

Lawrence Wilkerson: Trump-Xi Meeting After U.S. Defeat in Iran

Colonel Lawrence Wilkerson discusses the meeting between Trump and Xi in Beijing following the U.S. defeat in Iran. 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 again by Colonel Lawrence Wilkerson, the former chief of staff to the U.S. Secretary of State, to discuss what has been going on in both China and Iran. It's good to see you again. My first question I really want to ask you is, what do you see as having been achieved in China by Trump? I guess, what is there of substance, and what do you think were more theatrics?

#Lawrence Wilkerson

I don't watch many of the videos associated with Donald Trump. A few, I'll admit. But I watched these, such as they were and available, with some assiduousness — best way to put it. And I was struck, because ever since I went to China in 1984 the first time, and then back repeatedly with regard to the policy planning staff and later as chief of staff at the State Department, I've taken a real interest in China. I'm probably one of the very few who actually received an invitation to visit the Central Party School. That was when Hu Jintao was more or less in charge before he became president.

But it was a very flattering thing to receive, and it resulted in the fact that Richard Haass and I and others who had been over there, speaking incidentally with Wang Yi, who was then an up-and-coming guy in the MOFA, about their HIV-AIDS problem. And we actually brought some experts from Harvard and elsewhere over with us, and we helped them, and they solved their HIV-AIDS problem pretty swiftly, as they are wont to do when they learn where the problem exists and why. So I watched it very closely, and I was struck immediately by what I thought I would see, but I didn't know how I would see it — Xi standing rock hard, rock solid on the flat of his feet, if you will, not on the toes, not on the heels, standing there, waiting for the leader of the free world, as we often style our president — very questionable styling these days — but to come forward to him and to approach him and to extend his hand.

And I said, whoa, man, the Chinese have choreographed this to the last word, the last gesture. And sure enough, they had, and they lived up to what Richard Haass and I discovered was absolutely their first talking point, no matter why you were meeting — Taiwan — and being insistent upon it. And from that point on, I think the Chinese owned the summit. I really do. And, of course, I haven't been privy to everything that happened there. But I think they owned it, whether it's Cargill and resuming soybeans. I sent an email this morning, Glenn, to a friend of mine whom I met in Iowa, a Republican. I met him during the time I was working out there on the climate crisis. And I found him. Now, Iowa is our most powerful agricultural state — not California, not some other state in the South — Iowa.

That's our most powerful agricultural state. It has the most influence with Congress. So I wanted to make a friend of this guy — Republican, a Trumper at first. I don't think he is anymore. But I quickly understood that he understood the climate crisis, particularly as it impacted farmers and his rural community. And he was doing things that I was applauding because he understood what was happening with his terracing, with his erosion resistance in the soil and such, which was incredibly successful in increasing yield. But the rains were destroying it. And he looked at me and said, you know how much rain we are getting now? It is unbelievable. And I've been a farmer in Iowa for 30 years. And then he talked about other aspects of it, like increased yields and increased growing season because of the heat. He got it, in other words. So I'm asking him a question this morning.

I can't wait to hear his reply to my email. Okay, so China's going to buy our soybeans again. Are you and the community at large going to be able to grow them? Because I'm hearing from farmers right now, including my son-in-law, who's a farmer up in Maryland, that they can't get the fertilizer. And so they are looking at a disastrous farming season because they can't get the fertilizer, and they don't see it coming anytime soon. So this was a disaster in terms, I think, of the real issues that we needed to talk about, not least of which was a more substantive discussion of the Iran war, which I think boiled down to Trump made his points, Xi made his points, both were lying, and they went on from there. So I'm not sure how to characterize the summit yet, except in gestures and choreography, which the Chinese are geniuses at. Trump lost.

#Glenn

A lot of it was superficial, it seemed. China can do a lot of things because they would like to have good, cordial relations with the United States, and I think they're willing to go to a certain extent to make sure. As Xi Jinping said, we want to make sure that the so-called Thucydides Trap — this idea that the declining hegemon is met with a challenger, that this usually results in war — is managed carefully. So we have to manage this very critical time in human history very carefully. So towards this end, I think they're going to be willing to do a lot of things. But I think those things would be, for example, curbing or restricting some exports of chemicals that are used in fentanyl.

