

Larry Johnson & Wilkerson: US Warships Tried to Enter Strait of Hormuz

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#Nima

Hi, everybody. Today's Friday, May 26th, and our dear friends Larry Johnson and Col. Wilkerson are here with us. Welcome back.

#Larry

Hey there, good to meet you.

#Nima

Let me start, Larry, with what has happened in the last two days. One of them was the American oil tanker that tried to pass through the Strait of Hormuz, which Iran hit. At least they fired some sort of missiles there—cruise missiles toward the tanker, just a warning sort of missiles. But last night we learned that the United States, four U.S. warships, tried to enter the Strait of Hormuz, which got the same sort of reaction from the Iranians. And we had the American attack on the city of Bandar Abbas, which is close to the Persian Gulf, and then the Iranian response on the American base in Kuwait. Putting that aside, on the other hand, Donald Trump is trying to sell us that everything is going well.

We're going to reach some sort of agreement. And even J.D. Vance yesterday said the same thing. Moments ago, before coming to this live, here is what the head of the Iranian parliament tweeted. He says three things, three points in his tweet. One, we seize concession not through dialogue, but with missiles. In negotiations, we merely make them understand. We have no trust in guarantees or words. Only actions are the measure. No actions will be taken before the other side acts. The winner of any agreement is the one who is better prepared for war the day after. Here is what it... Do you feel any sort of negotiations or talk or peace happening? Your understanding.

#Larry

Yeah, no, they're... The United States is strangely silent right now. And let's put it into a time frame. I judge it like 12 hours ago, so it's 10 p.m. at night. That is early morning Iran time, and there was no action. Twenty-four hours before that is what you just described, where the four ships tried to go through the strait, and Iran stopped them. Again, we don't know if they fired missiles directly at the ships, but it stopped it. And in response to that, the United States attacked. They launched some bombs, but apparently they didn't hit anything important.

However, Iran fired a missile as a warning shot at the airbase in Kuwait from where those flights, these combat air patrols, had originated. Then, 24 hours before that, there had been a similar ship trying to sneak through. Iran stopped it. In that one, the United States killed four sailors in small boats. So actually, they hit Iranian targets. So as we look at this progression, day one, it was very aggressive — they hit and killed Iranians. Day two, they fired shots, but they didn't kill Iranians. And now, in the last 12 hours, they haven't responded at all, the United States. So that tells me that there's something going on, that Iran has delivered a message to the United States.

And I think the combination of that missile that was fired at Kuwait, because they put the U.S. on notice — "We're going to destroy this air base if you keep this up. We're not going to break the ceasefire, but if you continue to attack and provoke, we're going to take out that air base." And as a consequence of that, right now we've seen at least, I don't know if it's permanent or at least a temporary standing down of U.S. aggressive missions against Iran. Iran's positions have been very, very clear, and they were contradicted yesterday by what Donald Trump said. Iran wants immediate sanction relief, and they want their assets unfrozen.

Trump yesterday said, no, no, there's not going to be any immediate sanctions relief, and we're not unfreezing a single thing. Iran's going to maintain control of the Strait of Hormuz. Trump says, no, no, no, they're not. So this fight claiming, oh, yeah, we're really near an agreement — if what Trump is saying reflects the U.S. position, they're nowhere near at all. But the United States keeps coming back to the nuclear issue. Iran has said that's for discussion later. That's not for discussion now. The now issue is get the sanctions relief, return the frozen assets, we'll maintain control of the Strait of Hormuz, and this war against the Palestinians and Lebanese has got to stop now.

#Lawrence

Carl. Carl. Well, I think Larry has described it pretty well. I would add that his last point, which I think is adamant with the Iranians, ain't going to happen. Bibi is going full hog and looks like he might go for the entire country of Lebanon before it's over with. And he's even got people in Beirut now screaming and hollering because he's attacking with Air Force assets that clearly aren't Hezbollah. Or if they're Hezbollah, it's a real stretch to prove that they are. So that's the fly in the ointment as far as I see it tactically on the ground. Bibi Netanyahu is paying no attention to this at all.

