

Trump Orders Attack, PANIC ERUPTS as Iran HITS BACK | Johnson & Wilkerson

Former CIA Analyst Larry Johnson and Col. Lawrence Wilkerson join the show to discuss the latest attack move on Iran ordered by Trump and how it has erupted in massive panic in a surprising way. <https://sonar21.com/> Larry Johnson's blog LIKE the video and Subscribe for more in-depth geopolitical analysis Leave your thoughts in the comments below! Support the Channel: Patreon: <https://www.patreon.com/dannyhaiphong> SUBSCRIBE ON RUMBLE: Rumble: <https://rumble.com/c/DannyHaiphong> Follow Me on Social Media: Twitter: <https://twitter.com/DannyHaiphong> Telegram: <https://t.me/DannyHaiphong> Support the channel in other ways: <https://www.buymeacoffee.com/dannyhaiphong> Substack: chroniclesofhaiphong.substack.com Cashapp: \$Dhaiphong Venmo: @dannyH2020 Paypal: <https://paypal.me/spiritho> #trump #iran #iranwar

#Danny

Welcome, everyone. Welcome back to the show. It's your host, Danny Haiphong. I'm joined by good friends of the show, Colonel Lawrence Wilkerson and Larry Johnson. Gentlemen, good to see you again. All right, good to be with you, even if you're a hot body. Good to be with you as well, both of you. Well, how about we get started with how the story is being written right now on the Iran front? So, as the story goes from the U.S. side, Donald Trump had ordered an attack that was supposed to happen today or tomorrow.

And as he ordered the attack, Donald Trump claims that Qatar, the UAE, and Saudi Arabia picked up their phones, told Donald Trump to wait just a minute, do not attack because Iran is going to be ready to negotiate. You should delay this, in fact. And so, the New York Times wrote this. They said that Trump threatens Iran and then pulls back all on the same day. He was a little early to Taco Tuesday. And in this—and I'll pull it up and get your reaction to it, Larry—sorry, wrong article, wrong picture. I'll get to that later.

#Larry Johnson

I'll just say it's a lie, but I'll explain why it's a lie.

#Danny

Yeah, yeah, yeah. So here's the article. It says Trump threatens Iran and pulls back all in the same day. And in this, though, they cite a U.S. military official who actually says that rather than it being the Gulf convincing Donald Trump not to do this, it was actually Iran's military capabilities and the fact that they had been able to track U.S. military operations, including their air operations, with

more accuracy and thus more lethality, meaning fighter jets could be coming down. So, Larry, how about you help us understand what exactly has happened here? Because it seems like there's just panic erupting on all fronts, despite Trump's confidence that he can hit Iran any day, any time.

#Larry Johnson

Well, there are a couple of things that have to be in place before there is any military action. One, over the weekend, the Pentagon issued a stop movement order. So that is a precursor that, okay, there is going to be offensive action. The one that will trigger that—you know that it's coming down the pike—is when CENTCOM issues what's called air tasking orders, ATOs, when you start using the acronyms. There haven't been any ATOs issued yet. So that's why I say this notion that he's ready to attack yesterday, that's complete nonsense. It's just a lie. They weren't ready to attack. The determinant, the one country that will determine whether or not the United States carries out a military strike, is Saudi Arabia.

Saudi Arabia right now is hosting the KC-135 air refuelers. They're based at Prince Saud Air Base just outside of Riyadh. And why is that important? Well, most of the combat aircraft, the F-35s in particular, are based over in Jordan and Israel, is my understanding. So they have a combat radius of 550 miles. Maybe if they've got a light load, they can get 600 miles, but between 500 and 600 miles. Okay, guys, look at your map. Ladies and gentlemen, look at your maps. Look at where Muwaffaq al-Salti Air Base is in Jordan, just outside of the capital. And then go over to Riyadh. That's over 800 miles. Okay, that means those planes are going to have to be refueled even before they get within 300 miles of Riyadh.

And then from there, they finish the other 300 miles to Riyadh, and they can just pass Riyadh. They could launch a Tomahawk or a JASSM missile into Iran. And then they've got to be immediately refueled. So these planes, to operate, each F-35 is going to need at least, probably a minimum of four air refuelings just to stay in the air and be able to get back to the home base. So this is why these air refuelers forward-positioned there in Saudi Arabia are critical. Now, we saw two weeks ago when Trump announced Project Freedom that was going to also use combat aircraft to so-called open up the strait. It got shut down within 36 hours because the Saudis said, nope, not using our space. Kuwaitis said, us too, we're with them.

And Trump gets on the phone with MBS, and MBS basically tells him to go pound sand. So I said, we'll see where we stand right now. I do know that there are extensive efforts underway by the Chinese and the Russians in terms of trying to erect this new security architecture in the Persian Gulf involving Turkey, the Saudis, and Iran. I'm waiting to – I've got a source who's able to provide information out of Pakistan from the most senior levels. So the Pakistanis are very much in touch with both the Saudis and the Iranians, particularly with the Saudis. They've got a mutual defense pact with them. So we'll get an idea if, in fact, the Saudis say, no, you're not using our territory, then Trump's options are really, really limited at that point.

#Danny

Hmm. Yeah, great points. And Colonel Wilkerson, before I get your comments, I'll just read this short bit from The New York Times talking about this ordered attack-pullback situation, titled "Tuesday." The official warned that the downing of the F-15E fighter jet last month and the ground fire that struck an F-35 revealed that American flight tactics had become too predictable in ways that allowed Iran to defend against them more capably. Perhaps most important, the U.S. military officials said that while five weeks of intensive bombing may have killed several Iranian leaders and commanders, the war has left a more hardened, resilient adversary. So your thoughts about what's just gone on here, Colonel Wilkerson?

