US APPROVES Iran Strike, Trump LIES to Putin & Xi LIVE | Larry Johnson & Col. Lawrence Wilkerson

Former CIA analyst Larry Johnson and Colonel Lawrence Wilkerson provide their assessment and analysis of reports that Trump has approved of a US-Israeli combat operation that includes massive strikes on Iranian infrastructure even as he was meeting with Vladimir Putin and Xi Jinping. Meanwhile Iran continues to blast tankers in the Strait of Hormuz at huge expense to the world economy. Follow Larry Johnson: https://sonar21.com/ PATREON.COM/DANNYHAIPHONG Support the channel in other ways: https://www.buymeacoffee.com/dannyhai... Substack: chroniclesofhaiphong.substack.com Cashapp: $Dhaiphong Venmo: @dannyH2020 Paypal: https://paypal.me/spiritofho Follow me on Telegram: https://t.me/dannyhaiphong #iran #iranwar #israel

#Danny

Welcome back to the show, everyone. As you can see, I'm joined by former CIA analyst Larry Johnson and Colonel Lawrence Wilkerson to go over the latest developments. Well, gentlemen, let's talk about the summit, the trilateral summit that just occurred in Shenzhen, China. As you can see, Donald Trump was very excited about the trilateral summit, posting this afterward: “Peace through strength.” The three leaders met for 90 minutes. Donald Trump talked about denuclearization and how all three countries need to talk about reducing nuclear weapons. He mentioned Iran a bunch of times and ensuring a non-nuclear Iran. Of course, there were other talking points, like the ICC. What they came up with was a bit underwhelming, but it was called a peace declaration. They affirmed their commitment to reform the UN, to increase production and supply of oil and petroleum products, and to reform the ICC or eliminate its abuse of power. They also affirmed that a nuclear war cannot be won.

But my question to you gentlemen is: with Trump signing on to a peace declaration, is this just Trump lying to the faces of Putin and Xi? As this was going on, there were reports that Donald Trump has, in fact, approved U.S.-Israeli strikes on Iran for a four- to seven-day period but just has not given the order yet. So, Larry, what did you make of the summit and, you know, this report at the same time? There were also other escalations: the bridge attack by Ukraine right before it, the ICBM that was launched right before it. So, some messages sent, maybe in other forms. But what are your thoughts on this contradiction here between the U.S. continuing to mull, weigh, and approve strikes without giving the order yet, and this trilateral summit?

#Larry Johnson

Well, you know, I fully expected, and had said so, that there was not going to be any attack prior to that three-way meeting. Because, you know, if Trump had ordered the attacks and then Iran was retaliating, well, heavens, Trump would have to deal with that. I mean, he'd have to be front and center. He'd have to be managing the crisis, which means he wouldn't be in China. As far as the outcome of that meeting, you know, if we had to have a musical theme, I'd bring in the singer from 60 years ago, Peggy Lee. Colonel Wilkerson remembers her. He was just a young teenager back then. But she sang this song, "Is That All There Is?" You know, and that's what we came away with. You know, as we talked about before we went on air, all the foreign ministry, foreign service, State Department types, they have a category called Sherpas.

Now, the Sherpas attached to Everest carry all the heavy equipment for all the foreign tourists who want to say that they climbed Everest, but they've got some little brown guy carrying everything for them. Those guys are tough as nails and strong as can be. Within the diplomatic world, the Sherpas are the senior diplomats who are tasked with drafting proposed treaties, agreements, and statements. But the fact that this got announced so late—they didn't agree on it until probably last Friday or Saturday—meant that they only had three days for these Sherpas to get together and draft a statement. And as you correctly noted, Danny, it was really a nothing burger.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

Hey, we agree that we're going to meet again at some point in the future to talk about controlling nuclear weapons.

#Larry Johnson

What about that? Well, just in general. And, man, we all agreed that it's important to have oil flowing through the Persian Gulf. Thank you, Captain Obvious. So, yeah, like I said, it was a nothing burger.

#Danny

Yeah, Colonel Wilkerson, to you.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

I have to frame it in a little context here that I think is very important, and I hope you'll suffer me for a moment. First of all, we should have had this with William Jefferson Clinton at the end of the Cold War. We were crafting something like this in the Bush administration when things turned so sour for H. W. Bush that he lost his concentration. Very frankly, putting Jim Baker, his very competent secretary of state, out as his campaign manager was an indicator of how serious he felt

the situation was for him personally. He was going to lose, and he didn't want to lose. So we took our eye off the ball, really took our eye off the ball.

Then came this ignorant, bamboozling, Arkansas draft-dodging, woman-chasing idiot from, you know, the hustings. And we were off to the races with the expansion of NATO, et cetera, et cetera. Read Stephen Kinzer's new book, Boiling Point, and you'll understand really what I'm talking about. So we get to this point where no president has the brains, has the willingness, has the support—and we're talking about quite a few presidents, including Trump, and of course Biden at the end, and then Trump again—to say, "We really need a new architecture on the globe." U.S. hegemony is a foolish, stupid, ignorant, dumb way to approach the world—oligarchically supported, nonetheless, but still all those adjectives and more.

