields. Yeah, but it ain't going to last, that sort of thing. Republican. I said, what are we talking about here? He said, well, it ain't going to matter a bit because we don't have the fertilizer. We're not going to be raising any soybeans. And that's the truth, unless you get the strain of hormones functioning again, and you get that urea and other things out, and you essentially take the pressure off global commerce. Then a lot of farmers in this country—and I know this from the perspective of my son-in-law, who has a farm up in Maryland—they're not going to be able to plant, simply not going to be able to plant.

So the disconnects in this are just awesome. And then the last thing I'd say—so much to say—is that he didn't get anything, really. And the one thing he thought he was going to get was couched in truly Chinese foreign reasoning, which is explicit: if the Strait of Hormuz were open, we'd all be better off. So if you want help opening the Strait of Hormuz, here it is—lay off the Iranians, let them control the Strait, you know, that sort of thing. Donald Trump probably didn't even hear that. But I think it was probably pretty explicit. And you go downhill from there.

#Larry

Yeah, let me just add that when I use the term—for those who are not aware—“Sherpa,” well, normally it refers to the guides on Mount Everest. It is also a term used within diplomatic channels for the diplomats who have to do the actual heavy lifting. They have to write the documents, they have to negotiate out whether you're going to say happy or glad or pleased. They get everything prepared so that when the principals come together, they're not caught up in a big argument over, you know, the actual substance of the matter. It's already sort of been pre-cooked or predetermined. And none of that was done for this. Zero. Yeah. So, you know, that's where they get into the first problem. You know, the other thing is, the one who's blockading now the Strait of Hormuz is the United States. Yeah.

#Lawrence

She meant that. Yeah, get out of the way and commerce will resume.

#Larry

Yeah, because, uh, Iran has started allowing ships through, but that meet the Iranian terms. And Iran has basically said, look, if you're aligned with the United States and Israel and attacking us, okay, you're not going to come through, period. And we're not going to allow that. However, uh, you know, if you sign up and agree to our terms, you can go through. And I think there were at least 30 ships that were allowed through yesterday. And so now, as far as global diplomacy goes, it's not Iran that's seen as holding things up, it's the United States. The other thing, the other critical thing here—and I put an article up on Sonar21 earlier this morning or late last night, depending on where you were—going through the five critical commodities that come out of the Persian Gulf that fuel the global economy.

And when I say fuel, I mean they are literally essential. You can't live without them, just like Col. Wilkerson was talking about fertilizer. So the fertilizer that's produced is produced in part from urea and from sulfur. I didn't know that. But the sulfur content is about 40% of the world's sulfur comes out of the Persian Gulf. I mean, these numbers are fantastic, and we don't appreciate that. When you sit down and look at the oil, liquid natural gas, urea, sulfur, and helium, those are the big five. The two countries in the Persian Gulf that produce actually the majority of those items are Saudi Arabia and Qatar.

Kuwait, Bahrain, United Arab Emirates. They do a little here and there, but they're not the major players in those. And Qatar, surprisingly, plays a major role with urea, sulfur, LNG, and helium. And the urea and LNG, they were basically destroyed when Iran took out the Ras Laffan plant. So what we're looking at here is that even if, you know, they magically opened the strait, the gut punch to the global economy is just starting. And China understands that. And China is well positioned to not suffer like the rest of the world is going to suffer. And that's what I don't think Trump even had a clue about.

#Lawrence

And the other thing I'd point out that the farmer in Iowa pointed out to me was diesel is critical. And the cost of diesel is critical. And they can't go to the point that they went to, for example, a few years ago and expect to sustain themselves if diesel is as expensive as it was a few years ago. And it has every portent of being that way if we don't get this strait open.

#Nima

Yeah. The other point, Colonel, was the sanctions on, you know, Chinese companies, because they were somehow sending or receiving products from Iran and Russia. Donald Trump was talking about sanctioning—they sanctioned some Chinese companies before going to China. It seems the outcome of this meeting between the two presidents was that Donald Trump has decided to lift those sanctions.

#Lawrence

And the other point, Colonel, is... well, the Chinese weren't adhering to him anyway, and they directed all of their colleagues, if you will, in the world not to pay any attention to him also. So Trump was doing something that Xi had already done.

#Nima

Yeah. Do you feel, Colonel, that China, when you look at the meeting, I think something has changed? Looking at the big picture, something has changed, totally changed. China today, in my opinion, is a product. They saw what has happened in Ukraine. They saw what has happened with the case of the Iranian war, the war on Iran. And they're just thinking of their position. How do you find China's position right now? How do they define themselves? We know that the most important issue for China today is Taiwan. And they were talking about it, they were mentioning it, but we haven't heard anything in the outcome, in that statement by the White House, about Taiwan. It was about the Strait of Hormuz and demilitarization of the Strait of Hormuz—nothing of that sort for Taiwan. What is that, in your opinion? And how is that going to change the situation in Taiwan?