#Lawrence Wilkerson

Well, this must be very embarrassing to an Air Force chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. I can only imagine. Something I picked up on this morning, I think it's accurate, and it comes from a number of sources, one of them Reuters. Yesterday, Pakistan deployed 8,000 troops and a squadron of fighter jets to Saudi Arabia, as Larry was saying. The deployment was confirmed this morning, at least as far as I could tell, and I'm asking myself, this is a squadron of 16 aircraft, mostly JF-17 fighters, and I'm asking myself, are these deployed to protect Saudi Arabia from the United States? Or are these deployed in some way to change the balance with regard to the Iran-U.S. war, Iran-Israel-U.S. war?

And if so, in what direction, especially with regard to Israel? And are the troops that are being deployed along with them, according to the reports, for the same purpose? Are they for protecting the Saudis? And if they're for protecting the Saudis, and as Larry indicated, there is a growing relationship between both Turkey and Pakistan and Saudi Arabia—against whom? My guess would be you can flip a coin on that. The United States, under certain circumstances where we barge in. But I can't figure out any other reason than to honor their relationship with Saudi Arabia, which is new and growing, but also to send a signal, perhaps, like I'm describing.

Whom are you defending against, and who are you protecting the Saudis against? If I were Pakistan, I think I'd be very circumspect about the way I determined that. I'm not so sure about Mohammed bin Salman, because I think he's already made his decisions, and maybe we'll see them here. As to the agreement, such as it is, the word that came out early this morning is that there is no agreement whatsoever in terms of the negotiations. The Iranians have claimed, you wanted to talk about the nuclear. We refuse to talk about the nuclear. We said, well, then that's tough. We'll talk about it with bombs. That's a direct quote from a senior official.

So where are we? Going to resume the war, but Trump doesn't know when and doesn't know how. And he doesn't really want to. And meanwhile, we've got the Israeli ambassador to the United States making such egregious statements as "J Street is a cancer in the Jewish community in America." And we've got Tom Massie being absolutely floored with Jewish money, millions and millions of dollars trying to defeat him. Man, where are we? Who's mounting the influence and in what direction, and

what's it going to produce? I have no idea at this point. I think that Trump doesn't want to go back to war, but I think he wants to go back to war. Toss the coin.

#Danny

Yeah. And the Wall Street Journal reports, Larry, that I guess following on what Colonel Wilkerson was saying, these Gulf countries—Qatar, Saudi Arabia, UAE—their officials, anonymous officials within their regimes, are saying they had no idea that Donald Trump was going to strike at the moment he said he was going to strike. So it kind of throws cold water on this idea that they were the ones who pulled him back. What's your comment on this? Because he's done this before, too. It wasn't too long ago when I feel like he was talking about delaying strikes because of the Gulf countries.

#Larry Johnson

Well, the reality was, in the initial strike on the 28th of February, the Saudis, despite prior public claims to the contrary that they were opposed to this, were absolutely supportive of it. So they knew that was coming. They made the bet that the United States could deliver on its promise to protect them because the U.S. had deployed Patriot missile batteries, adding, well, some THAADs to the area. So they were all operating on the assumption that the United States could deliver on its promise to protect them. Well, that turned out to be bullshit.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

Yeah.

#Larry Johnson

And as a result, Saudi Arabia suffered some fairly significant damage, not as bad as Qatar. Qatar really took it in the shorts because of the destruction of that billion-dollar-plus radar at Al Udeid, along with several other radar systems. And there was one other that's a billion dollars, and I don't know if that was in Kuwait or in Saudi Arabia, but that got taken out. One in Bahrain, too. It was in Bahrain?

#Lawrence Wilkerson

Yeah, there was one there. I don't know if it was in addition to what you just said.

#Larry Johnson

Yeah, so, I mean, there were at least five or six different radar systems that were all there, integrated for air defense. And man, once those were wiped out, there goes the air defense. And

they got to the point where some of these radars would be just taken out by drones, you know, leisurely flying along and then boom. So that was a bit of a wake-up call for the Saudis, which then, as I mentioned earlier, we saw two weeks ago when they put the kibosh on Operation Project Freedom. So what I don't know right now is whether the Saudis are going to hold firm to that and that they've made their decision—okay, we're going to go, we're now going forward, going to put our trust and reliance on the Chinese and the Russians to assure that we're not going to be attacked.

And part of that assurance comes that they won't have to worry about the entire—before, the entire premise of having U.S. troops forward deployed was to attack Iran. And it was all based upon a lie, a false assumption that Iran was intending to attack those countries, which it was not. It never has. It was only after those countries allowed themselves to be used as a springboard for attacks on Iran that Iran turned around and said, okay, guys, you're going to pay the price. Now, again, the other outlier here is the United Arab Emirates. They're not—I mean, they're really not critical. The two countries that are responsible for most of the critical commodities, that's Saudi Arabia. They're the majority distributor of that.

Liquid natural gas, that's Qatar. They're the major distributor of that. Sulfur, that's primarily the Saudis. And then helium and urea, that comes out of Qatar. So between those two countries, in terms of the economic impact on the world, they're critical. Now, Qatar is hurting the most because some of its infrastructure is so damaged. It may be years before it recovers the ability to produce that, which means the world is facing some global shortages for the foreseeable future. But it looks like both the Saudis and Qataris have come to the point where, you know what, going with the United States, that brings too much heat. They can't protect us. It's like the mafia shows up at your pizza parlor.