So let's throw that away. Let's sit down with the other powers in the world of consequence. And, of course, that would be Beijing and Moscow, and maybe New Delhi, maybe Brasilia. But at least let's sit down with the big three, as it were, and let's develop a plan for a consortium. Not a consortium that would run the world, so to speak, but it would in many respects. But those respects would be positive as long as you had the right attitude, the right plan, and the right people executing that plan. And what do I mean by that? I mean that, first of all, this consortium would take on the two existential challenges we all confront—what they're blathering about in Turkey. Just absolute blathering.

Nothing of consequence is being accomplished there while we're going to burn up—not by mid-century, as we talked about in the Climate Security Working Group, DOD, NASA, and others years ago, but probably in the next 10 years we might be burning up. For sure, by mid-century we'll be burning up. When I say that, I mean we will be unable to live on certain stretches of land in this world, and it's going to get worse from there. So that's one thing they should be looking at in a consortium, in a group of powerful people. The second thing is what they alleged they were looking at—and as Larry said, it was very, very perfunctory—nuclear weapons and the fact that we have people building them, states aspiring to them.

I think we have a couple of new members among the states that own nuclear weapons. And we have no treaties, not a single one. And we have countries like America and China, and possibly Russia, once it sees what China and America are doing, building out or modernizing, or both. So we are in a very dangerous world, and we need some sort of governmental process to deal with that. So that's what I would have been hoping: that this was a very dilatory, very late approach to finally realizing this and getting together. I should have known that Donald Trump wouldn't have a clue about any of this, but I've got to think that Xi and Putin do. Were they trying to suck him into something that would be followed up on by another president who would be more competent?

I don't know. I suspect there was some of that in there because I think these two understand, as do other leaders in the world, that we need something like this. Frankly, Europe doesn't understand. They're too busy doing our bidding with regard to Ukraine. And I go back to Steve's book again.

Look at Steve's book. We've been in Ukraine since 1945. Frank Wisner, the CIA, Allen Dulles—taking many criminals away from the Nuremberg trials and getting them into Ukraine and starting to destabilize the Soviet Union even before the war formally ended. So we've been in Ukraine since 1945. Not a year have we missed being in Ukraine.

And we built a Nazi structure in Ukraine, a real Nazi structure, consisting of the people whom we bribed to give us all the lists they'd gotten on Soviet spies and others in Ukraine as they built their war apparatus to take Ukraine. So we've been there for 75 years. And then, as I told Stephen the other day, we started on Europe. In 2002, in my administration, we started on Europe, using the CIA and liberal democracy as a weapon. And we went after Europe: parliamentarians, newspaper editors, labor union heads, NATO secretaries general Stoltenberg and Rutte, and so forth. You've heard this story before. But this needs to be told, and it needs to be said that Russia is not fighting Ukraine.

They're fighting the whole damn NATO complex, Washington included, and a whole bunch of other people who weren't in NATO but are now and make up some of its most vicious members, like the Scandinavian countries or Lithuania, for example. So that's where we are now. And we're very late, as I said, in putting this apparatus together, even in a rudimentary form, and even with an incompetent from one of the principal powers, the United States. But it needs to be done, and it needs to be taken down a road that will lead to more positive outcomes than I gather from Trump sleeping in front of Xi Jinping when he's delivering remarks. But it's an important development if it is followed up on—a very important development, a necessary development if we're going to survive.

#Danny

Yeah, great points, Colonel Wilkerson. Well, Larry, I wanted to get your reaction and the colonel's reaction to the timing of this report that Trump is okaying strikes, waiting for the right time to officially order them. But the White House is doing some research, it seems like, before they order them, asking the Pentagon and the U.S. intelligence community to prepare an analysis and assessment of how Iran is likely to respond to each attack option prepared by the U.S. military. One of the questions the White House posed was whether there is a military action that can be carried out without provoking a devastating Iranian retaliatory response against oil and gas facilities in the Gulf. Larry, what's your reaction to this, especially the timing of it as a summit is going on? Is that a coincidence, or is that intentional?

#Larry Johnson

Yeah, well, that's an easy task. Give me that task if I were back at the CIA. Easy response: No, there is nothing that you're going to do that's going to lead to Iran doing nothing. Any attack of any substance on Iran is going to lead to devastating military and economic consequences for the United States, for Israel, and potentially the Gulf states. I did want to point out, with reference to what Colonel Wilkerson was talking about, that the visuals out of APEC, with Putin front and center—not

on the periphery, not in the back row, but in the front row, next to Xi Jinping—were a visual declaration of victory over Europe and the West. The United States and Europe tried to isolate Russia and Putin and completely failed.

The ones who were on the periphery were Mark Carney of Canada and Albanese, the prime minister of Australia, all looking quite uncomfortable having to be there sharing the stage with one Vladimir Putin. So you've got that. Now, back to the White House. You know, we'll find out in the next 12 hours. When you look at all of the cyberattacks that have been taking place since last week—and these were definitely cyberattacks—first on air operations, secondly on the banking sector, third on the intelligence community, going after and taking out NSAnet. Well, in between those, there were attacks on the tech sector as well. Microsoft was one in particular.