I'm not pronouncing that well at all. Also, buying some energy and agriculture from the United States, making some good gestures. But the one area where it appears there's no willingness to give

an inch would be on the issue of Taiwan. And I got the impression that they are, well, especially now that the U.S. suffered its defeat in Iran, that they're willing to send a very strong message that, you know, what you're doing now is unacceptable — that is, trying to chip away, I guess, at the One China policy. Or do you think this is something that Trump would be willing to walk a little bit back from? Or is it just going to return to the status quo?

#Lawrence Wilkerson

As his straits become more and more dark, and I don't expect them to become anything but, I think there might be some flexibility there. But at the same time, I have to add, I don't believe China thinks that there is any possibility, really, of the Americans coming to Taiwan's defense — first of all, at all, and second, and probably as important in their calculus, effectively. So it's an issue because it has been an issue. As Richard Haass says, as he was briefing the team going to China in 2001, I guess it was, before 9/11, for our first meetings with him — policy planning meetings — I just sat there and listened. I knew what he was going to say. The first point they'll bring up is Taiwan.

I guarantee you, every meeting, that was the first point they brought up. So it's almost like a rubric with them. It's almost like, I've got to bring this up to discuss other things of note and consequence. I've got to get this one out of the way, get it out of the way. There's a little bit more than that this time, a little bit more than that. And I think it's partly because, as you and I have briefly discussed in the past, China is well aware that it's winning. It wishes to do nothing at all to disturb that process. And it sees, as Ricardo Alarcón said to me one time in Cuba, even a dying elephant can thrash a lot of grass. Well, I think Xi sees that too. He does not want us to stop our suicide.

But he would like to see it, and this is an aside, he would like to see us stop it before it impacts China adversely. And so he's willing to help up to a point that keeps us afloat, perhaps is the best way to say it, but doesn't increase our power and, in fact, slowly and gradually diminishes it even more, to the point where he doesn't really have to be concerned about us anymore other than one component. And this is the difference in all of human history — this component: nuclear weapons. He's got to be concerned about nuclear weapons. And I'm doing a piece for the Eisenhower Media Network right now, along with a Kansas University professor, and together we are stunned at what we are planning to do with our stockpile.

We damn well know he's almost as old as I. He'll hate me for saying that. We damn well know that this is a nuclear arms race to match and perhaps even exceed the one that occurred during the Cold War. And basically, you only had two powers there. Now you've got nine states, eight in addition to us, and two or three aspirant states. So this is a very serious issue, and it's going to get more serious as we go along. It's going to be very serious with Xi. I think one of the reasons he axed some of his Politburo-aspirant military members recently was that very thing. He's not too happy with this nuclear arms race, and he certainly doesn't want to be one who makes it worse.

He'll do it, but he doesn't want to make it worse. And that's all the way back to Mao Zedong, when Mao Zedong said, we don't need any more nuclear weapons than to deter people, because we've got a billion people. They drop them on us, they'll kill a couple hundred million. We'll drop them on Los Angeles, New York, Houston, Michigan—you know, we'll wipe them out. So that was kind of the philosophy they had: just enough for deterrence. Now they're building out, and they are going to build out as vigorously as we do, I suspect. So this is a hell of a dangerous thing to happen, this nuclear arms race, with no treaties—no treaties whatsoever. So Xi is very circumspect about that, I think.

The rest of it, I think, was a show. No way in the world does Donald Trump or our intelligence community believe Xi when he says he's not helping Iran. I mean, our own New York Times is now going to have Kash Patel sicced on it by Trump to go after these people who, from the DNI's office or wherever within our 18 intelligence communities, leaked to the New York Times that China's providing arms to Iran. They're also going after the New York Times, I'm told, and already in place to do it for this business of saying Iran is not depleted the way Trump's saying it is. They're putting something like 70% to 80% on ballistic missiles remaining and launchers remaining and all manner of other things, particularly in the area of the Persian Gulf.