Hey, you need to buy some insurance so your pizza parlor doesn't catch on fire. Capiisce? So, you know, you pay the money. Next month, your pizza parlor burns down. And you go back to the guys, hey, I paid you this money. And they go, oh, our bad, we didn't have control over that. That's essentially what's happened here. The United States offered protection money. They paid up. They bought U.S. weapons. They bought U.S. Treasury bills. They let the U.S. come base troops there. And bam, they get punched in the nose. They got a bloody nose. And they're saying, wait a second, this wasn't supposed to happen. So I think there's a reevaluation of the relationship with the United States underway right now.

#Danny

And the shameful, I mean, absolutely shameful behavior of the U.S. military, of running away to hotels and civilian areas in order to avoid the very attack that it was the U.S. that ordered, to avoid the retaliation for their own attack. But, you know, Colonel Wilkerson, there is a mystery, though, that's been going on in the region. Only one? Comment on it. Well, every single day, have you noticed – and this goes to both of you – there have been reports by the UAE. There's been one by Saudi Arabia. But it seems like every day, the UAE in particular – this is the Ministry of Defense – is

talking about how there are drones, hostile drones, being fired at them, this time six in the past 48 hours.

And they cite the nuclear energy plant on May 17th that was hit initially. Not a lot of damage being done by these drones, but no word about who's firing them. And you know, Nadia, it was when it first began blaming Iran. OK, Iran is doing this. But now the UAE has even backed off on that. They're just saying it's coming from the western border area and they don't know who did it. They're investigating who did it. So any idea about what's going on here? Is this a way to try to provoke the war to restart? It doesn't seem like it's doing a very good job. But Colonel Wilkerson, to you and then Larry, if you have any thoughts. Well, my first guess would be Israel.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

Very first guess. Second and third guess, too. Anything they can do to stir the pot. Meanwhile, there was a report in Haaretz this morning that the IDF was quoted. I don't know who it was. It sounded like it was a more senior guy. Let me get this straight. Yeah. We are on risky, pointless missions in broad daylight and shouldn't be here. This is the IDF senior officer leadership in Lebanon. And I don't blame them for saying that. I saw the stats yesterday on the—well, Netanyahu put a clamp on because we could get into the IDF itself and find out post-traumatic stress, suicides, desertions, and absent without leave. We could find all of that out. But now, as I understand why it's dried up, Netanyahu has said no more. You can't reveal that data anymore. Well, we were hearing yesterday that all of those categories are skyrocketing, and that they have real problems in terms of keeping, manning the forces that are in southern Lebanon.

So you got these kinds of comments, you got those kinds of comments, or reality, I think, of the situation. In other words, you got another July 2006 or another 1982 in Lebanon for the IDF—they're getting walked, in short. And you've got all the rest of this going on, and so Netanyahu's getting a little bit desperate. I think he's doing all manner of things, and that's the reason I said what I said about the drones—to stir the pot and to make sure that, one, Trump doesn't leave and continues this conflict and fulfills his ultimate dream, and two, that there's not an untoward political situation which looks like it might be building in Israel right now for himself personally. So look for anything coming out of Israel right now to exacerbate this situation in any way they possibly can.

#Danny

How about you, Colonel Wilkerson? I mean, Larry—sorry about that.

#Larry Johnson

I got promoted to O6. Okay, cool. Now, let me make a commentary about the casualties from these kinds of wars that don't normally show up. So over the weekend, I was serving as the chief range safety officer for a shooting event that was for veterans. And I had ten assistant RSOs, one of them

a guy named Tank. He was a Navy corpsman that served with the Marines, and he's been one of my students. And another one of my students, a kid named Jamie Lee Scatter, he too was a Navy corpsman, but he was trained by the Marines as a sniper. And Jamie, you know, he wanted to become an NRA rifle instructor, and so to do that, he had to take the basic rifle course.

And so that's where I first met him. And, you know, when I asked him about his experience, he just downplayed it. He didn't say, oh, I was a Marine Corps sniper, and I don't know why I'm taking a course from you, which he would have been fully entitled to say. But we went through the course, and then at the end, he revealed what his real experience was. And I, you know, began, you know, he's 43 years old. And as I tell these guys, I said, if you're under 45, you're one of my kids, okay? But, you know, I gave him a hard time. But just, you know, a humble guy, competent, very kind. As a corpsman, he spent more time saving lives than taking lives.

Anyway, so Tank and I were involved with this shooting event on Sunday, and we said goodbye to each other, and I'm in the car for like five minutes, and all of a sudden my phone lights up, and it's Tank, and he's crying because we just learned Jamie committed suicide on Sunday. Now, as I started looking into this, we've had 147,000 soldiers, sailors, and Marines kill themselves since the start of this global war on terror 25 years ago. That number is bigger. It's bigger than—we only lost 110,000 Marines in World War II in the Pacific War, Marines and Army, in the Pacific battles, Guadalcanal, Iwo Jima. We've got more than that that have died from suicide. And the deaths from suicide exceed those that have died since Vietnam, in Iraq, and in two engagements in Afghanistan, Syria, and Somalia.