But I think StreamYard and other systems got hit. The United States went out of its way to avoid blaming anyone. Normally, with false flags, they'd be first out of the gate: "This was Iran," or "This was Russia," or "This was China," or North Korea, or the Martians. They didn't do that. They went out of their way: "Nothing to see here, folks. Move along. This is normal. This is all normal. Ignore the flames and explosions in the background. That's just special effects." So, you know, that told me there's something to it. I didn't know if they were delaying until after the meeting with Putin and Xi to then come out and say, "Oh, my God, we have discovered gambling in the casino."

#Larry Johnson

It's the Iranians in the library with a candlestick.

#Larry Johnson

You know, going back to playing Clue. But so far, they haven't done that. So it's now about 8:50 p. m. in Tehran. Night has fallen. We'll see if the U.S. starts attacks now or, you know, if they don't do anything in the next 24 hours. Trump has a narrow window to respond. Thanksgiving's a week from today. I don't see him launching any operations on Thanksgiving. That wouldn't go down well with the turkey and the dressing. So right after Thanksgiving, maybe, but then you've got Christmas three weeks later. And then, all of a sudden, it's January 3rd, and you've got the new Congress. So he doesn't have a lot of room to play with here.

#Danny

Yeah. Colonel, your thoughts? Same question.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

Well, coming down from the heights that I was just at to the desultory and lower level of this stupid war, I think there's a real good chance that Donald Trump has contemplated, and even possibly

moved 60 to 70 percent towards, a decision to do what a lot of us have suggested. If I remember correctly, Larry even brought this up once, and certainly I've brought it up several times, and that is to declare victory and leave, with only maybe some rearguard kinetic action that won't amount to much. And that's what I'm hearing is going to happen. That is to say, we're going to declare victory and leave. Good for him, I say. How he's going to do that, I'm not quite sure, but I think there are some people who are working on assessing what he's doing and how he's doing it. And we may see some reporting on this in the next 72 hours or so.

I hope that conclusion, which I've heard the most in the last 48 hours, is going to come to fruition: that we're going to say goodbye to this war. In essence, we're saying goodbye to a lot of other things, too. I think ultimately, even though we're building bunkers in the region for our GIs and others to get into, even though we're replacing radars as we can and so forth, about as soon as we replace them, the Iranians destroy them. Even though we're doing a few things that look residual, like we're planning on actually maybe trying to help the Saudis, for example, they're beyond help. They're beyond help. They're done. They're toast. I think probably you could say the same thing about most of the other GCC countries. You almost could come close to saying that about Israel, given the dilemma they're in right now.

And they have the problem of deciding whether General Eisenkot is really going to be the new leader of Israel or Bibi's going to throw everything into a cocked hat and try on his own to resume the war with Iran. I understand Eisenkot has threatened to cut his throat if he does. So we've got an interesting situation building in Israel with regard to who's going to have the power to do what to whom and how. Now, not for a minute do I think they're going to stop the genocide and the killing of people, because they're just intent on doing that as long and as deeply and as fast as they can in the West Bank and elsewhere. And Lebanon's a big question too. I think things have slowed down in Lebanon considerably on both sides of the coin, if you will, with both Hezbollah and the Israelis.

But right now, it's looking like Israel is, as I've predicted before, in some really deep trouble as a state, as a Jewish state. Interestingly enough, I think Eisenkot has added to that. Even though he comes as the author of the obliteration doctrine and with far more bona fides with regard to the IDF and his leadership thereof than Netanyahu, he still has thrown some of this into a cocked hat, which is interesting for me because I didn't think he would. All to say that I think we might be looking at this winding down in every aspect, except possibly the Iranians, who want to get in some final blows. And the Houthis aren't going to wind anything down until they've defeated Saudi Arabia thoroughly and completely, and until they own all that is called Yemen.

#Larry Johnson

Not to take you off topic per se, but have you seen the visual that's come out of the Saudi sovereign wealth fund tower?

#Danny

Yeah, I think I have that. I'll pull it up as you talk.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

I tell you what, something else I saw was miles and miles of supposedly Saudi combat vehicles, each one of them hit by a drone or a missile or something and just left strewn across the whole landscape. Not a soldier left in sight. I guess most of them were killed.

#Larry Johnson

I mean, this hit on the tower—this is the tallest building in Riyadh.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

Yeah, the one that MBS was so proud of.

#Larry Johnson

This is World Trade Center height. And the fire coming out—I mean, this is reminiscent of one of the World Trade Center towers getting hit. Now we'll see if it collapses. What's fascinating is that the New York Times story reported it like this: "Oh, Riyadh's tallest skyscraper hit in Saudi-Houthi strike," which is like, "It just blew out some windows." And then when you see the visual, that's more than blowing out some windows, folks. Jesus.

#Danny

Yeah, yeah, a huge, huge explosion.

#Larry Johnson

Sorry to take you off topic.

#Danny

Yeah, it's important. It's all related. I guess the question is, Larry, given what Colonel Wilkerson was saying just now, does Iran let the United States walk away or declare victory without these concessions? I guess there's a matter of justice here as well. Your thoughts on that?

#Larry Johnson

As long as the U.S. walks away by lifting the blockade, lifting the sanctions, and unfreezing the assets, then Iran's not going to pursue some vendetta. But if the United States tries to maintain any

kind of blockade—so let's say they don't proceed with the attacks, but they do continue with the blockade—well, we've seen over the last five days now that Iran has dramatically increased its attacks on tankers and other cargo ships trying to transit the Strait of Hormuz without the permission of the Iranians.