#Lawrence

Well, ever since Deng Xiaoping, the number one talking point for any Chinese diplomat or any Chinese person in the structure—the governmental structure—whether it be a district governor or just a simple minister in the districts or up at the higher level of the Politburo, the very first talking point is Taiwan. Every time we went to China, that was the first thing that came out, whether it was Wang Yi talking to us. At that time, he was head of the North American Division in MOFA and knew more about North America than any other Chinese. Then Chen Shicheng, and Chen Shicheng passed away, so he inherited that moniker, if you will. So it's the very first thing they say.

It doesn't really comport with putting enormous emphasis on it because it is pro forma with them. Now, that said, I suspect it is a little more serious right now because he sees—Xi sees—the Politburo, the military structure, which Xi just changed majorly. Think about that for a minute. And I have input that tells me that that was a lot about the nuclear arms race that is aborning right now and what those military people believe and what the civilians believe. But that's another matter altogether. I doubt they even talked about that. I doubt very seriously, because there were no—as he said—there were no sherpas, there was no groundwork done, there were no issues discussed.

This is a very important issue, Mr. President. We should have a working group on this, and we should have a position when we go in. None of that was done. Key issue, but none of that was done that I can detect. And none of those business people were there to talk about nuclear weapons, except in the sense that they might be making money off of them and might have had a side conversation about it. So what we're looking at with regard to China's position, which is your bigger question—China's position in its grandest scheme—is do nothing to stop the suicide. You don't necessarily have to do anything to aid and abet it.

But if you have something, bring it forward and we'll talk about it. But right now, we're not in the business of aiding and abetting a clear suicide by the other power on the other end of the world that competes with us. Now, we don't want that suicide to suddenly turn into a dying elephant thrashing grass, and maybe we're in the grass. So be careful what we do, be careful how we might decide to aid and abet that particular aspect of it—for example, the war in Iran—because it might have ramifications for us, which the war in Iran certainly does in terms of oil and other things. So that's China's geostrategic position.

Let them kill themselves. At the same time, you've got other people in the Central Party School who are advising, and generally that advice gets up to the Politburo, and it has some impact, that you don't want them gone completely from the world because they benefit you by being in the world in a number of ways—tick, tick, tick, tick, tick. So if you can develop diplomacy that keeps those aspects of the empire from disappearing and keeps them either negative, neutral, or in your favor, do that too. So he has a very exquisite portfolio that he can choose from at any given time in terms of actions China will take vis-à-vis America, and in general, vis-à-vis the West, which he considers Europe in particular—Western Europe in particular, Eastern Europe.

I think he's kind of got real substantive questions about it, as do I and anybody looking at it. Are the Poles going to take over for Germany? Are you kidding me? That's what their government is talking about right now—send your troops to our country, we'll take over from Germany. Well, Poland, what are the two countries in the world you've had in the last few hundred years the most problems with? Moscow and Berlin. Okay, well, maybe that's not a smart move. So Xi's kind of puzzled about that, but he's not puzzled about Western Europe. Western Europe is essentially, for different reasons, in the same state that America's in.

So he's got a similar strategy toward that. He doesn't want to lose them, and certainly doesn't want to lose the aspect that Putin is talking to him about all the time—restoring Russian sales of LNG and oil to Europe, which is happening right now. It's happening right now, even though the EU has passed laws about it not happening. And so he's got a very exquisite view of what's happening in the world, and he's got a strategy—multiple strategies—for dealing with it. And this meeting was no disturbance of that. Not really. It just confirmed for him what he already thinks he knows, and probably rightfully.

#Larry

You know, the language he used was particularly striking. You know, when he brought up the Thucydides Trap, I bet Trump was going, huh? Who's that? What's that? What kind of trap? Now, I admit, you know, I had to go back, and I said, you know, I was familiar with the term, but if you'd asked me to stand up and give a definition, I couldn't have given the definition offhand. Okay, so either we're looking at Xi Jinping as one of the most intelligent, educated leaders, well-versed in ancient Greek history, or one of his clever underlings said, hey, boss, let's lay this on Trump. This will freak him out. I'm not sure which it was, but it was one of the two. And the Chinese were

sending a very strong signal that they are the rising power. In fact, I think, if you want to pick a number of variables, you could point out that China has now surpassed the United States.

They have more banks in the top 10 of the world banks. They have a higher literacy rate than the United States. They certainly have a higher industrial capability. They can build more ships in one year than we've built in the last 60. They've developed hypersonic missiles—four—and we haven't even deployed one. So we just keep going down the list. And, you know, I think they also know from history that this is this kind of displacement of a hegemon, displacement of the United States as, quote, who perceives itself as, "We're the world leader, we're the best, we're the strongest." And nope, you know, it's like with Snow White, where the evil queen's mirror—"Mirror, mirror on the wall, who's the fairest of them all?"—and the day comes when the mirror looks back and says, "You ain't. You know, your time is over."

#Lawrence

And one of the—Nima, one of the—what Larry's talking about is so true. One of the most difficult things in human history, the 3,000 years we know something about and the 5,000 we know a little bit about, is this kind of transition, which is what Graham Allison and the Thucydides Trap—and General Thucydides himself—talked about. He was a general. A lot of people forget that, as well as a historian, one of the first historians in the world. Part of their point is just this: it is one of the most difficult transitions, most often failed at rather than succeeded, out of empire, out of the grand power, out of the scheme of, you know, "I'm the hegemon, I'm the number one power in the world." And it's not going to be any different for America.