You know, go down the list. All the damn wars we fought since 1960 haven't even matched up to the total of these casualties we continue to take because of the emotional trauma inflicted on these soldiers. And it's a fucking outrage. And it is the kind of thing that these people in political positions who issue these commands, they never pay the price. And I am furious about it. But you know what? Same thing's happening in Israel. There are suicide rates going up because you still have people there with a conscience who realize they've killed, they've murdered women and children, and they can't live with themselves because of that.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

Let me throw this on top of that, Danny. The number of homeless veterans is almost as high as the number that Larry just suggested is the suicide rate. And we have a president who is commander-in-chief and who gives absolutely no regard to any of these things at all.

#Danny

Well, he says it publicly twice, doubled down on it, that he doesn't take into consideration even the general population's financial situations when he's considering what he's going to do about a war, and particularly a war with Iran. And it's certainly having massive costs, and certainly a major cost of

these wars is the U.S. can stave off the massive casualties that it imposes—at least deaths that it imposes—on other countries. But the costs are still incredibly high for those who come back, who survive these wars of aggression that they're ordered to undertake. Definitely. There's no doubt about this. And maybe I can get your guys' comments on this.

You know, the New York Times—I don't know if you saw it—Donald Trump said that it was treasonous for the New York Times, CNN, anyone in the so-called fake news media now to talk about Iran being victorious. And meanwhile, it seems that they've gotten the memo, because as this strike was being pulled back, they published this article, an analysis about how Iran would respond to renewed strikes. And what they say is that Iran could continuously, perhaps given what they've been able to do since the ceasefire as well, fire hundreds of missiles per day at Gulf energy infrastructure, refineries, ports, water desalination plants, and also shut down the Bab al-Mandeb Strait.

And now all of this that the New York Times is reporting is simply coming from reports that they've read, like people just like us who go and read Iranian media and Iranian statements and what they say. And that's basically what they're citing. So, how much of this has to do with Trump's hesitation to go back into the war, not least also the additional factor of this burgeoning economic crisis? I've seen that some economists say we're about weeks away from a global recession, that some of our friends like Preston Rony say it could be a Great Depression. Whoever wants to jump in.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

I'll jump in and tell you that I think one of the reasons we're seeing great trepidation within the other Gulf countries is just what you pointed out. There are so many other ramifications, but that's one of them. The second tier, as I've called it, of targets that Iran has in its sights, if you will, and plenty of missiles to hit—fast ballistic missiles, plenty of other ordnance that they can expend in the wake of those missiles—because they've been very good at coordinating the really modern high-velocity stuff with the low-velocity cheap stuff, drones primarily. And they could rip through the region, hitting Ras Tanura, Dhahran, Yanbu, all those other places where, as Larry just pointed out, it's absolutely critical for Saudi Arabia. I mean, you could take down 7% to 20% of their oil capacity, and it would be down for months.

When we did that in China in the petroleum disruption exercise, Ras Tanura, for example, at the time, which was much more productive than it is now, was down for over six months. So you took a huge capacity down. And you don't really have the capacity to shift around like we did in that exercise, other than maybe from Russia, maybe the United States. But why would they want to do that if you're making a big profit? Maybe eventually the global recession/depression would force them into that sort of thing. But this would be really traumatic for the region and for the globe if Iran were forced, by the circumstances it's in now, to hit this second tier of targets, and if they hit it with the devastation that they hit the first tier. And I think they would.

I think they'd be just as accurate, they'd be just as devastating, and they'd be ten times more impactful on the world. And you threw the Bab al-Mandeb in there, that too. And the Houthis have already shown that they can close that for all practical purposes, which are the only ones that matter. We're looking at a real global problem unless Trump wakes up. And when he wakes up, he's got to hit Bibi over the head and put him out. And I don't see that happening. I just don't see that happening. Any more than I see, though I hate to say it, Tom Massie beating this massive, massive Jewish-Israeli combination of money pouring into his campaign that probably surpasses anything we've ever seen in a House of Representatives campaign in the history of the country.

#Larry Johnson

We're dealing with a real disconnect here between the markets—commodity markets, oil markets, financial markets—and what's actually going on in the world. Go back to the COVID epidemic and what happened to the price of oil during that period. The price of oil per barrel went up over \$120, and there wasn't an actual shortage.

#Larry Johnson

I think the production, the oil wells were still pumping. The infrastructure of the oil wells was still intact. And yet the market reacted, oh my God, and they pretended like there was going to be this incredible shortage. And again, even that analysis didn't make sense because if people were staying at home and they weren't traveling to work, the demand for actual oil was going to go down, not up. So the market should have behaved in a different way, and it didn't. Now we're seeing actual shortages—I mean, disruption of at least 20%, if not higher, of the world's supply of oil. And that supply has been cut off. So we're dealing now with a 20% reduction. That is not—you can't just turn it around in a day. If oil production returns somehow magically to what it was on February 27th, you'd still be looking at six to eight weeks of shortages.

And what's the price of oil doing? Ah, it's up a little bit. \$110, \$110. It's not accurately reflecting what should be out there, number one. Then the combination of these commodities that have been disrupted out of the Persian Gulf—when you look at the combination of urea and sulfur—they are critical for making fertilizer. Critical. Helium, critical for computer chips. Forty-four percent of the world's supply comes out of the Persian Gulf and is not coming out now. And so... what are they saying? Oh, there's a possibility of a recession? Horseshit! It's underway! I mean, for God's sake, we sit here and deceive ourselves, lie to ourselves, that we'll be lucky if we get away with a recession. Because the recession is already underway. The real question is, is it going to be a depression? Now, within this, the argument's made that, oh, well, the United States, you know, it's our economy.