So he's going after the New York Times now the way, you know, Dan Ellsberg was gone after for the Pentagon Papers, but with more viciousness and a lot more power to do damage to these literary giants. I'm surprised the New York Times is doing this, other than there is so much Israeli influence on the Times editorial board and others within the complex that maybe they're doing it so that Netanyahu's screaming at Trump to keep the war going is effective. That could very well be why they're doing it. Because they're saying, you haven't done much yet, Donald. You need to do more, in essence. And that's okay with Netanyahu and the other supporters of Israel in America. I don't know. But it's not good that he's doing these things against journalists.

I mean, this is a whole newspaper he's going after. And apparently what Patel is going to do is ferret out the whistleblowers. So it's absolutely damaging to anybody that wants to live up to the whistleblower laws that we passed to protect whistleblowers, which we've almost destroyed now and will probably finally destroy completely with this supine Congress and these moves by Trump to go after these people. Not a good development at all in terms of the domestic situation. And then you look at the other aspects of what Trump was doing there, and you look at how insignificant the diplomats were, the few that were there. And one of the diplomats that I found to be very helpful when I was at State was the Secretary of the Treasury.

And in essence, I have to tell the truth and say it was Ken Daum, the Deputy Secretary of the Treasury, who was an Asia expert and who often saved us from making errors in what we were doing diplomatically because they didn't make sense in terms of his knowledge of the economy and Asian economies. And so we welcomed him, and Ken spoke most of the languages out there too. So he was a real addition to our diplomatic team. And we see Scott Besant there, but I don't think he

added very much to it at all. I don't think he's capable of adding very much to it at all. The Chinese are leagues ahead of him in terms of economic matters. So we didn't have anybody there but business. I mean, in essence, that's what it was. It was a business trip.

And the lead honcho businessman was Donald Trump himself, however much he lied or equivocated. So what did we accomplish other than things like I was talking about? OK, they resumed soybean buying from the United States. Well, what if we can't raise the soybeans? This is not a, you know, issue here, issue there, issue there. They're all connected. And the Strait of Hormuz and its closure is connected to them all. And I didn't really see anything come out of this that said anything about, other than expressed interest in its being open, it being open. So what did we accomplish? I mean, I'm waiting to hear more about it and see if we did accomplish something. But I don't think we accomplished much except we illustrated very well who's the number one economy in the world and who's not.

#Glenn

I saw Marco Rubio afterwards make a big point out of the fact that, well, not the fact, but arguing that the United States never asked China for any help on Iran or anything because we don't need any help. We're all-powerful. I thought, yeah, that was a bit disappointing, though, because, well, first of all, it's obviously a lie, and everyone knows that the United States wants China to put pressure on Iran, so we know that they ask them for help. But also what it signifies, because the whole reason they have to, you know, play pretend that they don't ask China is because they want to present themselves as all-powerful. But this is, again, showing off a hegemonic potential.

I was hoping that a meeting like this between the two great powers, at least the two largest powers now, would be a good way of, I guess, recalibrating relations — that is, transitioning a bit into this new multipolar reality we're in. That is, in other words, under a hegemon, the hegemon doesn't have to get help from anyone else. But I would like to see the United States, Russia, and China come to a place where they recognize that the stability of the world depends on their ability to work together and coordinate. You know, if they can't harmonize interests, at least manage the competition — do something. But instead, they're still holding on to this charade, this idea that they're still, you know, all-powerful and don't need assistance from the Chinese.

It just... I don't know. I would have liked to see something like a great power compromise. But on this, though, it seems that one of the areas where the U.S. overstated the agreement was with the nuclear issue. That is, they argue that the Iranians should not have a nuclear weapon. The Chinese agreed. Indeed, the Iranians seem to agree. They also said they won't get a nuclear weapon, but the U.S. sold it as something more than this, it seems — that they weren't even going to have any enriched uranium, which I can't imagine the Chinese would support at all. So how do you see these issues? If the U.S. is overstating the Chinese agreement to these statements, why is it so important?

#Lawrence Wilkerson

Let's unpack a lot of that.