But a bigger problem, I think, Larry just referred to indirectly perhaps, but nonetheless he referred to it, and that is that if we do have any diplomacy going on, even through third parties — through Oman, Pakistan, whomever — if we do have any going on, how do you conduct it coherently when Donald Trump makes these pronouncements all the time, which are probably as divorced from anything they're doing on the ground with third parties in terms of diplomatic maneuvers completely? So you get one person saying, people exchange whatever on the ground that forms some view of one particular issue, like, for example, the Strait of Hormuz, and then all of a sudden Donald Trump comes out and condemns Oman or some other egregious move. How the hell do you do any coherent diplomacy with your prime diplomat — and that's what the president is supposed to be, really — making these pronouncements all the time?

They're disconnected from reality and disconnected probably most of the time from diplomacy being conducted, third party or otherwise. I don't know how you do this. I simply don't. And is it just to keep everything so confused so essentially Bibi can do what he wants to whenever he wants to? Now he's expanded in Gaza, and he's going full bore again in Gaza. And he is talking about—this was in Haaretz's headline this morning—he's talking about 70%. How do you get 70% of Lebanon and stay anywhere near the Litani River? This is crazy. It's just crazy. You can't figure out what's happening, and I think it reflects Trump's desperation. I think he does not know how to get out of the mess he's got himself into, but he does have some visceral view that he needs to.

#Larry

This just came across the wire from Donald Trump: Iran must agree that they will never have a nuclear weapon or bomb. The Hormuz Strait must be immediately opened, no tolls for unrestricted shipping traffic in both directions. All water mines, bombs, if any, will be terminated, and we have removed through detonation numerous such mines with our great underwater minesweepers. Iran will complete the immediate removal and/or detonation of any mines that are left, which will not be many. Ships caught in the strait due to our amazing and unprecedented naval blockade, which will now be lifted, may start the process of heading home. Say hello to your wives, husbands, parents, and families from me, your favorite president.

The enriched material, sometimes referred to as nuclear dust, which is buried deep underground with virtually collapsed mountains caused by our powerful B-2 bomber attack 11 months ago, sitting on top of it, will be unearthed by the United States, which, it is agreed, is the only country along with China with the mechanical capability of doing so, in close coordination and conjunction with the Islamic Republic of Iran, plus the International Atomic Energy Agency, and destroyed. Doesn't make sense, but that's what it says. No money will be exchanged until further notice. Other items of far less importance have been agreed to. I'll be meeting now in the Situation Room to make a final determination. Thanks for your attention to this matter. President Donald J. Trump. There's so much wrong with that.

#Lawrence

And who wrote it for him? I mean, a hodgepodge of Defense Department, State Department, Trump's lackeys. I mean, who wrote that crap for him?

#Nima

Stephen Miller.

#Larry

I don't know if that's Miller. There's this one woman, young woman, she's in her 20s. I wouldn't be surprised if she's writing. She's being told what to write. She writes it. With the mines as an example, the United States hasn't exploded a bunch of them, number one, but by the Department of Defense's own estimate, it's going to take six months to clean the mines up. Six months, okay? And that's assuming there's no threat from Iran. Iran is not going to allow the United States to come in and, quote, dig up the nuclear dust. That ain't happening. There would be, if any Iranian agreed to that, there'd be a coup. So you've got that. And Iran has, you know, we'll see what is actually going to be agreed upon in the Situation Room. The things that Trump says, oh, all these other items of less importance, those are actually the key items.

#Nima

Yeah. Colonel, I really feel that Stephen Miller has a very substantial role in the Trump administration. Oh, I do too. Together with Jared Kushner, these are two important characters. One of them is part of the administration. The other one, Jared Kushner, is not even part of the administration. But he's so important. Here's what Stephen Miller said about the situation in the Middle East.