We've got this strength and we can withstand some of this. Sorry, boys and girls, that's another lie you're being sold. The pillars of U.S. hegemony, its control, its ability to be the economic leader of the world, have hinged on two things. One is the petrodollar—everybody's going to buy oil, have to use dollars. And the second is everybody's got these foreign countries that will buy our treasury bills

so we can continue to spend like a drunken sailor at a whorehouse in Manila. And instead, what's actually going on? We're seeing that on the petrodollar front, China, Russia, Iran—major either buyers or suppliers of oil—they're selling now in alternative currencies, particularly yuan. So if you're looking at it, the U.S. market with petrodollars is shrinking. It's not increasing, and it's not staying steady—it is shrinking. Maybe it's not shrinking very fast, but it's still contracting. How about U.S. treasuries?

Ditto. The countries that used to buy—China, Japan, even Europe—they're selling off their treasuries. They're not buying any new treasuries. And people say, well, this has happened in the past. Never in the past have you had the economy of the United States where it is dependent upon continuing to sell these treasuries to other people, because our debt is now approaching \$40 trillion. And that's been accelerating over the last 16 months. When Donald Trump took office, it was \$37 trillion. Within the end of the year, it was \$38 trillion. Within another 77 days, it ticked up to over \$39.2 trillion. And I bet you by the end of June, we're going to be looking at \$40 trillion.

So when you put all that together, these are not happy notes for an economy that, oh, we're doing well. We're not doing well. And the contraction that's coming is this cascade of effects from the shortages, not just of liquefied natural gas and oil, but of the urea, of the sulfur, of the helium. I mean, sulfur, which goes to make so many different things, is critical in so many different industrial processes that there's a holdup. So, you know, we keep sitting around and deceiving ourselves, pretending that, never mind, remain calm, all is good. No, Larry, S&P is doing very well. Yeah, yeah. Just, you know, it's one lie after another.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

Meanwhile, just to add to the gloom, Putin just announced, or the Russian Ministry of Defense just announced, the armed forces will be engaged in a very large-scale strategic nuclear exercise that runs through May 21st. The drill involves the strategic missile forces, the Northern and Pacific fleets, the long-range aviation command, and part of the forces of the Leningrad and Central Military Districts. Fast down to another Reuters report: Lithuania wants to allow NATO nukes on its territory.

#Danny

Yeah.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

And then fast down to another one, you'll see that Kain is over there telling the Poles that they're not going to get the troops that they were going to get. What the hell are we doing in Europe? I know what Putin's doing. I know what Putin's doing. Putin has decided, I think, and rightfully so, probably given the evidence he has, he's going to have to go to war with NATO.

#Larry Johnson

Yeah.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

And he's preparing for it.

#Larry Johnson

Yeah, I mean, just to underscore that, we've had statements now in the last five days. Dmitry Polyansky, the former number two guy at Russia's U.N. mission. And I know Dmitry. He was a very good friend. He's a very good friend. When I spoke to, uh, when I addressed the U.N. Security Council on the whole Nord Stream pipeline issue, he was my point of contact at the embassy. And so, you know, bought me a coffee at the U.N. and, you know, steered me around, and we've been in touch ever since. So, uh, and then Sergei Ryabkov, uh, the deputy foreign minister, who I met first back in December of 2023 in Moscow. I was there with, uh, Pepe Escobar and Alastair Crooke. Um, both men have made very strong statements in the last five days about the need. You know, basically, Russia is going to attack the Europeans.

If the Europeans continue to supply these missiles that are enabling attacks against Russia, Russia will retaliate. Now, for Dmitry to say that—and I'm paraphrasing what he said—but it's the kind of thing that Dmitry's not sitting there just offering his opinion. He didn't say, "No, I've been thinking about this, I'm just going to speak off the cuff." Oh no, no, no, no, no. When he said that, he's delivering a message that's got signed, sealed, and delivered by Vladimir Putin, as well as Sergei Lavrov, the foreign minister. And the fact that they are now both delivering a coordinated message—the West better pay the hell attention, because I think the odds are within three months there will be a Russian strike on the production facilities of drone factories in Europe that are involved with supplying drones to Ukraine.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

You can probably confirm this or deny it, Larry, but I heard last night that the Duma actually voted and passed legislation allowing Putin to go to war with whomever he decided he needed to.

#Larry Johnson

Yeah, no, I've heard the same. Yes.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

And, of course, it's referring to NATO.

#Danny

Yeah, yeah.

#Speaker 1

Yeah.

#Danny

You know, well, this leads us to many possible points of U.S.—I guess we could say U.S.-NATO chaos—but we could just really say U.S. imperial chaos at this point, with the U.S. steering this ship, however chaotically and haphazardly. But I don't know if you saw the reports, Larry, and Colonel Wilkerson, your comment on this too—that Politico is reporting this despite the fact that the U.S. is very much still seemingly obsessed with trying to restart the war against Iran with the Israelis and Donald Trump, as Colonel Wilkerson, you said, he wants to and he doesn't want to.

But it seems like they also want to overthrow the Cuban government in a potential military operation. This is according to Politico, that Trump and his advisors are frustrated that their pressure campaign—like trying to blockade them, cut off their fuel, economic sanctions, etc.—didn't cause regime change, which is interesting since Cuba's only been going through this forever. But this is the Politico report: yes, Trump might really attack Cuba. That appeared in Politico. Larry, you know, how does even such a thing occur?