#Glenn

Sorry, that was a long question.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

No, it was a great dialogue. I think we're looking at, as I've said many times before, this shift of power in the world being more and more recognized — and more and more recognized not just in Asia, in the 60% of the GDP and people that live there or work there or both, but also by a wider array of people in the West. So that's the first thing I think we have to think about when we talk about someone like Marco Rubio, who probably doesn't understand that at all. And so he's flying in the face of not only world opinion, global opinion as it is developing, but also Western opinion and opinion even in America. I like to think that people like you and I are having some impact on that.

And Marco Rubio, too, is running for president. So you have to really parse his words now in that regard because he's running for president as a MAGA guy — maybe even as a more intensely MAGA guy than Donald Trump himself, whose vicissitudes are such that you wonder what he means when he talks about MAGA issues. So Rubio is kind of out of the equation right now as an identifier of diplomacy, as he should be, or even of where America might go in the future if he were to be the heir apparent and become the heir. I don't think that's going to happen, but he does. So everything he says now has to be interpreted in light of the fact that he's running for president of the United States.

The second thing I would comment on in what you outlined there is what I've been saying also pretty persistently, and that is that if China has an attitude that is best reflected, for example, in the BRICS summit that's coming up in September in India and in its title, which is all about sustainability, development, innovation, cooperation — I underline that in the title, I even made sure that the translation was correct — and we're about all the opposites of those key terms, and that's what we are. Let's just envision something for a moment, if you could put it up in Klieg lights across the globe, hang it out in space, you know, and say, okay, this is what the empire stands for — the American empire.

It stands for sanctions on 2.2 billion people, and more if we can get it, and war, as exemplified by the last 25 years, surely, but certainly now, maniacally, by Iran. What does the rest of the world stand for, led by China and, to a certain extent, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and BRICS? What does this stand for? Innovation, development, technology, cooperation, resilience — all these terms in their title. That is a stark contrast, I think, not only to the world, the global community, certainly the global South, who suddenly have some hope maybe, but certainly to the cognoscenti

and most of the rest of the world, including the West. It looks like we've lost our way completely. It looks like we are walking into hell completely, with full awareness that the flames are all around us and there's nothing we can do. We can't even turn around and walk back.

We're just going to go right on in and burn up. That's a hard place to be if you're a citizen and you're trying to figure out how to return to the Republic, get out of this empire, or at least diminish its impact, and at the same time deal with a very different world. And I think a lot of people are having trouble with that across the gamut, whether it be academics, business people, or whatever. The ones who seem to not have any trouble with that, Trump took with him. And that's a very alarming development. I think he took those people with him who build, let's face it, dangerous airplanes. Yeah. Thank you very much, Boeing, who would raid the world for a few pennies in terms of agriculture, who are interested in a technocracy that puts them in charge.

And I wouldn't put it past some of these people to, essentially, work their Chinese contacts who might be empathetic and sympathetic with them to help them do this and ultimately establish a technocracy that not only is in the United States of America and triumphant, but also is spreading its feelers all around the world to include the dominant power in the world, China. So what are we talking about doing with this council of business people rather than true diplomats? I think it's pretty apparent what we're doing. We're trying to build what Elon Musk wants to build. We're trying to build it as fast as possible. We'll take the Chinese technology and rare earth metals and everything else that we need to do this along with us.

And if you want to accompany us, certain members of your regime, and be a part of this eventual global technocracy, feel free to do so. And we'll build it so we can watch it from outer space. And Elon will provide the rockets. I know this sounds like nonsense, but I'm increasingly of a mind that it isn't nonsense and that we have a group of people in the world, led by the United States, who are so interested in this technocratic approach to the future. And for some reason, there's no question about it—AI least of all—which they all are heavily invested in, directly or indirectly. But there is an insidious aspect to it that troubles me greatly. It would trouble George Orwell greatly too, I'm sure, were he still around. So that's a long, rambling answer, but I think we're in trouble.

#Glenn

Yeah, no, I get that impression as well.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

Those of us who still believe in poetry, those of us who still believe in Shakespeare, those of us who still believe in the cultural things in the world that make life worth living, those of us who believe in families, intact families and children and healthy environments to raise those children, and education and help for the poor and all those things—we're in trouble.