#Lawrence

When did he say that?

#Speaker 04

President Trump is the one who's going to make that decision, and President Trump alone. He's directly, personally involved in the negotiations, making sure that the results are up to his standards. As you've outlined, Iran has made significant, material, and dramatic concessions to the United States that would have been impossible only a short time ago because of the military battlefield defeat that they have suffered and the embargo continuing to choke the life out of their economy. But let's understand something else that's very important—to baseline this all on where we are today versus where we started.

When Obama signed the Iran nuclear deal, the so-called JCPOA, Iran was on a guaranteed path to a nuclear weapon—to being the dominant power in the region, to being the richest and most militarily threatening nation in the entire Middle East, with the ability to launch ballistic and ultimately nuclear weapons to Europe and eventually the United States. Now, because of President Trump, their economy has been dismantled. Their nuclear program under Operation Midnight Hammer has been obliterated. Their entire defense industrial base has been eradicated. Their navy's at the bottom of the sea, their air force at the bottom of the sea, their entire leadership class has been decapitated.

It is the most complete, thorough, total military thrashing in the history of armed conflict. Four weeks and a country decimated to that degree, to that extent, and now here we are at the end of that with Iran putting on the table a complete reopening of the Strait, as has been discussed, and many other concessions that are going to be unveiled in the time to come. But again, there's no deal until there's a deal. Nothing's final until it's final. And President Trump has been clear that he reserves the option now or at any time in the future to do whatever is necessary to defend and protect America's national security.

#Lawrence

Let me make a couple of administrative comments before we go into the real meat of it. Look under his name. It says Deputy Chief of Staff for Policy. I've been very close to four presidential administrations, intimately so with two. Never in the history of presidential administrations has a deputy—deputy, mind you—chief of staff had such power as he just intimated and had such a position to articulate the lies written for him by Israel that he just articulated. And how do I know that Israel wrote most of that? Because it's been coming out in Haaretz and little pieces from Bibi and others for about a week or two already. Stephen Miller is an agent working in the White House for Bibi Netanyahu. Of course, we've all known that all along.

But to have this prominence when he gets it in his mind to come out and speak like he did there is a bastardization of everything the system stands for, particularly in the White House. The deputy chiefs of staff are supposed to manage the cabinet-level and other equivalent agencies within the government. One of them manages half—maybe it includes State, Treasury, and a couple of others. The other one manages the other half. That's not what they're doing. They're letting him be a spokesperson for Bibi Netanyahu from the podium of the President of the United States. And most of what he said there was propaganda and very difficult to determine if any of it is true, but pretty well determined that a lot of it was false.

So why is he occupying this position that the president himself, or the chief of staff if he empowers her to be so, ought to be articulating? I would say it shouldn't be any of the administration's, or the chiefs of staff's, deputies or primaries. It should be the Secretary of State, the Secretary of War, if he could speak intelligibly, or someone else empowered in the mainstream of the cabinet to speak. Why is he speaking? That's the big administrative question. Why is he speaking as if he were the

president of the United States, and in real terms, more articulately but lying, much the way the president does? This is a mystery to me. Administratively, this is a mystery. What are they doing? Yeah.

#Nima

Larry, the last sentence he said, I think it's so important for Iranians. He said it doesn't matter what they get by these talks and negotiations, if we could call them so-called negotiations. All options are on the table. It means that the United States can decide to again attack Iran, over and over. It depends on the decision on the part of the President of the United States. This is the whole concept, this is the whole problem with the Iranians right now. They're talking about what is the main point of talking with the United States if we finally get to the battlefield. So let's do it on the battlefield. What is the point of talking with Americans? When it comes to the nuclear program, they're basically saying there is no point in that. If you're part of the NPT, then we can enrich uranium. If that's the problem, we can get out of the NPT. There are people, many people, arguing that right now in Europe.