In fact, in some respects, it's going to be more difficult because we have an incredible capacity to not be cohesive in 50 states, increasingly with different views, different visions, different kinds of problems, but some common problems that adhere—one of which is AI and water use and power. And it's coming into me, email after email after email, about the problems we're developing with this. Places like Corpus Christi, Texas, which have no water, which are going to disappear if we can't do something about their water problem. All of this is creating some real turmoil. So add to that the fact that this is an extremely challenging moment for anyone in human history to navigate successfully, stepping down from empire.

And by the way, Britain, when it stepped down, simply stepped into the shadow of America. So it had some place to go to hide. We don't have any place to go to hide, and we have a potential for dismemberment of our country, period, that's hugely potent right now, particularly with this administration, which would take total advantage of that, probably to create their own kind of government in its wake. That's extremely destabilizing and dangerous, I think, and we're at a moment right now in history, our history in particular, that's going to be difficult to navigate. And Xi knows that. Xi knows that. He doesn't want it to be catastrophic, but he wants it to proceed apace.

#Nima

He said that, Larry, he said that you have to choose. You want to confront? We can confront. You want to cooperate? We are ready to cooperate. And this is, I think, one of the main messages from China. We know that the Iranian foreign minister went to China before this meeting between Donald Trump and Xi. And next Wednesday, we're going to have Russian President Vladimir Putin going to China and talking with him. Larry, how do you see the way that China, Russia, and Iran are solidifying or improving the sort of partnership they have to confront these kinds of policies on the part of Washington to influence their countries?

#Larry

Well, there's something big underway behind the scenes that's not in public. I have received this information from—I'll call it a source with access to Pakistan's intelligence service. The comments that both Putin and Wang Yi made after meeting in Karachi regarding a new security architecture for the Gulf were not just offhand remarks. There is an actual planning effort, a negotiation effort underway, and it is concentrated on Qatar and Saudi Arabia. And part of the reason Pakistan is playing a leading role in this, with the encouragement and, if not the direction, of China, is that Pakistan has a bilateral security treaty with the Saudis.

And the reason they're focused on Saudi Arabia and Qatar, as I mentioned earlier, is those two countries produce helium, sulfur, urea, and liquefied natural gas. I mean, Qatar accounts for 10% of the global supply of liquefied natural gas. Think about that. It's the fourth largest after—you know, I had Russia, the United States, Norway, and then I think Qatar. So, you know, it's not insignificant. And the entire idea behind this new security architecture is to expel the U.S. military presence from the Persian Gulf, because the only reason it's there is to attack Iran. So get that out of there, to create an incentive for both the Saudis and the Qataris to distance themselves from the United States.

Because in the past, you know, part of that relationship of having the security blanket of Uncle Sam was you also had to buy Uncle Sam's treasury bills. And you had to buy Uncle Sam's, you know, shitty military equipment. Well, now that's starting to go away. And so Iran is not just a passive observer in this. Iran is directly involved in coordinating with both China and Russia, and China is playing a major role here. And that's why I think Trump sought to get the Chinese intervention—help us get those Iranians under control—and China's basic word was, no, no, it is you're the problem, not them, which is, you know, shocking for someone like Donald Trump. So this is, it's not, you know, they're not announcing this, but this is happening behind the scenes. And I think this is terribly, terribly significant.

#Nima

Larry, is that related to this sort of news that came out about a non-aggression pact between, you know—because they're talking about a new pact between Iran and Arab states? Yes, basically Saudi Arabia and Qatar. Oh, yeah, a non-aggression pact.

#Lawrence

Absolutely. And one thing, just to reinforce what Larry said, I have it on fairly good authority that Netanyahu had a trip planned to Islamabad. But what's happening right now has delayed that. But I'm quite confident that one of the things he wants to do is start a diplomatic action and otherwise to counter some of this because he sees it as being counter to his interests, as well he should. His political turmoil right now, though, is deepening every moment. I don't know what's going to happen. The vote of no confidence procedure in the Knesset is very different.

And I think what he's done is forestall a precipitate vote of no confidence by simply going for the bigger one, which puts it out to almost when an election would be anyway. So he feels like he's got the time to regain lost ground and such. And frankly, there's no one in the opposition who looks like they're any better than Netanyahu. And that's got voters probably puzzled as to whom they might vote for. But he's concerned about what's happening. There's no way he doesn't know about what Larry just said. Yeah.

#Nima

Colonel, here is what Donald Trump said about the reason for the war on Iran.

#Speaker 05

We don't need it at all. We don't need it at all. Fair enough. So, I mean, you could make the case, you know, like, why are we even doing it? We're doing it to help Israel and to help Saudi Arabia and to help Qatar and the UAE and, you know, Kuwait and other countries, Bahrain.

#Speaker 04

It also helps China.