This is doing enormous, enormous damage to the shipping industry. It is also further curtailing the shipment of anything out of the Persian Gulf. And at some point, you can't rule out that Iran will go after the U.S. ships that are trying to enforce the blockade. But again, if the United States quietly lifts the blockade, lifts the sanctions, and unfreezes the assets, then I think they'll leave the United States alone. You know, they don't have to do it with a public announcement, and Iran may even be able to go along with letting it happen quietly.

#Danny

Right, and the data as of yesterday showed that 15 tankers had been struck and disabled in the last four days. It must be noted that these ships did not move forward afterward.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

Did you see the data on the insurance rates?

#Danny

It's gone up 1,000% or something like that. Yeah, I've never seen anything like it.

#Larry Johnson

From $30,000 to $1 million or $2 million?

#Danny

Unbelievable. Unbelievable. Unbelievable. Well, given what some of you referenced, we can take a look at some of these images. Here's an image in reference to what you were saying, Larry, in terms of the optics of this. Yeah, you had Putin, Xi, and Trump at the very front of the so-called family photo at the APEC summit. And, of course, it was their trilateral summit that dominated headlines. But I also wanted to play this, given that you were referencing some of these outages. Today, for the third day in a row, the NSA reported internal outages. Here's what Fox News said.

#Speaker 1

Well, breaking news right now: sources are telling Fox News that the NSA is facing a classified internal communications outage for the third day. This could have big consequences. We're not sure, but Jennifer Griffin has details for us on this breaking news. Hi, Jennifer.

#Speaker 2

Well, this is highly unusual. Sources confirmed to me that the NSA's internal classified communications system is at least partially down for a third straight day as they try to bring it back online. It does not mean the NSA cannot communicate at all internally, but the system is still disrupted.

#Danny

So, Colonel Wilkerson, let me turn to you. Larry commented on these outages. What do you make of them? Marco Rubio and others in the U.S. have been hesitant to blame foreign adversaries, although some people in Congress have been blaming Russia, Iran, and China. But what are your thoughts? Is it all a coincidence that these outages have been happening at the same time, or is there something more to it?

#Lawrence Wilkerson

Well, I think there are a number of reasons that could be at work here, and I don't pretend to know which one of them is prominent or even which one of them is decisive, if one of them is. One is that the administration could be doing things orchestrated by Vought, Miller, and others like them that are designed to begin to create a sense of fear in the American people, a sense of fear that they will exploit. Another is that we really do have some people out there who are probing in ways that will demonstrate to them where the probes are efficient and effective, and what those effects are. And they could run the gamut because we have a world, Danny, a world that now hates our guts.

Even our friends in Ukraine, with respect to the war itself, the Europeans hate our guts. So I don't know that there would be anybody out there with the capacity to do these sorts of things that I would exclude. And, you know, you could say, technologically speaking, a lot of countries have the capacity. So I don't know that we should so readily discount the possibility that people are playing with us in that regard, including some of the significant powers, to see where we might be most vulnerable. They know pretty much, I think, because what we did after 9/11 showed us just how vulnerable we were. And we didn't do a whole lot to fix it. And then thirdly, I think we could have a combination of all of this.

And in there somewhere, you have to throw in some incompetence. And I say incompetence because if you look at what happened with the air traffic control system, for example, you see billions of dollars put into fixing it, specifically designated by Joe Biden's administration and by the Congress that appropriated the money to fix the air traffic control system. Billions of dollars. Then you see the big, beautiful bill with billions—I think over 12 billion in that one—to do something about

it. Nothing's been done. So you have to ask yourself, too, how much of this might be, in some places, a product of malfeasance in office, of which there's been plenty. And I particularly point to Hegseth because he's not managing his money worth a damn.

#Danny

Yeah, Larry, any comments on this?

#Larry Johnson

Well, let's start with the possibility of renewed strikes. One of the indicators that that may not be happening came yesterday with the redeployment of the USS George Washington from the Persian Gulf, or that area of responsibility, reportedly headed back to Japan and then back to the United States. Now, what's odd about this is that it arrived on station after the George H.W. Bush arrived. So, you know, the aircraft carrier that's been out there the longest and is already reporting problems on board is the H.W. Bush, and they're keeping that in theater.

Now, you know, in the world of conspiracy theories, some are suggesting that perhaps this is just a decoy, pretending that the George Washington is going to go to Japan, but it's really sort of moving out of the area while staying close enough that it can turn around, come back in, and get engaged in the fight. But if it is true that they are sending it home, then reducing the aircraft carriers from three to two is a sign that maybe the United States has gotten cold feet, or sanity is prevailing, recognizing that this may not be such a good idea to launch new attacks on Iran.

The other unknown is that you had Admiral Brad Cooper consorting with Mossad and IDF chiefs in Israel two or three days ago. Again, was that coordinating strikes? Or was that him warning them off, saying, “No, we're not going to do this”? You know, take your pick which story you want to believe. And then the other problem you get into is the depletion of critical weapons systems. Now, on paper, they say, “Well, they've got around 1,400 Tomahawk missiles left in the arsenal that can be fired that aren't old. They're not outdated.” They include the outdated stuff.