#Glenn

Yeah. Now, I think the emergence of this, I guess, denationalized elite combined with the technological changes, the change in distribution of power—it's very difficult to manage all of these changes.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

I'm going to write that down. "Denationalized elite"—that's a great phrase.

#Glenn

Different order than the globalists, I guess.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

Yeah, a more direct and serious term.

#Glenn

Samuel Huntington, he wrote this article in 2004 called *Dead Souls*. He argued essentially, well, that we're heading where we're going now—that is, into an elite which isn't that connected with the nation anymore. And I think you can argue that this happened... well, he made the point economically, but also culturally. But you can say technologically as well, there's less that links the elites to where they are. But no, it's fueling many levels of problems. But I was also wanting to ask you about the Strait of Hormuz, because initially this is one of the things that really surprised me. That is, that the Chinese were arguing that they didn't want a toll and they wanted the Strait of Hormuz open. But then, you know, when I looked into it more, the statements—they weren't actually condemning Iran or anything. They were more or less just stating, we want an open strait, open waterways. And that's kind of a shared sentiment by the Iranians as well, I think.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

The way to get that is to let the Iranians control it, you know, with Chinese backup maybe. But that's the way to get it. That was the implication I took from it too.

#Glenn

Yes, I think these are kind of vague statements. People read what they want into them. So again, I might be wrong, but you don't think the Chinese are willing to put any pressure on Iran at the behest of the United States?

#Lawrence Wilkerson

Well, they might be willing to talk about the 10, or now 13 or 14, whichever list you read, points. I think I saw yesterday, and I asked one of my Iranian colleagues to confirm it, if he would. I said, is lifting of the siege, the permanent cessation of war, compensation for damages, removal of all illegal sanctions—that to them is all sanctions, primary, secondary, and so forth—and ultimately respect for Iran's sovereignty and its rights as a nation in the world, would that be a condensation you would accept? And he said, absolutely. So that's boiling the 10 down into five or six. But they're still, most of them, not acceptable to Bibi Netanyahu.

The only thing acceptable to Bibi Netanyahu, I think, is a Bantustan-like Iran. It's, you know, a lot of people running around—Azeris, Kurds, Persians, and everything else—and no stability and no soundness, civil war or whatever, all over the place. That's the only thing Netanyahu will take, other than a completely eradicated Iran with glowing deserts. So I don't know how you get there. I really don't. But Trump should be focused on key points in that. Notice that there was nothing there he said about the nuclear program—the nuclear program for him, at least. And he said he's reflecting the deputy foreign minister, I think. Yeah, I don't know exactly how to say this. I had not run into him before.

I don't know how you get there. Trump's major issue is the nuclear program. They don't even want to put it down as a point to discuss, unless maybe by back channel they've arrived at some kind of solution that both find, temporarily at least, suitable to the nuclear problem. And now they're just working on these other issues. I don't know. I still hold my view that I don't think diplomacy is anything but a subterfuge. Ceasefires are nothing but a subterfuge. And in a few days, we're going back to all-out war. And when Brad Cooper, that admiral in charge of Central Command—I always said, I told Powell, Powell agreed with me—don't ever put a Navy or an Air Force guy in charge of a unified command.

He wasn't so worried about the Navy as he was the Air Force. But Cooper's lying to Congress through his teeth. He's lying to Congress when he says we have not killed any civilians except those. And the only reason he said this was because it was on video—those you saw in the school at the opening of the conflict. Are you kidding me? Read the New York Times and the Washington Post. They even report that you've killed more civilians than that. What does he consider an innocent civilian? I mean, and this is the four-star leading the effort in Central Command. So I don't know where we are, but I think we're going back to war. Bottom line.

#Glenn

No, it appears so. I don't see any—well, again, I don't see a path to military victory, but I don't see any diplomatic settlement either moving forward. But the Iran issue, though, it had a very key—I think it's quite important also for the U.S.-Chinese relations because it seemed that when Trump, you know, agreed to this initial meeting before postponing it with Xi Jinping, that he wanted to

defeat the Iranians before they met, so he had that to show off. But instead, we're in this situation where the U.S. is in very deep, deep trouble. And I thought it was fascinating, as you probably read the article now by Robert Kagan, "The Checkmate in Iran." For me, this is quite extraordinary, to have one of the top neocons recognizing defeat. I mean, forever wars—are there... one of the top.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

He's the king. He's the prince. Take your turn.