#Larry

Yeah, the narrative construction that Miller was engaged in to paint Iran as so desperate, so damaged, so defeated, that they'll accept any agreement now — that we, the United States, have beat them down and they're begging, begging for an agreement — well, that's just simply not true. In fact, the opposite is true. It's the United States that's begging for an agreement. I'd recommend, you know, not to do cross-public, you know, cross-advertising, but Danny Davis had a geologist, an oil expert named Art Berman, did an hour-long interview with him the other day, and I'd really encourage people to go watch that, because he provides a lesson on what's really going on in the oil market.

#Lawrence

And despite, you know, like, here was Donald Trump yesterday claiming, oh man, the United States, we're the biggest in oil and everything else.

#Larry

And Berman had a great metaphor. He said, you know, let's assume that oil is like alcohol. So what do you want to drink? Are you looking to just throw back a few beers or some wine, or do you want to get drunk? If you want to get drunk, break out the Jack Daniels, 100 proof. He says the U.S. oil is really the equivalent of light beer and wine. It's not really the kind of oil that is needed anymore to produce diesel. And the diesel oil is imported. So the United States is actually importing 10% of its oil. Now, these are things I didn't know, but he had the facts out.

So what he's suggesting is that the economic consequences from this shutdown of oil out of the Persian Gulf, as the real experts know, it's building and building and building. And when it explodes on us, when the final impact comes, it's going to be devastating. So that's what's driving, in the back of the mind, the Trump folks: we've got to get a deal with Iran. But what Stephen Miller said there, suggesting such total U.S. dominance, it's just—it's dangerous. What I don't know is, does he really believe his own bullshit?

#Lawrence

Yeah.

#Larry

Or is he just saying that for the public relations line, you know, the public diplomacy part, but secretly he knows how screwed they are? That I don't know.

#Lawrence

And it's far more dangerous, Nima, if he believes it. Far more dangerous, in my view. I agree.

#Nima

Yeah. Larry, how do you see—Colonel, how do you see the role of Pakistan in what's going on right now? Pakistan is talking to Iranians, to Americans, going to China, coordinating with China. And we know they have a good relationship with Saudi Arabia in the region, with Turkey. That's a key country right now, in my opinion.

#Lawrence

Right. I just read—we talked about it a little bit before we went on the air—but I just read a fairly good analysis, I think, by some people who were fed the information, if you will, from CIA people who were willing to talk. And I was stunned by the procedures that they outlined that had gone on for the last few years since they ousted Imran Khan and what that meant in terms of, you know, it's typical Pakistani actions, but at the same time, it's not typical. When they ousted him, they put individuals into power in both the ISI and in the Pakistani military, some of them, as they do from time to time, overlapping to a certain extent. And they put someone in Khan's seat who is a lackey.

And what's happening right now is all of these forces, according to this analysis, all of these forces are sort of vacillating as to where they're going at any given time. For example, one of the things that came out of this was the Chinese were told no on continuing something they'd already spent a considerable amount of money on—the port that they were going to have, you know, not *carte blanche*, but almost *carte blanche* in—and it was a very, very important part of their movement to

the West, if you will. That got squelched, apparently, meaning that in this analysis's outcome, if you will, Pakistan was moving again closer to the United States because we had put so much pressure on them to do that.

And we had even been instrumental in getting rid of Khan—I believe that, others have told me that—and putting in the people that are now in power in Pakistan. So then you get to the second part of the analysis, and you're trying to figure out what they're talking about when they say, but... then it's back to China again and how China is still very influential in Islamabad, for obvious reasons—money and everything else—and decisions on the part of the civilian government as well as the military. So where are they? At the end of the analysis, I'm asking myself, where are they in these negotiations?