Because there are a group of Republicans, prominent influential ones inside Washington, inside Congress, that are scared of what this might do to their political prospects in the midterm elections, despite many people who watch this program saying, oh, politicians don't really care about their seats, etc., etc. Actually, Congresspeople do. They like to hold on to those seats unless they have a revolving door opportunity. But they want to hold on to their seats if they want to run again. And there are a few that do not see a war on Cuba as yielding results that would do anything good for them. But what do you make of this report that we could be looking at a war on Cuba with an ongoing war against Iran?

#Larry Johnson

Well, I want to introduce a concept that I'm sure Colonel Wilkerson's never heard of. It's called "if you break it, you own it." And I'll let him talk at length about that—what, you know, Colin Powell tried to tell George W. Bush about the dangers of going into Iraq. You know, militarily, yes, we've got a superior military to that of Cuba. Okay, so we go in and remove the government. Then what? Then we own it. And then whatever government that is installed is now seen as a U.S. puppet. And

there are enough Cubans in Cuba, and the terrain is sufficiently dense and robust enough that Cuban guerrilla operations will then continue, and there'll be attacks upon the U.S. So the U.S. is going to get itself into a miniature quagmire that it absolutely does not need.

Instead of, again, let's start by—if you want to change the government in Cuba, lift the embargo. Actually allow economic activity to flow. And then what happens is the government can no longer blame failure in society on these external sanctions. They have to take responsibility themselves. But no, the United States is too stupid to do that. We've always made sure that we've kept an external enemy for Cuba to fight against. And so this is, again, I don't know what the plan is. Okay, yeah, we can maybe insert some special operations forces to take out an existing government. Then what? Then what? Who's going to—at that point, then we've got to supply the water, we've got to supply the electricity, we've got to supply the food. While we're a little distracted in West Asia, that just is insanity.

#Danny

Hmm. Yeah. And let me actually pull this up as a follow-up, because I think this is what the U.S. is going to look at if they go into Cuba, because I think it could be even worse than what you're saying, Larry, in the sense that, you know, we could see maybe a second kind of Cuban revolution in Cuba. Israel is saying that in a restart of war against Iran—this is from Ynet—saying, you know, a 50-50 possibility of renewing the war. But an Israeli official told Ynet that Iranians are euphoric and view themselves as big winners. Trump is only threatening war and does not really want to become entangled in renewed hostilities. The Iranians are not prepared to give Trump anything he wants.

Their agenda is to humiliate Trump and show they defeated the world's greatest power. Uh, I would say if you attack Cuba, you would have a lot of young people who are frustrated with sanctions, with, you know, the difficulty of economic development there, dwindling, if not completely diminished prospects. You have a lot of them wanting to fight against the U.S. invaders, and those who are striking them, giving them a similar kind of fervor to defeat the empire, especially since it's 90 miles away and it's not like there isn't a history there. So, Colonel Wilkerson, how about your comments on this? There seem to be some parallels here. There could be euphoria all across the world going to Cuba, from Iran, one after another, the U.S. putting itself in this position.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

I think you have to look at this as an isolated case as well as, you're indicating, a connected case. And the isolated case is what's happening around Trump right now. And what I mean by that is the same thing that happened around George W. Bush when people in the Republican Party mostly, people out at AEI and other places like that, discovered how inexperienced this president was and discovered how much Cheney was filling in for that inexperience in certain areas. But it didn't

encompass the entire national security portfolio. So, it floored everyone that, for example, having followed Cuba for some 35, 40 years, that I thought was anathema—absolutely unbelievable jerks—Otto Reich, Roger Noriega, people like that.

They just flowed into the administration and began trying to assume secondary and tertiary spots. Powell got rid of several of them. He couldn't get rid of Roger Noriega. He stayed there. But that's what's happening now. And with regard to Cuba, you see the piece that just came out. Pure propaganda, but enough truth in it to essentially get people's ire up, if you will, and get it up in the right places like in Las Vegas, in New Jersey, in Florida, and so forth, for the huge Cuban communities. And if you didn't see it, it's all about how the Cuban military is making all the money in Cuba. They're getting everything. And Raul Castro sits at the top of this.

And the article actually included a network drawing with all the people—the Ramirezes, the Fernandezes, and all the rest of the people that are making fortunes. No one in Cuba is making a fortune off of this circuit that's set up. So these people are now jumping into this vacuum that Trump has created, and he's created it with this patina at the top of the vacuum, and it says, I'm willing to go to war with anybody. Because, Danny, we're doing this with Greenland again. We're doing it with Cuba, as you pointed out. We're doing it with Iran in your face. We might be doing it again with Iraq if Israel keeps building bases out there with our help.

It's all these people who are jumping on the bandwagon, and they want to get their pet peeve, and they're going to get it. They're going to go after it, and they're going to get it because this president does not know what he's doing. His secretary of defense does not know what he's doing. I'm increasingly convinced the chairman doesn't know what he's doing. And nobody in the government—Rubio, whomever—knows what they're doing. So all these villains are flowing into the cracks and crevices and going after their pet project. Cuba has been a pet project of certain Americans for a very long time.

#Danny

Yeah. Yeah. Including, I mean, Rubio is one of them. So one of those cracks and crevices could literally be, yes, right at the bottom.