#Speaker 05

I told him today, I said, you know, we're helping you. And we're helping you in another way because I don't think China wants Iran to have a nuclear weapon either. I said, just don't go crazy. You don't need them having a nuclear weapon either.

#Speaker 04

What did he say?

#Speaker 05

Well, he's not going to respond to much. He's a pretty cool guy. He's not going to say, "Oh, gee, that's a good point." What's he going to do?

#Speaker 04

What a wonderful point. You think he agreed? That was the impression.

#Speaker 05

I don't think he wants them to. No, he would like to see it end. But he's been good about it, you know.

#Lawrence

Sean Hannity's leading the person he's interviewing is so obvious. I think he must have gotten lawyer training.

#Nima

Yeah. Colonel, what he said about the reasons for the war is about Israel, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar. I don't see that happening in Saudi Arabia and Qatar. They don't see this war as helping them in any sort, in any aspect. Exactly the opposite. Yeah, they see how this war is hitting them, destroying their countries, their economy.

#Lawrence

Exactly the opposite. You're perfectly right there. You know, we forget—some people do anyway—that China was a very vested party to the JCPOA. And China showed during that time, through its negotiating and through its diplomacy, that it was indeed concerned about another violation of the Nonproliferation Treaty and another nuclear power violation. And it was convinced that the diplomacy that was going to take place with the Europeans and with us and others was going to be successful and would be good because they didn't want another nuclear power in the world. I don't think any of the vested nuclear powers want other nuclear powers in the world. Not really. In fact, I would say that the better amongst them want the numbers to go down, not up—but at best, or at worst, to stay stable.

So China was all for that. But China has seen what has morphed out of that with Donald Trump in particular, and Joe Biden—I can't let him out of this bag either. Since that JCPOA, and Biden was an enemy of the JCPOA because Blinken and Sullivan, his right-hand men as vice president, were

enemies of the JCPOA. They dared not let Obama get any sign of it, but they were, and they showed their true colors as soon as they came out, just like they did toward Cuba. Rapprochement achieved positive relations developing. They killed it. They murdered it in its crib. So a lot of the blame goes back to Biden, not only for that, but for Ukraine and a host of other things that we did very badly in his time, mostly due to Blinken and Sullivan.

I don't know if Biden was even sentient at the time. So you've got a situation now where China has changed completely because of what we've done. I'm not saying they're in favor of Iran getting a nuclear weapon. I don't think they are. Just as I said, in general, they're not in favor of that. But they have changed because we have forced them to change. And this is one of those things that I was talking about that Xi has told people to watch very carefully. Because if there is something the United States is doing that is disturbing our march toward championship, we want to do something about it. And that's where he is now. And he is doing something about it as best he can.

#Nima

Larry, when it comes to the Iranian nuclear program, it didn't seem that China responded to the comments of Donald Trump. But we know that Iran doesn't want nuclear weapons. It is not something new to announce, "Let's condemn Iran for pursuing nuclear weapons." They don't want it. That's why they were negotiating with the United States before this war started.

#Larry

Yeah, well, look, number one, I would ask anyone that has not read the JCPOA, that agreement that was inked with Iran, please go read it. Because the amount of propaganda that's put out about it is just—it's absurd, because you realize it was a robust agreement. Now, one of the propaganda lines in the West is that, oh, Obama gave back, gave all these billions of dollars to Iran. Well, number one, their money. Yeah, it was their money. They had paid U.S. arms dealers money. This was when the Shah was in power. So Iran had purchased weapons that were to be delivered to Iran. And then once the Shah went away, the United States said, oh, we're just going to keep the damn money.

Well, the courts then decided, no, you can't do that. But the United States has continued to hold it. The other thing to recognize is when that JCPOA was signed, both China and Russia at the time agreed to enforce pretty onerous sanctions on Iran if it didn't comply. And this is what makes it even more astonishing how stupid Donald Trump was in abrogating and tearing up that agreement. Because if the goal really was to prevent Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon, you know, that did it. But, you know, again, as I've argued before, the whole issue about Iran getting a nuke, that's just a sideshow. It's just an excuse to go in and try to find a reason to destroy the Iranian government.

Because when you explain to people that, at least within Shia theology—and the Shia are very consistent in this—it is a sin to kill noncombatants. It's OK, you know, guys carrying guns and shooting back at you, you can kill them, that's OK. But you don't kill women and children. You don't

slaughter innocents. And it's quite different from the Wahhabi and the Deobandi philosophy. And that's one of the principal reasons behind Ayatollah Khamenei's fatwa against a nuclear weapon, because a nuclear weapon is an indiscriminate weapon that kills innocents. And that's why it's a sin. And so you've got to applaud the Iranian Islamic Republic for at least having some shred of humanity that Israel and the United States clearly do not.

So the fact that, you know, China's presented, you want to help us keep Iran from getting a nuclear weapon? Yeah, sure. Because they're not trying to get one. I'm sure China has that assurance so far from Iran. And that's why, you know, while, you know, for those who are, you know, of a Hollywood movie mentality—yeah, get the nuke and that'll put you on even keel—the fact of the matter is Iran, with its conventional weapons, conventional ballistic missiles, has proven a formidable foe that has defeated a world superpower and one of the leading militaries, if not considered the most powerful military in the Middle East. Iran stopped them. And the rest of the world is watching, going, huh, how about that? Maybe the West is not as tough as we thought they were.