#Glenn

What are you really into this? Because this is quite significant. I mean, you know, the mood in Europe, the limit of free speech, that is, would be, you know, if you recognize that we're losing, that means you're taking the side of the opponent. So we always have to, you know, play pretend, that is. You know, the Russians—unprovoked war, the Ukrainians are winning. Everyone has to repeat these things, which you know aren't true. But the same goes with Iran. That is, you know, the attack was to, you know, say, liberate the country from the mullahs. And, you know, the Americans are overwhelming, the Iranians are defeated.

So one kind of has to repeat this nonsense to prove your loyalty to Iran. But again, for me, it's quite absurd because all you're doing is ignoring reality and thus making everything much, much worse. But still, for a guy like Kagan to come out, as you said, the king of the neocons, and say, okay, we lost. This is it. I mean, this is essentially the end of the, you know, arguing that this will be the graveyard of the American empire. He didn't use those words, but still, for someone who co-founded the Project for the New American Century, this is quite extraordinary. So yeah, wondering what you read into all of this.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

I think he's angry, and I think he's trying to stoke people into action by telling them dire things, drastic things about their current failings as he sees them. And I can't interpret it any other way than that, really, because I've followed him for too long. You get some of these people into a corner where they think the things they've devoted their lives to—and they associate that with the life of the republic too, such as it is—you get them into a corner, and they will put all manner of information out, telling you what the results are going to be. And they're usually truly dire results if you don't back up and reconsider and do what they told you to do in the first place. I think that's the real motivation for doing this. And I can't imagine that his wife wasn't in the closet saying, "Keep writing, keep writing."

Victoria Nuland. It's a sign of, I think, the ultimate—and I had kind of an argument or discussion with a friend about this the other day, who feels basically the way I do about the neocons but knows their history really well. I mean, he's made a study of their history. I would go to him if I had a

question about this or that esoteric aspect of neocon language or whatever, whether it was Bill Kristol or Kagan or whomever. And he knew where they came from, how they got generated in the Democrats originally, how they adapted to Richard Perle in the Reagan administration, and other things like that.

And Jim says to me, they're losing. And they really do not like losing after so many years of painstaking work to drive America into the hell that they wanted to drive it into. Now, they didn't think it was hell—they thought it was joyous and triumphant, and we would be empire forever. But they realize they're losing, and they're striking back in the only way that they know how. And they're not losing necessarily because we didn't carry out their strategy; we're losing because we carried out their strategy, but we did it imperfectly, would say Kagan.

#Glenn

I've seen many arguing that the empire is being thrown away and all of this, but I think it was always unsustainable. I often refer to a lot of the academic literature in the 90s that was quite critical of this concept of the unipolar moment, which always made the point that at some point, in order to maintain a global empire, it's going to be very expensive. So one's going to waste a lot of lives, waste a lot of money, but also waste the standing in the world, the reputation. And while an empire will always overextend itself, it will be dependent on keeping rising powers down, which would then incentivize the rest of the international system to come together a bit like BRICS and, uh, and balance then the aspiring hegemon.

So I think it's, um, yeah, no, I think that this was always doomed to fail at some point. But, uh, the idea that global primacy could be permanent, I think was very wrong. Indeed, the one who coined this term "unipolar moment"—I always forget his name—yeah, anyway, my point is even in his article, he wrote that this is the current phenomenon, it's going to change in the future, but this is what we have today. But no, I did want to have my last question about Trump.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

You really got me thinking there. Brzezinski wrote something like that, but it wasn't quite the same.