#Larry Johnson

Yeah. I was laughing when he mentioned the name Otto Reich. So when I taught at American University back in 1981, we'd invite speakers to come in. You know, it was the Washington Semester Program. So I'd line up speakers for three days a week, and then the students would do internships in offices. And one of my speakers back then was Otto Reich. So it's just like, that was a blast from the past. I'm talking 45 years ago now.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

You can't get rid of these people.

#Larry Johnson

Yeah.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

And Roger Noriega is his son. You know, Roger and I used to talk, and I'd say, "You talk just like Otto." "Well, I am just like Otto."

#Danny

Yeah. Yeah. Well, we do have something that's developing, gentlemen, and I would like your opinion on it. And that is the trip that Vladimir Putin is currently undergoing and participating in to China. He has just arrived in China. And I'm curious, you know, I'll show you the reception. This is the video of how he was received—very similar to Trump in many ways. But he was picked up by Wang Yi, who is the foreign minister. And unlike in many places in the world, to be picked up by the foreign minister in China like Wang Yi is actually a higher honor than to be picked up by the vice president, which is what happened yesterday with Donald Trump. But very similar reception in many ways. At the same time, lots on the table to discuss and lots on the table that's going to happen. So maybe Larry and then Colonel Wilkerson, what are your thoughts on the significance of this meeting, especially the timing? It's coming not days after Donald Trump returned from Beijing himself.

#Larry Johnson

It was just a week, you know. It was last Friday that Trump came back, so less than a week. You know, the key item—I think the key item for the discussion—is this new security architecture in the Persian Gulf. Because, you know, I think the Russian intelligence, Chinese intelligence, they're carefully monitoring what the U.S. is going to do. So they'll have a good idea before the attacks are launched, when or if they're going to be launched. And that's why, again, I come back to a lot of this hinging upon Saudi Arabia. I think Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Qatar—those three right there—can put a stop to this war if they refuse to continue cooperating with the United States, which will enrage and infuriate Trump. But it puts the United States in a position of, what else is it going to do?

I mean, I know not through any classified information, just through the serendipity of having a neighbor, a friend of one of my neighbors up the street. He's a pilot, a private pilot. But his son—I was talking to him the other day—I said, oh, man. He says, my son is coming home next week from the war in the Middle East. I said, well, where's he at? He says, oh, he's stationed at Prince Sultan Air Base. I said, what does he do? He says, he flies KC-135s. He's getting home next week because his wife is having a child via C-section, so they got him out of there. And while the son has been circumspect with what he's told his father, the essence of the message is, man, this place is

dangerous and it is not hospitable. So if the Saudis basically start shutting down the U.S. air operations there, you're not going to have a continual—this war is going to be effectively forced into a diplomatic track.

And that's what I anticipate that, you know, Putin and Xi are going to be talking about in depth. I mean, economic cooperation, that's—you know, there's nothing to be—there's no disagreement there. There's nothing to argue or discuss there. You know, Russia and China are full-fledged partners on that issue. You know, immigration, you know, labor, you know, again, they've gotten to the place, I think, now that you don't have to get a visa to travel from China to Russia and vice versa. So, you know, I think the focus is going to be on them coordinating a strategy to deal with the United States because they recognize the United States is not under the control of stable leadership. It's just the opposite, I'll say.

#Danny

Colonel Wilkerson, your thoughts?

#Lawrence Wilkerson

I was just going to add that they just released this. In the name of God, the official X account of the Persian Gulf Strait Authority, PGSA, is now live. Follow us for real-time updates on the Hormuz Strait and on operations and the latest developments. They wouldn't have done that probably without coordinating with both China and Russia. So they've got their deal going in the strait as if we weren't there.

#Danny

Yeah, I mean, both China and Russia have not incurred—I mean, there are many elements to that, too. China and Russia have not incurred the significant negative impacts. I mean, everyone has had to deal with the rising oil prices, but Russia has profited a lot from rising oil prices, and China has been able to stave off the worst effects of it, and loves the fact that Taiwan is affected majorly, too—majorly, and cannot do what China has done to stave it off. And to that point, too, what Taiwan can do, because it's not an independent country, is work with Iran to ensure that its vessels get out of the Strait of Hormuz, which is exactly what's been going on.

But Colonel Wilkerson, you actually really like this. I've actually been here. But one of the ways that China has been able to stave off the worst effects or the harshest effects of the ongoing Strait of Hormuz crisis is through its renewable energy sector. And here you have ABC News. It's so funny because I've actually been to this exact place in Gansu Province, far west in China, talking about this renewable energy boom in China. And here, I'll just play the video because I find it very interesting. It's very short.

#Speaker 1

China's been able to offset some of the energy shock from the Iran war and the Strait of Hormuz being shut, in part because of its commitment—its shift—to renewable energy in recent years. Like here in northwestern Gansu Province, where this major solar thermal power plant rises out of the desert. You can see streams of light there beaming from these 12,000 mirrors, which move with the sun, redirect that sunlight onto that central tower there, heating molten salt to extreme temperatures. Now, they say in just one hour altogether, they're able to generate enough energy for a family's regular use in China for about 40 years. In fact, they say the tower generates enough energy by itself to power the equivalent of Aspen, Colorado, for a year.