#Lawrence

Nima, this is the one place where I will take exception to what Larry just said. I don't think we have what we had with the Ayatollah. I think what we have right now is a very, very rational military force, the IRGC, in charge of Iran, for all intents and purposes. And I think what they have concluded, despite some of their Islamic leanings, if you will, which Larry elaborated on—and I agree with that to this point—I think they have an undisclosed facility deep underground. And I think they're very capable now of making a warhead, matching it with one of their faster missiles. And somehow, as the North Koreans did, announcing it—how they'll do that, I'm not quite sure—but I'll remind everybody that China was deadly opposed to all the Kims: Kim Il-sung, Kim Jong-il, and Kim Jong-un, getting a nuclear weapon.

They were our most potent ally, and Russia was right behind them at the time. I dare say they aren't anymore at trying to talk Pyongyang out of a nuclear weapon. More potent than we were in many respects, which is why we continually hosted the six-party talks in Beijing—one of the reasons, anyway. I think that whole thing has broken down now, and it's broken down with China and Russia also with regard to Iran becoming a nuclear power, because they understand, I think, that at heart, the only reason they're gonna want this is a deterrent. They don't want to use it on anybody, but they want a deterrent.

And the world has demonstrated to them, primarily through the DPRK experience, and the Gaddafi experience—he's dead now, and his country's in turmoil. North Korea is, you know, the dynasty is fine, and North Korea is, in their respect, fine. And it's all, in their minds, due to the possession of a nuclear weapon. I don't think they have any intent of using it. I really don't. And increasingly, the South has been kind of talked out of its trajectory toward perhaps having one, partly by that. And there are talks going on between Pyongyang and Seoul. So I disagree there, that they might find it convenient, even part of their survival, to have one in that still very dangerous region.

#Larry

Yeah, I mean, I don't necessarily disagree with the good colonel, because you can come up with a very rational argument why they now say, hey, look, we've tried to play it the Western way, and they keep betraying us repeatedly. And so the only way we're going to have guaranteed safety is we're going to have to build our own and let them know. But again, I come back to the whole nuclear issue. I call it a red herring, because let's assume that the nuclear issue is off the table. The West still wants to destroy the Islamic Republic. So it doesn't matter what Iran does. Because remember, when we were backing Saddam in 1980, '81 through '88, and that whole war that was waged against Iran, Iran wasn't looking for a nuke back then. And the nuke had nothing to do with it. We hate the concept of an Islamic Republic.

#Lawrence

Yeah, I think you're absolutely right there.

#Nima

I can confirm that there are... Israel.

#Lawrence

You've got to think about Israel in this too. Netanyahu is just such a freaking maniac. I have no doubt that he would use a nuclear weapon. And I'm sure they feel the same way in Tehran.

#Nima

Exactly, Larry. That's the main critical discussion right now in Tehran among the high-ranking people about what they are going to do with Benjamin Netanyahu and Israel if they decide to do something against Iran with nuclear weapons, if they decide to attack Iran every two months, every six months. What would be the response from Iran, and how can they respond to reduce that sort of threat? Just remember what has happened so far with the war against Iran. They have destroyed much infrastructure in Iran. They killed many people, innocent people, civilians. They don't want to get back to this sort of situation they're in right now. That's the huge question on their part: what are we going to do with that?

#Lawrence

And as I understand Brad Cooper's testimony to Congress, that wasn't necessarily open, we're planning on, if we do it, being as destructive as several nuclear weapons would be on Iran in this next response if we execute it. So, I mean, you know, you really have lots of incentive there. I wouldn't, as a military person in particular, but as a human being, I wouldn't blame them at all.

#Larry

Mm-hmm.

#Nima

Here is literally what Donald Trump said about the little cleanup that he has to do in Iran.

#Speaker 07

You ask for favors, you have to do favors in return. We don't need favors. We wiped out their armed forces, essentially. We may have to do a little cleanup work because we had a little month-long ceasefire, I guess you'd call it, but we have a blockade that's so effective, that's why we did the ceasefire. We really did the ceasefire at the request of other nations. Yeah.

#Nima

What does that mean? Literally, in Iran, they say there is no difference right now between the President of the United States and Benjamin Netanyahu, the Prime Minister of Israel. Correct. They're two merging with each other. They basically have the same sort of policies and the same sort of mindsets.

#Larry

Unless we see an order given throughout CENTCOM to start withdrawing assets from theater, then I assure you that the United States will renew an attack on Iran. And this next round, while Trump, again, in his delusion, "Oh, we've destroyed their military capability." Well, if you have, then why isn't the Strait of Hormuz open? Well, you know, if you've really wiped it out, if all the ships are at the bottom of the sea, then what is there left to punch back with? And, you know, Trump, in one of his recent social posts, accused anybody who suggests that Iran's missile force is largely intact of being a traitor and guilty of treason. You know, just crazy, crazy talk. So, you know, Trump is, you know, Trump's going to have to learn the hard way.