And I don't know if Larry wants to reveal it or not, but we talked about something else before we went on the air that seems like it would spin out of this if their decision is that they're really solid with China, that it ain't going to be a bifurcated foreign policy anymore, which is what they've been trying, according to this analysis, to maintain. You know, a little bit here for the U.S., a little bit here for China. Let each of them think that everything or most of it is going to them and nothing is going to the other, and vice versa. Well, that's a dangerous game to play, a very dangerous game to play, and especially with this administration. Some of the things they attributed to Marco Rubio saying about this inside channels indicated that maybe the State Department at least was aware of the ambivalence going on in Islamabad right now.

But my question to myself was, what the hell does this mean with regard to these negotiations? Does it mean, as the analysis also said, Rubio had concluded that the Pakistanis were duplicitous and he wasn't going to pay any attention to them? Or does it mean that Trump said that? Does it mean we don't trust them at all? And then the question is, why are we letting them be intermediaries and acting like we trust them? All coming back to the realization, I think, that this diplomacy is a farce. It's a farce. Whether you're telling Oman off or you're using Pakistan, it's a farce. We're not doing any diplomacy. All we're doing is trying to look like we're winning a war that we're losing, and it's becoming increasingly difficult to do so.

#Larry

Yeah. Let me just point out that after that incident, after Iran fired — so that took place, I guess, early Thursday morning Iran time, which was like Wednesday night my time. But after they fired that missile at the U.S. air base in Kuwait, I'm told that the Supreme National Security Council met and came up with a new policy. That was later on Thursday. President Raisi had an hour and 47-minute conversation with Pakistani Prime Minister Sharif. And in that conversation — and I'm not at liberty really to divulge all of that — but it dealt with what Iran's policy vis-à-vis nuclear weapons and the nuclear world would be going forward. Later that day, so this was yesterday, the Pakistani foreign minister, Ishaq Dar, communicated all that to Marco Rubio. And again, without going into the

details yet, because the source has asked to hold back on this, it's the kind of information that after getting it, Marco Rubio would have needed an underwear change, okay? He might have defecated upon himself, right?

#Lawrence

But it would prove the one conclusion that this analysis offered — that Marco Rubio doesn't trust the Pakistanis any farther than he can spit.

#Larry

Right, right. So that's why the White House, up until this latest tweet we talked about a little bit ago, or this Truth Social post by Trump, why they've been strangely quiet for about 24 hours — because of the seriousness of this message. Right. Now, the assumption that was expressed by Stephen Miller, that Iran is in a desperate situation economically, that it's untenable, is simply not true. And Iran, I would argue, actually has better economic prospects right now than it did three months ago, before the start of this war. You know, for example, its trade with Russia and China has increased, not diminished.

It's got more cash flow coming in because of the price of oil going up. And the attack by the United States and Israel on Iran on February 28th really galvanized China and Russia to say, okay, we've got to step up our game in supporting Iran beyond what we had done previously. So, you know, Trump is trying to figure out—well, I'm not sure Trump is conscious about this—but the people around Trump are trying to say, how the hell do we get out of this mess? Because we are caught right now. We don't have any good military options, despite all the chest-thumping we're doing.

#Nima

Yeah. Colonel, I think when it comes to the conflict in the Middle East, the war between Iran and the United States, the most important comments are coming from Israelis, mostly Benjamin Netanyahu. He said that we must complete the mission in Iran in a way that constitutes a final solution. A final solution. Yeah.

#Lawrence

Not a good use of language, by the way. But he's very guarded about that. So when he does say something like that, beware. I mean, he doesn't use these terms loosely. Sometimes he uses them for what you might call deterrent impact, but sometimes he means what he's saying when he says it. And what he's doing in Lebanon right now—unconscionable. It's beginning to look like another Gaza. Haaretz this morning called it—it didn't call it a genocide yet, it called it ethnic cleansing. That's a

pretty strong phrase for them to be using. And I think they're right. Where is he going to stop? Is he going to stop like he did in 1982 because he's getting his ass handed to him by the other side? Maybe. I don't know. But where is he going to stop if he's not?