You get up to 2,000. Well, take that 1,400 number. That's roughly 450 Tomahawk missiles for CENTCOM, 450 missiles for EUCOM, and 450 missiles for PACOM—Central Command, European Command, and Pacific Command. So it's not 1,400 total available for CENTCOM. It's actually much, much less than that. And you can say, well, why does that matter? Well, we fired 1,000 during the first 40 days of the war against Iran. So if that's a benchmark, we can't even meet 50% of what we hit Iran with during the first go-round. So that's to say there's a problem with arms, munitions, and supplies.

#Danny

Yeah, well, Colonel Wilkerson, I was also wondering about the USS George Washington leaving for Japan, as Larry noted. And it also comes amid reports that the George H.W. Bush is going to have its deployment extended all the way to 365 days. So really maxing out the deployment of that aircraft carrier, much to the anger and chagrin of families and, I'm sure, a lot of the crew on it. So, any reactions you have to that and to the likelihood of strikes here, given that, you know, it seems like every day we hear, "Trump is mulling it," "Trump has decided," "He hasn't given the orders"? And yet there are some material realities that Larry pointed out that do indeed seem to make this venture quite difficult and consequential.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

Yeah, if you wanted to keep your enemy guessing, Trump is good at that. I agree with Larry. Washington can turn and come back at flank speed and be in battle position in a very short time. So we'll just have to see what happens with Washington. I think Donald Trump must have a hard-on for H.W. Bush because of who it's named for. Poor guys and gals. I wouldn't want to be in the Navy right now. I just would not want to be in the Navy, and I damn sure would not want to be under that Israel-loving Bradley Cooper's command. Looking at that meeting and the little bit of video you showed there, it reminded me of what the Iranians do when they show the IRGC and the consultations going on and so forth.

Except in their case, it probably is reflective of reality the next day or the day after that. In this case, I would guess that they're probably talking about how the war can't be resumed anytime soon and probably trying to figure out, if not directly, at least indirectly from their conversations—this is the U. S. side—exactly where Israel stands in terms of its ability to refrain from doing something that we would not want them to do, as opposed to doing it regardless of what we say and do. And where does it stand with regard to the confrontation? They're creating it.

Netanyahu is using Yitzhak Rabin techniques, if you will. He created the situation that got Yitzhak Rabin assassinated, just as surely as if Netanyahu had walked up with a pistol, put it to his chest, and shot him. He created that settler and the settler environment that would assassinate Rabin. To a certain extent, he's doing the same thing with regard to Eisenhower. And he's doing it with regard to others he doesn't like, too. I don't think Netanyahu would care who got assassinated, just so long as it was one of his political enemies and it enhanced and deepened the profound sense of crisis that Israel would then be in.

Not very hard to do because they're already in a crisis, and people know it, even the average Israeli. So I don't know what that meeting was all about other than what I said. And that worries me somewhat because that means they don't have any control over it at all if they're making that kind of overture, that kind of visit for that purpose. I would have thought that otherwise, too, but that would prove it to me. So I think it's a very dangerous situation. And I think the focal point of that danger is Bibi Netanyahu and what he might do.

#Speaker 1

Yeah.

#Danny

Yeah. Well, you know, your thoughts on that, Larry—the Israel factor here? Because Israel always seems to be at the center of all of these reports that a strike is coming, that they're lobbying—Netanyahu in particular. What do you make of the Israeli role now that you've elicited and outlined all of these developments that seem to contradict the U.S. and Israeli push for some kind of a major operation? Maybe a major operation to, you know, offer some kind of so-called exit path or off-ramp toward declared victory, yet maybe without thought to the consequences of that. Your thoughts? Oh, sorry about that. Hold on. You're muted. Yeah.

#Larry Johnson

As long as Eisenkot continues to make progress toward forming a government, then I do think that reduces the chance of Israel getting involved again in a new battle. While the Mossad chief is clearly a toady of Bibi, the IDF chief is not. And the IDF chief also can read the room. And if he thinks former General Eisenkot is going to be in a position of command, I think he's going to be more and more reluctant to commit Israeli forces to a new misadventure. You know, Barak Ravid reported in Axios that Trump has now tasked the intelligence agencies to say, "Tell me about the likely Iranian response to these various courses of action." Any course of action that's kinetic against Iran is going to elicit a significant response and retaliation that will really put the United States and Israel in a trick box.

And the downsides can include a massive anti-ship missile barrage against some of the ships offshore. Now that Iran has missiles that can reach 4,000 to 5,000 kilometers, those ships are well within that range. Shooting down U.S. aircraft and capturing U.S. pilots—that's not a good look, particularly around Thanksgiving, with U.S. military personnel in the hands of Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps personnel. So if that is true, then that tells me Trump is now looking for an off-ramp from whatever he thought was a good idea. I think another factor here—and I'm only speculating—is what he heard from Xi and Putin. They may have made it clear to him and said, "Hey, we've got Iran's back, just so you understand. You can start a fight with them, but you may be starting a fight with us. Think twice about that."

#Lawrence Wilkerson

Yeah.