If he authorizes new strikes, which I believe he will, the Iranian retaliation will be far more devastating to the United States. Now, the wild card here is, what are Qatar and Saudi Arabia going to do? Because this will be what they call the nut-cutting moment. If they allow the United States to use their facilities—in Qatar, it's Al Udeid. I mean, that is still the largest base throughout the Middle East. And then the Saudis with Prince Saud Air Base. I was just, actually, yesterday, one of my neighbors said—he's a pilot—and I got talking to him, and he mentioned that his son was over in Saudi Arabia. I said, what is he? He goes, oh, he's Air Force. He's flying KC-135s. And I went, Jesus, man.

I said, they don't have protection. He goes, I know. He says, the only good news, he says, my son gets to come back next week because his wife is having their first child. And so he got leave to do that. I said, good. But all of our guys that are over there right now, they need to get the hell out, be pulled out. But the question remains, will the Saudis allow the United States to continue to conduct air operations? If the Saudis and Qataris shut that down, then that's going to make the United States pause. Again, that's one of these other wild cards that, even though Trump wants to give the order, Admiral Cooper is going to have to come back and say, hey, boss, we don't have the access to Qatar and Saudi Arabia that we did before.

And I guarantee you, if the Saudis and Qataris aren't on board, Kuwait's not going to stick its neck out. It's going to say, oh, yeah. And so all of a sudden, the United States is going to be faced with not having the bases to launch the refueling aircraft. And understand that I think they're keeping the F-35s farther to the west in Jordan at the Muwaffaq al-Salti Air Base. So if they're going to fly to drop ordnance on Iran, the distance from Muwaffaq al-Salti Air Base to Riyadh is over 800 miles. The combat radius of an F-35, as I understand it, is like 550 miles. So that means they've got to be refueled before they even get to a point near Riyadh where they could potentially launch a JASSM. A JASSM has a range of about 500 miles.

And then they have to immediately turn around and get refueled again. So, I mean, this is what we're talking about. If you're going, and the plan is for 500 targets—if you're going after 500 targets, you've got 500 aircraft in the air, or at least more than 100 or 200. And if you've got to do refueling for 200 aircraft, I mean, this thing gets enormously complex, right? So that's where, in a way, the Saudis and Qataris, I think, hold the key to whether or not the United States will actually be able to renew this offensive. They want to, but then you get down to the practical nuts and bolts of the logistics. Do they have the logistics that can actually support it?

#Lawrence

There was an article in Haaretz the other day, too, Nima, that was interesting from the point of view that that newspaper was reporting it. But it was reporting it from a different angle than Larry was just discussing, which is an important angle militarily. It was saying the Israeli IDF/AF is really angry with the United States because of all the space they're taking on their airfields.

#Nima

Basically, in Ben Gurion, they have a lot of C-130s and other airplanes at Ben Gurion Airport. Larry, when it comes to Saudi Arabia, we have a report from Bloomberg saying that during the recent war—the war between Iran and the United States—the UAE leader, MBZ, Mohammed bin Zayed, personally called the leaders of Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia, proposing to form an Arab coalition against Iran, but every country refused. This report is from Bloomberg. How do you find that? You know, we have two sort of arguments. On one side, we're hearing that Saudi Arabia was trying to convince the United States to continue the war. On the other hand, we're hearing from

Saudi Arabia that this war has to end. We have to find other solutions because our economy is in bad shape right now, and we cannot make money.

#Larry

That is the key thing to look at in terms of the disruption of the flow of those five commodities I talked about earlier: oil, liquid natural gas, urea, helium, sulfur. When you look at the overall, within the scope of the Gulf Arabs, the oil flow is most critical for the Saudis. Their major income stream is from the export of oil and the export of sulfur. For Qatar, their major income stream is from the liquid natural gas, the urea, and the helium, and yeah, they also pump some oil. Everybody else is also primarily dependent on oil that's getting exported. And if it's not getting exported, they don't have the cash flow.

So they are looking to get that whole process back online so that they do have some cash flow. And this is where the UAE is now in a bit of trouble because before, they still had Fujairah Port, which was on the Gulf of Oman. So it was considered outside of the Strait of Hormuz. It was not easy for Iran to block it. Well, Iran blew it up. And now they don't have that anymore. So their cash flow is cut off. And this is, you know, I feel like the voice crying in the wilderness with respect to the economic implications of the shutdown of this place. Now we're going on—we're approaching 80 days—and it is, the global impact on the shortages is significant.

Just as an example, here in the United States, it was Shell and Mobil Oil that informed Costco and Walmart. So the two big, you know, these are big stores which sell cut-rate items. They said, you know, all that oil we give you, or we sell you, that you put on your shelves for people to do their own oil change in their vehicles—we don't have any more. So those shelves are now going to be empty. Toyota issued a bulletin to its U.S. distributors that, hey, you know, usually they use like 8-weight oil for oil changes. They're now saying, well, you can use 16-weight or 20-weight because we don't have any more of the 8-weight, and the others are going to be scarce too. So this is starting to hit.