#Danny

So that's the report there. I've actually been there. It was a cloudy day, so I didn't get that nice sun. This is actually the Gobi Desert, so it's a very impressive feat. It's a massive solar farm.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

If you've seen the ones that they're having a bit of a problem with in terms of the Tibetans, but nonetheless, they're there and they're growing. The solar arrays they're building up in the incredibly clean atmosphere of Tibet, where you get about four to five times the power from these panels. And the panels are better panels than we have anyway. The Chinese make the best solar panels in the world. And the fact that you can get it at that altitude and they're building out more—they're going to, I think I read in National Geographic, with that alone, they're going to get the equivalent of the Yellow River dam. So in terms of hydropower versus solar power, they are way ahead of everybody else in the world on renewables.

#Danny

Yeah, definitely. And I mean, this is the future, and this is kind of the future. I think Russia and China—you know, Russia has a lot of oil, so it doesn't have to shift in this way. But we know that this cooperation between Russia and China is across the board. And they share a very big border, actually. And actually, across that border, China produces a lot of these things. They produce a lot of trains. They produce, in the province that borders Russia, trains and transportation and all kinds of infrastructure like this that Russia definitely benefits from. So, Larry, any comments that you have on this?

#Larry Johnson

Well, it's just a reminder, you know, Pepe, if you saw the documentary he made about his travel across the old New Silk Road and just, again, the remarkable technological advance of China. This goes back to looking at that meeting with Trump and Xi. Xi was very upfront about referring to the

United States as a declining power. China is the rising power. And Trump, you know, didn't get the message. He thought, oh, yeah, he's talking about Biden. No, man, he's talking about you, too. And the United States. I am fascinated by, you know, I'm in touch with or listen to several people who are, quote, Chinese experts.

And they're always talking about how much trouble China is in, how fragile China is, how, oh my God, they're living on the edge of disaster. And all of this is just a fraud, it's not real. And I'm thinking, guys, the Chinese have accomplished more technologically in the last 10 years than the United States has in the last 40 years. And do they have some population challenges? Yes. Do they have some problems with their real estate market? Yes. But China's not sitting on a debt-to-GDP ratio of 130 to 1. No, their debt-to-GDP ratio, all of it combined, is like 88 to 1.

#Larry Johnson

So they're not in the kind of extreme financial stress that we are, and yet the world continues to move in their direction. They're building more electric vehicles that aren't dependent upon oil. They have diversified their industry. They are well advanced in the area of robotics and drones, you know, not us. And yet we persist with this delusion that somehow we're more advanced, more on top of it. We're the, you know, we're the old cat's pajamas. And it's not the case anymore. And so, you know, here was Xi basically acknowledging reality and Trump failing to grasp it.

#Danny

Yeah, yeah. I mean, China doesn't have, to your point, Larry, I mean, you mentioned earlier the \$40 trillion U.S. government debt, many trillions, too, of corporate debt. And then we go down to the individual level — the credit card debt, auto loan debt, mortgage debt — I mean, it's astronomical. It's also in the trillions on each level. All of those things are bubbles at that level, at the ground level here. But no, no problem — the future is not Chinese, you know, according to the Wall Street Journal. We have Apple, the NBA, and Sydney Sweeney, so we must be on the way up, actually. But your thoughts?

#Lawrence Wilkerson

I think one of the things that both Wang Yi and Xi are concerned about — and I put this in the think tank, the Central Party School is a major concern too — is that all of this is happening, and it's happening a lot faster than even the Chinese thought it was going to happen. And then, at the end of the day, what the empire will do when it realizes that it is in this sad shape is try to stop it. And it'll try to stop it with nuclear weapons to level the playing field, if you will. I think that's a growing concern in both Moscow and Beijing — other places too, but principally there — because they're the ones that have to enter the arms race that we are starting now in order to keep up and spend all the resources that they could spend otherwise. China doesn't want to spend all these resources on nuclear weapons, but it's made the decision to do so.

And what I don't know is whether or not their decision was to match the world or just to match us. I think it's probably just to match us. Because if Russia and China stay as close as teeth, as Miles said, then they don't need to match Russia and us combined. But still, we're talking about going back to something close to Cold War, 30,000 nuclear warhead levels. And maybe not quite that far, because these damn warheads today are much more powerful, much more accurate, and in most cases hooked up to much faster missiles than they were in the past. This is a very, very dangerous thing we're doing, and they know it, but they don't know how to stop it. And I would say on Xi Jinping and Wang Yi and Putin and others, Sergey Lavrov's major list is, what do we do about this? What do we do about this errant superpower declining and disappearing and yet still extremely dangerous? Mm-hmm.

#Danny

Well, this was a great show, gentlemen. Any final thoughts? Larry, I'll go to you before we close out.

#Larry Johnson

No, we'll find out. I think this week will be a watershed moment. We'll find out if the Saudis are going to play ball or not. If the Saudis play ball, then the war continues. If the Saudis don't, the war may be forced to an end that the United States is not happy with. Colonel Walker, any final thoughts?

#Lawrence Wilkerson

And Bibi won't be happy with it either.

#Larry Johnson

Yeah, God knows what he'll do.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

I wish Bibi had run out in the street and said, I have PTSD.

#Danny

It was Netanyahu, everything. We would see, yeah, everything would be on fire. All right, everybody, that was a great show today. I want to make sure that you hit the like button before you go. That helps boost the show. You can find Larry Johnson's blog, Sonar21, in the video description below. All the ways to support this show are also in the video description below—Patreon, Substack, and much more. Tomorrow I'll be back at 1 p.m. Eastern time, same time, with our friend Scott Ritter. All right, everybody, we're heading off together. See you tomorrow, May 20th, 1 p.m. Eastern. Bye-bye.