#Danny

And Colonel Wilkerson and Larry, I'd like both your thoughts on this. I remember having both of you on to talk about the Abraham Lincoln developments, that debacle, and how absolutely crisis-ridden it was for the U.S. Navy. There was an Iranian report—likely exaggerated, and maybe some of this did not happen—that Bradley Cooper visited the Abraham Lincoln and that there was actually a huge conflict among crew members directed at him. And I'm just wondering, based on your knowledge, how relying on these aircraft carriers for a future operation might be impeded by not just the drop in morale, but maybe the outright disgust with this war continuing, particularly since it's extending deployments and making their futures very uncertain, and maybe their families' futures too. Your thoughts? Colonel Wilkerson, you first.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

Sorry. I go back to an analysis we did at Eisenhower, a fairly good analysis of when Trump made his remarks—you may recall—that he was going to go to 393 ships or something like that in the Navy, which would mean a huge buildup. I don't remember if it was in this administration or the first one. I think it was the first one. Well, one of the things we found in that analysis was, one, we didn't have the shipyards. Well, they started trying to deal with that by outsourcing the building to Australia, to Korea, and other places. But that wouldn't cure it either. We looked at the shipbuilding capacity of those countries alongside their own need to build commercial shipping and things like that.

You couldn't do it that way either. And the cost would probably be prohibitive too if the allies really decided they were going to stick it to us. And then we looked at the other things. But the thing we looked at that really told us it was impossible to do that was recruiting. I think the figure was about 276 operational ships at that time, or something like that, that you could call ships, combatants, whatever. We couldn't man them. We couldn't man 10 or 11 carriers. We had to hotbed. We had to hot bunk. We had to shift people around. Same in the submarines. That was alleviated a little bit by the fact that we were taking submarines offline because they were so old.

We didn't want to endanger the crews and so forth. But we put them into rebuild, and now, as I understand it, we have most of them, particularly the SSBNs, the ballistic missile submarines, out there anyway, hopefully without killing some sailors in a submarine destroyed due to age. But we looked at the Navy hard, and it's impossible. You can't increase the size of the Navy because you can't increase the number of sailors necessary to sail the Navy. Now, they actually tried to do something about that by building ships that were automated and didn't need nearly as many crew members. They built one. I saw her launched at Bath Iron Works.

For example, this ship took its usual complement from about 313 down to about 177. But then we asked fundamental questions. What's the strength of the Navy? What's been the strength of the United States Navy since it was started by John Adams? Damage control—the ability to save your ship. Even if you got pummeled by a British ship that was twice your size, you didn't get sunk.

Instead, the British ship limped away a lot of times. It didn't get sunk, but it limped away from the battle because we have the best damage control in the world. We haven't lost a major combatant in a long time, years and years and years.

We didn't lose the one hit by two Exocet missiles in the Gulf, nor the one that had a 19-foot hole ripped in her side in the port of Aden, Yemen, in October of 2000, I think it was, when al-Qaeda struck her. You can't do that if you have these automated crews. Automation does not do damage control. It's brave sailors risking their lives who do damage control. So all that is to say, we can't have a bigger Navy, and our Navy right now is inadequate to the task. And it's inadequate to the task in spades because of this war with Iran, because it's basically a maritime war. And that's terrible. I mean, we're tearing our Defense Department apart.

#Danny

Yeah, Larry, any reactions? Same question to you.

#Larry Johnson

Well, again, to underscore what Colonel Wilkerson is talking about, there's no strategy. If you have a clearly defined strategy, then you can put together a plan, an operational plan, to meet the objectives of that strategy. So, for example, if you say, "Okay, our strategy is that we're going to rely more heavily upon our maritime presence, our ability to deploy carrier task forces and to use them as leverage in projecting force around the world," okay, so what are you going to do to support that?

#Lawrence Wilkerson

Oh, instead of having four support ships, we're going to eliminate two, so we're down to two.

#Larry Johnson

So you want to expand your naval operations, but you're going to cut your ability to support those naval operations. Yeah, that's right. That's what we've done. And, you know, they started that under Obama. Again, this is bipartisan stupidity. And I've been reminiscing all week about the music of The Who, Roger Daltrey and Pete Townshend. If you go back to the '70s, they had one song, you know, "Won't Get Fooled Again," and it ends with, "Meet the new boss, same as the old boss." And that's what we're discovering: oh, they turned out the Republicans. Now we get Hakeem Jeffries and Chuck Schumer. Great. We've gone from Tweedledee to Tweedledummer.

#Speaker 2

Yeah.

#Danny

Yeah, we've gotten guarantees of funding this war, Colonel Wilkerson, the war against Iran. I think the promise is that the war will be funded because of some necessary needs somewhere in the foreign policy establishment, but then they'll stop it. They will stop the war against Iran and also give a lot more money to Ukraine. I think that's a big promise from Hakeem Jeffries, Chris Murphy, and the rest. There is, I think, a lot of reason to be concerned that, even with a change of face and party majority coming up in January, we might simply see new forms—or maybe the same old forms—of escalation in the future. What are your thoughts on that?