#Lawrence

Watch out, I'm getting an oil change next week.

#Larry

Get it while you can, my friend. Get it while you can. So this cascade effect is starting, and it is significant. And the problem is, it's not until the full rage of this economic crisis punch in the gut comes—starts, you know, becomes so apparent—that Trump is actually going to have to cave. And we saw Trump just before he got on the plane, when he was asked about the economic circumstances for Americans. He basically said, I don't care. Not my problem. Well, it's going to become his problem. You watch. In fact, today, you know, during this whole China trip, the stock

market, it's sort of up to over 40, you know, 50,000 again. It's dropped now about 500 points on the Dow Jones. It's down on the NASDAQ as well and the S&P. It's starting to fall. And the realities of the supply shortages are going to start hitting. They're hitting this week. It's going to be worse next week. It's going to be worse the week after.

#Nima

There is a report, Colonel, in the Financial Times. It says that if the Strait of Hormuz remains heavily disrupted into next month, the issue shifts from high prices to actual physical shortages. Yeah. This is the reality of Donald Trump. I don't know how he's going to—he said that he rejected the Iranian proposal. Here's what he said about the Iranian proposal.

#Speaker 08

Questions around the China trip, which is first on Iran: have you rejected the latest proposal from Iran, or where does that stand?

#Lawrence

I looked at it, and if I don't like the first sentence, I just throw it away. I promise you he didn't know what was in the first sentence. Oh, he didn't know what was there. He lies through his teeth all the time. Back to Larry's point, I think we're already now, today, at a point of things not getting where they should be getting. You don't have to look out to the future for that to come. We're already at that point. And I certainly would say that about what the Iowa farmer told me. And their expectation is, in both the diesel product they need at a price that's affordable and the fertilizers that they need, it's a foregone conclusion for them. And they're desperately trying to figure out how to deal with that. The other thing I would say about that is you've got an enormous capacity here in Iran's remaining ballistic missiles, which Trump has sicced Patel on—you know, the supposed whistleblowers that talked to the New York Times on both issues, both the fact they have missiles left and the fact that they have a robust supply of them along the Persian Gulf.

And to go after these whistleblowers with a vengeance is, at the same time that we're hearing from others in the farming community and the economic community in general, that, as we said, these ships that made port because they were able to get out of the Strait and have offloaded their product have basically been consumed now, in one way or another—either upcountry, if you will, or they're consumed in the vicinity of the port or whatever. So there's nothing coming now, nothing whatsoever coming. Regardless of Trump's desire for his buddies to play the stock market and so forth, I think that's going to be taken out of the equation here very shortly because the stock market is going to start plummeting, and it's going to keep plummeting. And then he's going to have to deal with that.

The last thing I'd say about this economic situation is that we don't seem to understand that though we're flush with oil—we have plenty of oil, we have plenty of refining capacity—I'm not so sure it's so smoothly operating with regard to diesel, but we do have the capacity. It has really no relevance if what's happening to you is global, and other things than that product coming out of the Permian Basin, for example, and going somewhere to be refined and delivered for use, are irrelevant to this stoppage of the global economy that's going to occur and impede you in so many other ways that you aren't even contemplating right now. And I don't see anybody really working on this in the Treasury Department or anywhere else. And you've got other things brewing right now. Like, for example, the Cuban government just said, we're out.

We're done. We're toast. You know, if somebody doesn't help us, we're toast. We're finished as a society and as a country. I don't think they'd be saying that if it weren't true. So there are other things brewing. And to your point about the Saudis, I'll recount to you what Powell said once after Bandar had left. The Saudis will bet on two courses of action, maybe three or four, but two in particular that are directly the opposite—directly the opposite—until they perceive that one is going to overwhelm the other. Then they'll shift all of their bet. They'll shift all their dough, all their concern, and everything to that option.

So that's probably what they're doing right now with regard to which way they're going to go. And ultimately, I would say Donald Trump is ignorant of that. Donald Trump will go regardless of the Saudi view, and he will reinforce whatever is the most negative aspect of the Saudi reaction—negative for the United States—which, as Larry intimated, might be, you're not using a single asset. And oh, by the way, you're not using Al-Udeid either, because we've talked to the Qataris and they're not going to let you use it. So what do you do in that case if you're Bradley Cooper? My concern is Bradley Cooper will force his way in and execute anyway.

#Larry

That's my concern.

#Lawrence

And it wouldn't be hard to do. It really wouldn't be hard to do. The Saudis can stand there and interpose all the objections in the world and break out their National Guard and everything else. We'd still go ahead and execute. How do you like that if you're coming home and you're a pilot to a place where the host country might be ready to shoot you when you land? But I'm not impressed with Bradley Cooper at all. Yeah.

#Larry

Concur.

#Nima

Larry, what do you make of the way Benjamin Netanyahu announced that he was visiting the UAE during the war, in a secret sort of meeting with MBZ? And later on, we had the UAE denying that meeting. And then Israel came out saying it wasn't just Benjamin Netanyahu, it was the head of Mossad, the IDF chief of staff, the head of Shin Bet. They were all together in that meeting with MBZ and his people.