#Glenn

No, it was something with K. Yeah, yeah.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

I can't put my finger on it either. I would say another thing, though, just to demonstrate how badly the warp and woof of, I think, even the Bill Kristols, Richard Perles, and others has gone astray. This came out of the New York Times yesterday. From 2 September 25 to the present time, roughly nine

months, the United States of America has conducted 55 lethal military strikes on boats in the Caribbean and the Pacific. No warning shot, no boarding, no arrest, no trial, just death. 194 people by our count. No accounting to Congress or the people. The U.S. government has not publicly ID'd, identified, any of them at all. The Department of Justice document that they say contains the legal justification for what they're doing is classified secret. Does that take me back to my administration? And then the last thing, the drugs keep coming. What a comment. I mean, what a comment on the present state of the empire.

#Glenn

Oh, by the way, Charles Krauthammer, he's the one with the unipolar moment. It came to me now, yeah.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

He used to bug the hell out of me all the time. You didn't want to say too much because Charles knew he was in a certain physical position where he had sympathy and empathy, maybe. But at times I wanted to pick up the phone on my desk at the State Department and hurl it at him.

#Glenn

Well, I made the point before, though. When I read his article, I thought that the main flaw was, because he described as well, there's a unipolar distribution of power now. We should take advantage to have a hegemonic period. And in the future, this distribution of power will change, and then we'll shift. We'll go to multipolarity. But I think the main flaw in that thinking was the human nature part of it, because that's not how human beings work. You have now, you know, 30-plus years, a whole generation of politicians growing up under the idea that we live under a liberal hegemon, that our dominance is required to spread liberal democratic values and have peace. So the idea that we would simply say, oh, I guess the Chinese and Russians have risen now, let's just shift to multipolarity — that's not how human beings work. Right. And I think it should have been predicted that once this happened, we would still fight it tooth and nail. But that kind of takes me to my last question.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

All those missionaries you put into the world, like Victoria Nuland and so on, really screwed it up.

#Glenn

Right. Yeah, but they're not going anywhere. As you said, they genuinely believe in this higher mission. But is this self-deception? That's what I want to ask about — if this is a Trump meltdown or self-deception. Because when I heard him talk about China, he made all these comments that the

Chinese agreed the Iranians wouldn't enrich any uranium, the Chinese want the Strait of Hormuz open. Does he believe everything he's saying, you think? Or is this just, again, trying to manage the narrative?

#Lawrence Wilkerson

I was looking for a comment because you were cueing me to it. Dr. John Gartner from Johns Hopkins, who is a psychotherapist and taught for 30 years or so at Johns Hopkins. He's the one that's on every now and then, podcasts here, podcasts there, talking about the deranged nature of Donald Trump and how intense it is getting, and how it fits every profile that you would want to draw up if you were someone like him, an expert in this. And he predicted that not only is he worse, he's going to get even worse. That's scary when you think about it. Because as I said to another person yesterday, basically our founders left us no methodology for removing such a person from the Oval Office. Period. Oh, the 25th Amendment. I said, that's a joke. That's a joke.

And I sent him the video on the 25th Amendment, which is very persuasive that it will never work and that it was intended by its crafters to never work. So how do you get rid of a megalomaniac? That's what this doctor was saying, actually. It's going to get worse, he said. It's not going to get better. It's going to get worse. Where do we find a point in the next two years that we prevent perhaps a civil war, for which Pete Hegseth is building a military component that will be supportive? Brad Cooper may be a perfect example of that — the commander of Central Command — and others too. And I don't know what to say about it other than, yeah, you're right, we don't have any way to get rid of this guy. We do not. Impeachment is a joke. We've proven it a joke over two centuries.

#Glenn

Well, he's obviously a huge narcissist, but I can kind of understand how his mental state could have gotten a lot worse here. Because if you look at how he thought things were going for him and how it actually went, it's quite a shock. That is, you know, he sees the U.S. relative decline in the world as being caused by these weak leaders. And he's very convinced, and it seems that he's the solution because he's the strong leader. He's a smart leader. So essentially, America's revival rests on his shoulders. And then, you know, in his first administration, you saw that the intelligence services attempted to take him down with this Russiagate hoax, and he overcame it. But nonetheless, he lost the presidential election, which he says was stolen. But he was able to come back against all odds and regain the presidency. And again, it becomes this underdog story, where he becomes his own hero.