#Lawrence Wilkerson

I think we probably have a sea change coming up with regard to this new crop coming in, principally to the House, but also a significant number to the Senate—more than anybody anticipated in the Senate. I think most of the results are in now and tabulated, and I think it's going to be a considerable, though not overwhelming, majority in the Senate. It's going to be a majority that hasn't been seen in a long time. Schumer's gone. I've been assured by leaders of both parties, actually, including leaders in the Republican Party I still talk to and trust, that Schumer's gone. Jeffries is a different model.

I was at the Monaco restaurant last night with some people from the Project on Government Oversight, and we were arguing about that, two or three on one side, two or three on the other side. Jeffries had been reelected, and had been reelected by some solid Democrats who are currently in the House. I said, "Well, you haven't seen this new crop yet." I've experienced a new crop coming to Washington, though it wasn't nearly as big as this one. It did initially effect some pretty significant changes. It didn't last because the old people like Pelosi and Hoyer and a host of others hung on to their sinecures with rabid power. But this is going to be a bigger group, a much bigger group.

And I had some people telling me Hakeem's going too. They're just going to need to get the new majority in there, and they're going to have to settle how they're going to vote. And they're going to have to settle who's going to get the vote, and it ain't going to be him. I don't know if that's true or not. I heard both sides of the argument. But if that were done, if both of those leaders were gone and new people were put in there, it would be a sea change, I think, in both houses. Whether that's going to make any difference or not, I agree with Larry. I've been around a long time. I've seen a lot of Congresses, and most of them weren't very good.

We've been particularly bad at legislation since about '72, '73. We don't seem to do anything but throw rocks at one another. We don't govern. That's it in a nutshell. We do not govern. Neither party governs. They just like to holler and scream and get themselves on C-SPAN in an empty Congress, but they're there. They get themselves doing other things, raising money and everything else, which is their preoccupation three or four days a week. So we don't govern. It would be a marvelous thing

for this old man, before he passes away, to see a legislative branch of the government that actually governs or tries to govern. I'll hold out some hope for that, but I'm not all that optimistic about it.

#Danny

Well, I know both of you have commitments at the top of the hour, so maybe a minute or two each for your final comments. We didn't get to comment a lot on Ukraine today, but maybe you could comment on what's going on there and what the summit might mean for that. Trump said that there's momentum going in the right direction. I'm wondering if you believe that, Larry. And Colonel Wilkerson, you get the last word after that.

#Larry Johnson

Yeah, I will quote from Shakespeare's Macbeth with respect to Ukraine: "It is a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing." Amen.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

Out, out, brief candle!

#Danny

Yeah, yeah. Your thoughts on it?

#Lawrence Wilkerson

I agree with Larry. I do think there's a growing body of information in the world, if people will just consult it, showing that Putin is not fighting Ukraine. He's fighting the entire goddamn West.

#Larry Johnson

Yeah.

#Speaker 1

Yeah.

#Danny

Yeah. And we can close on this. I believe there was a Kushner-Witkoff proposal to Putin—you both have talked about it—that said, "Hey, let Ukraine into NATO, and you can get Donbas." And I thought, yeah.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

How brain-dead could you be? Yeah.

#Danny

It's not like we haven't been here before, right? I don't know. Sometimes what is striking, I think, about these last days of the first half of the Trump administration is that it feels like we're in a loop. We've been here before. We've heard these same proposals before, and yet they fall on deaf ears. But I really appreciate both of you coming on today. I want to make sure everyone knows that, Larry, your Sonar 21, as well as Transition Protocol, are both in the video description.

#Larry Johnson

No more Transition Protocol. I've resigned from it. I think the provenance of a lot of the information is questionable, and I discourage anybody from watching it.

#Danny

Oh, okay. All right. Well, let me...

#Lawrence Wilkerson

An honest man.

#Danny

Let me correct the record, then. I'll go into the video description while you're here, Larry, and I will remove that because I don't want anything associated with you that you're not proud of and don't endorse. Right.

#Larry Johnson

No more Transition Protocol.

#Danny

It's gone. Guys, always a pleasure.

#Larry Johnson

I'll see Colonel Wilkerson tomorrow.

#Danny

Yeah, and I'll see you both next week. Take care, guys. All right, guys. All right. Thanks so much, Colonel Wilkerson. I appreciate your time, Larry Johnson. That was some big news. I was not expecting to hear that in public from Larry, but nevertheless, I've always got to respect my friends' and my guests' wishes. Follow Larry Johnson at sonar21.com. Yeah, we have a couple of minutes here. I want to first just say that tomorrow at the same time, 1 p.m. Eastern time, I'll be on with Patrick Henningsen, and we will go over the day's developments. And, of course, we're going to continue to break down the significance of this summit.

If there's any significance at all, if you want my assessment of it, it was, yes, a big nothing burger. But when I look at the terms of that peace declaration, I have to say that my initial thought was: Vladimir Putin, Xi Jinping—they sit down with Donald Trump, or they have conversations, because, you know, these things don't happen at the table, all right? Like, this peace declaration wasn't like, "Oh, we've come here. Well, what do we agree upon?" No, they've been talking probably for weeks on end about what they're going to say publicly after the meeting is over. And when you look at the full text of the declaration, it's really, of course, pretty substanceless in terms of content, right?