#Larry

Well, I'm going to use an obscure cultural reference, and I'll explain it, but he's a malevolent Conrad Dobler. So, in American football, there was this football player known as Conrad Dobler. He was famous for being a dirty player, and he was also known for provoking fights between different people. Like, you know, they'd be crouched down on the line, and he'd say to the center, "Hey, do you hear what this guy said about your sister?" You know, and so all of a sudden you get two guys fighting. That's Benjamin Netanyahu.

He is out to stir the pot, to get other people to cause disruption within the Gulf Arabs as much as possible. Not to say that the United Arab Emirates is not doing a good job on its own in that account. But nonetheless, this was just deliberate malevolence on the part of Bibi, because he recognized they're in a tough situation. They're not doing well on the ground in Lebanon. Their ability to sustain air operations against the Lebanese—I think they're going to run up against some real limitations on that. And the tide has turned against them in the United States.

#Lawrence

Yeah, that's not going to work.

#Nima

Lebanon is just screwing Hezbollah. I don't know if you saw the footage that Hezbollah is publishing, and it's just unbelievable the way they're hitting each and every point, you know, every point where they have these IDF forces, Merkava tanks, batteries. I'm talking about the air defense system batteries, the forces. They're hitting everything with these FPV drones.

#Lawrence

Yeah. Let me quote this from Haaretz based on what you said just earlier. This is out of Haaretz yesterday: Abe Foxman's death marks the demise of the American Jewish establishment. That's where we are, I think, with Charlie Kirk's assassination and all that that meant. We have eroded something I thought would probably persist for at least another decade or two, and maybe even get worse. We have eroded it dramatically. They do not have the influence in this country that they once

had. I think Tom Massie is going to prove that in spades. But that's a huge development, a huge development, a positive development as far as I'm concerned.

#Larry

Yeah.

#Lawrence

But, you know, a dying elephant can thrash a lot of grass, and the Jewish influence may be dying, but it can still thrash a lot of grass, and Donald Trump is grass that's thrashable. Yeah.

#Nima

Larry, do you think that Donald Trump—there are two options, let's put it this way. One of them is what Robert Kagan said about the situation with the war against Iran: it's not good. The only option for Donald Trump is just leaving the region, just letting them do what they did. The second option is what the other neocons, the hardcore neocons, are suggesting: we have to stay in the region, we have to continue this sort of fight. If it comes to a blockade or something like a blockade, and these sorts of attacks happening between the two sides, at the same time we have to prepare, we have to send a lot of weapons to the Iranian people, and they have to do the heavy lifting for us, just overthrowing the government. It's just amazing to me, this argument—how disconnected it is from the reality of what's going on today in Iran. Where does Donald Trump want to go?

#Larry

Trump doesn't know where he wants to go. He's got to be told. I mean, he really doesn't. He doesn't have an escape plan. He's been given several exit ramps, and he's refused to take them so far. And that's still because he is so much under the control of the Zionist lobby. So, you know, that's why I think he's caught. You don't have anybody—the few voices around him that reportedly have advised against this—he's ignoring. So, you know, unfortunately, there are two ways to learn. There's the easy way and the hard way, and he's going for the hard way.

#Nima

Larry, is that right? I don't know. We've heard some sort of news about Tulsi Gabbard's office being raided by the CIA.

#Larry

Yeah, that wasn't true. She debunked it.

#Nima

That wasn't true, no. Col. Wilkerson, before wrapping up, do you have something to add?

#Lawrence

I'm just sitting there, pondering.

#Nima

The same question that I asked Larry—what would be the path forward for Donald Trump? Robert Kagan's sort of solution or the other party's?

#Lawrence

Well, the smart path, the wise path, would be to call quits to this and tell Netanyahu to go stuff himself in whatever way he would do that. Just doing what I'm suggesting would probably do that sufficiently. And tell him if he uses a nuclear weapon, we will bring every force in America down on his head and make sure that he is gone from the political scene, if not the world. Maybe even a little more threatening than that. But he won't do it. He won't do it. One, because he's being lied to—fiercely being lied to—by a lot of people, including people like Brad Cooper.

And two, because he's not that kind of person. He just can't do that. We're stuck with that. And I could say three, he's demented, and increasingly so. That's what we have right now. It's not a phenomenon that hasn't occurred in history before. You can point to all points, and a lot of points in time, where it occurred, particularly in the 20th century. But there's nothing we can do about it, really, unless the American people were really willing to take their republic back. And they've demonstrated repeatedly that they're not.

#Larry

Yeah.

#Nima

Thank you so much, Carol and Larry, for being with us today. Great pleasure.

#Larry

Yeah, we have nothing but cheery news for the world, right?

#Lawrence

Cheery news, cheery news.

#Larry

All right, my friend. See you soon.

#Lawrence

All right. Keep Brazil out of the fight. Yeah, yeah.

#Nima

We're going to stay out of the fight, yeah. We're not going to be part of it. Take care.

#Lawrence

Okay. Take care. Bye, all. Bye.