And then the people tell him, listen, how about you take out Venezuela, kidnap, take the leader. And then he does it in one day, like a great leader, like a great warrior, and he's able to essentially restore the dominance of the U.S. in his own backyard. And then they say, hey, but you can also take Cuba. How about Iran? No other American leaders have ever been able to do this, but that's because they were weak. Their weakness is why we're in decline. You know, you're the strong one.

And suddenly he goes from, you know, just going higher and higher, more and more success in his own mind, and then suddenly everything falls apart, especially now in Iran. It must be, for a narcissist, this must be very devastating, though. I can imagine, you know, if I was him, retreating into my own reality. But again, I'm not a psychologist, but it just seems like I think you're right.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

I think part of the reason for it is that things are seeping through now. It's impossible for them not to see through with all the deluge that's now started, including some of the mainstream media. This has really, really alarmed him, I think. And to send Kash Patel to do what he's been sent to do is a perfect illustration of how much it's alarmed him. This is Julian Assange and the Pentagon Papers and all kinds of things writ large, but with the president, you could say that against Dan Ellsberg maybe the same kind of opposition existed, but at least you had Katharine Graham at The Washington Post and others like her who were willing to stand up for what they believed and what they thought was true journalism and triumph.

I don't think you're going to triumph today. I think he's going to wreck a lot of what the republic has left, including the free press, before he leaves. And what does that leave us with? I mean, if it leaves us with a J.D. Vance or a Marco Rubio or indeed a civil war somewhere in there, roughly around the midterms or afterwards, God only knows what it leaves us. But it's certainly not going to leave us better off.

#Glenn

So you think there's a real possibility of a civil war in the United States?

#Lawrence Wilkerson

I keep going back to that period in the Empire, or the Republic, I should say, that most impressed our founding fathers, if they had such an impression, and quite a few of them — including Jefferson, probably Madison, probably Washington. Maybe Franklin was more skeptical, but there's a reason they talked about things like the Roman Empire, the Western Roman Empire, and adopted terms like Senate and so forth. And there is a rough analogy here with Caesar coming into the Senate. The Republic is still in existence. He defies all the portents, and apparently there were one or two right on the steps of the Senate, and goes in, and he's assassinated, and then the civil wars break out. And it wouldn't have taken a military genius to oversee that after about, oh, six weeks or so, and say who was going to triumph, probably.

#Glenn

And Octavian did.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

And Octavius, of course, became Augustus and established the Pax Augusta and years and years of peace in an empire, which would thereafter always be an empire and always have a single ruler passed on. There is so much similarity, even with 2,000 years of history having intervened, that it hurts to think about it. Is that where we're headed? But without, in many respects, at this point at least, an identified Octavius. Would he come from the military? Would he come from government? Would he come from places we don't know now? I doubt it, because you have to be in position to do what you're going to do, and Octavius was.

And Octavius had a very good relationship with the power structure. And so you would have stood there probably a week or two into that, regardless of Shakespeare and Mark Antony's comments — cry havoc, let slip the dogs of war. Well, the dogs of war slipped, and it was inevitable, really, looking at it, who was going to triumph, who had the loyalty, the forces, and so forth, and who had the genius. No question about it. Who is that person today, were I to be proven correct in this rough analogy? But it is impossible, is what I'm trying to tell people.

#Glenn

Well, it seems that this fits in with the wider politics of the day, when you have these huge shifts in the international distribution of power. That is, governments—well, states—among each other. They begin to see everything now in all-or-nothing terms, as there are two big changes within the U.S. as well.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

Think about some of the surrounding reasons that the Russian Revolution took place, and took place in the way that it did, and was usurped by Stalin. I mean, these things happen. We like to think, oh, not here. Stand by.

#Glenn

Well, on that pessimistic note, thank you, as always, for coming on.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

You Europeans have to get together and save us from our own wrath.

#Glenn

Yeah, I'm not sure how anymore. Nor am I. Well, it seems to be reaching a point where either there's going to have to be someone pulling back, or we're going to go over the edge. But the current path isn't sustainable anymore, it seems. So something's probably going to give soon.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

I think you're right. I just hope it's not catastrophic.

#Glenn

Well, thanks again. You ruined my day, but yes, I appreciate it.