There's not really much content here. Reform the UN—that could be interpreted any way possible. Pump more oil. Well, Russia is a big oil producer. China actually produces some energy too, a lot of it for itself. And of course, the U.S. likes to brag about how much oil it produces. The International Criminal Court—some people are disappointed in that. But if we look at the history of the International Criminal Court, we can see why Russia and China would not have any problem endorsing a statement against it, given that it has mostly been used against African countries—so-called "dictators" in Africa—as a neocolonial weapon. And we know about the role that it played during the Yugoslav war.

#Larry Johnson

And Milošević.

#Danny

And then, of course, nuclear war cannot be won. Oh, my gosh. That, I think, is a really easy one to agree upon, even though just agreeing on dialogue continues this pattern of the United States not repairing the damage it's done to arms control treaties, as Scott Ritter, friend of the show, often talks about. So, "This was the best they could do," I think Putin and Xi Jinping thought to themselves. That's my opinion when I look at what they came out with. I think they're both right now more interested in managing a chaotic U.S. empire in decline and ensuring that their interests, as well as the interests of stability, peace, etc., are advanced as much as possible, given that the U. S. empire, of course, is designed to do the exact opposite and is ruled by forces—a tiny minority, of course, of forces in the world—that seek the opposite of peace: endless war and instability for profit.

That is its job, and they're well aware of that. So the show goes on both here and, of course, geopolitically, in this larger struggle for a multipolar world. It wasn't mentioned, and I want to mention it: Vladimir Putin and Xi Jinping met for three hours, double the time that Trump, Putin, and Xi Jinping met when they met. And this was the first meeting that occurred on the sidelines of the APEC summit. Xi Jinping declared that they had met 50 times and said that he and Vladimir Putin were dear friends. So I think we can see what the message really is: there's no real change in trajectory geopolitically. Russia and China are not cozying up to the United States.

And the United States is not offering any commitments to Russia and China that should actually assuage the fears of the neocons. But they're panicking anyway, calling it an absolute nightmare that this happened and even going so far as calling Donald Trump a traitor for doing this. So that's where we are politically in the establishment. If you notice, establishment politics are probably at their most nauseating, at their most rot-filled. I mean, it's an absolute stench, and it's going to get worse, everyone. Stay tuned on this channel because it's going to get worse when the new Congress comes in.

Not because I believe the Democrats are inherently worse than the GOP, but because—what do they say? Shit rolls downhill. Well, think about the U.S. empire's decline and chaos and penchant for destruction as a snowball of shit that's constantly rolling downhill and getting bigger and bigger and bigger. And that's why the wars are getting bigger and bigger and bigger. And that's why the crises are getting bigger and bigger. So just get ready for that, because if you think Hakeem Jeffries, AOC, and these types are going to turn the corner on U.S. warmongering in all of its forms, including domestically, think again.

What usually happens is we find that there are new forms, altered forms, or the same damn thing just painted with a different stroke or slapped with a different brand. The same kind of terror, the same kind of repression, the same kind of destruction, the same kind of regime-change wars, the same kind of rampant security-state apparatus, buildup, military contracting, giveaways to the big banks. We can go on and on and on. But it's going to continue on that way because they're not changing who rules. Actually, they continue to serve those who do. And so until there is a real, open conflict in the United States and in the West between those who are ruling and those who are being ruled...

We're going to see a lot of the same path continue. And we're going to see, of course, the multipolar world—countries that are truly sovereign, people that are truly sovereign—try to push back as much as possible against that and hopefully build a new and better world. So all that is to say, be ready for that, because all of these optics should really just point us right back to a deeper understanding of this. And I think the lack of substance coming out of the APEC conference, trilateral summit, historic Yalta 2.0, 7.0, whatever you want to say—from the weird observations people were making, right?

The body language, all of this. Just remember that that is a byproduct of the fact that the U.S. empire can't deliver on anything positive for humanity. So you're going to get a lot of garbage while the world is trying to build something better. People and countries that are trying to build something better continue going about their business, trying to do so in very difficult conditions, nevertheless. So, everybody, hit the like button. That helps boost the show in YouTube's algorithm. Tomorrow, November 20th, it will be me and Patrick Henningsen at 1 p.m. Eastern Time. And then November 21st, I'll have a new guest on the show, Matthew Ehret, for the first time.

Actually, I've known him for quite a few years, and I'm very happy to have him on the show on Saturday. And then I will announce more guests. Again, hit the like button. Be sure to go to the video description. Follow Larry Johnson's work, and check out all the ways to support this channel. Oh, last thing: hit the subscribe button if you haven't. Likes and comments are, of course, by far the most important. Like button: one. Comments: 1A. If you can do both, it's great. But the like button is what boosts the show in the algorithm the most. Comments help show engagement. And then, 3A: hit the subscribe button, because while it doesn't really boost anything in the algorithm, what it does is counter YouTube's AI clampdown, which is very active right now.

They're clamping down on bots and metadata. And so people are getting caught in the crossfire all the time because it's not humans. They're deploying AI systems that incorrectly detect that you're AI or that you're a bot or whatever, and they'll take you off. So do hit the subscribe button if you have not, because you may already have been taken off. You don't know. All right. Matthew Ehret on Saturday, and tomorrow, Patrick Henningsen at 1 p.m. Eastern Time. Both of them will be at 1 p.m. Eastern Time. All right. I'll see you all tomorrow. Take care. Bye-bye.