Where is he going to stop if he's got a little power left? And what does it mean with regard to his concentration on—should Trump decide to go back to war with Iran? Iran. Does he move all of his forces, or those forces that would be necessary, principally the IAF? Does he move them over to join Trump in a week or two of resumed bombing of Iran? Or does he continue what he's doing in Lebanon? Without the IAF, he's somewhat limited, because that's the only thing really that's saving him from really domineering Hezbollah with regard to his tanks and other elements of the ground forces, who are being roundly beaten battle after battle, incident after incident, I should be saying. I don't know where we go here in terms of the theaters that he's involved in. In terms of this morning, Haaretz said he's got 51 now.

I think that's the postulation. So he's got a majority if the election were to occur right now. And they're talking about other people than Naftali Bennett and Lapid and others that were, shall we say, in the running—Gantz, Benny Gantz maybe. They're talking about other people now in possible competition with Netanyahu, which means things are opening up a little bit on the political scene in Israel. What does all this mean in terms of what you just said? Remember when I was quoting that he said it in Hebrew amongst his select few—Ben-Gvir, Smotrich, and others—when he said they will get a surprise that they are not expecting. That and the final solution sort of reflect the same thing.

#Nima

Larry, here's what Jonathan Pollard said about the use of nukes. Here's what he said.

#Speaker 05

In the West, nuclear weapons at any level—tactical, strategic, EMPs, whatever—are viewed as something that should only be used as a last resort. And even then, very carefully, on an escalation ladder, as they say. With me, I don't care if you start throwing nukes immediately—responsibly, but immediately. And a case that I've been pushing is the use of an electromagnetic pulse weapon or weapons against Iran. Why are we waiting to get hit? No.

#Lawrence

How do you use a nuclear weapon initially, responsibly?

#Larry

Yeah, yeah.

#Lawrence

That's the question of the day. I mean, look at Pollard. He looks like Jabba the Hutt with a beard, okay?

#Larry

I mean, he is just an unconscionable, despicable human being. And, you know, he cavalierly discussed the use of a nuclear weapon. Again, to what end? To what purpose? Just having a big explosion somewhere doesn't, you know—Israel, even with all of its nukes, does not have the ability to wipe Iran off the face of the earth. And Iran has made it very clear, any such attack will be retaliated against on a massive scale. So, you know, this is not a recipe for peace. This is a recipe for utter destruction. And, you know, the likely result would be the utter destruction of Israel. So, you know, we call that the silver lining. But to get there, again, it enters into a dimension of horror that someone like Pollard can just talk about so cavalierly.

This is a consequential week in what's taking place at the White House right now. They're trying to press—they think they have the leverage to coerce Israel or coerce Iran into a deal. But Iran's sitting there, and they're watching now what Israel is doing. They've broken the ceasefire. I mean, the ceasefire was predicated upon stopping the attacks in Lebanon, particularly in Beirut. They're attacking Beirut now. And Iran's made it clear, if you do that, we're going to start retaliating. So I think, again, the odds are quite high that this war is going to reignite, and there's going to be far greater destruction, both for the Israelis and for the U.S. military presence in the area.

Yeah, Iran's going to suffer too. I don't want to minimize that at all. But, you know, we're... I had to go back and look it up. The dynamics with the Gulf Arabs, they're not a united front. I mean, it's almost like a reality TV show in which they're locked into a house and they all hate each other. So, you know, nine years ago, you had Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates all pissed off at Qatar because Qatar had its relationship with Turkey, and that Turkey-Qatar axis was also supplying support to Hamas or Hezbollah, and the Saudis and the UAE said, by God, we're not going to allow that to happen. And the one country that came to Qatar's aid was Iran.

So here's Iran, who'd built up this positive relationship. And then during this last year, you had Saudi Arabia and the UAE pissing on each other. So I said there's no common—the Gulf Arabs don't have some common bond that draws them together. And this is where the role of Pakistan and China comes into play, because China in particular, with its economic power—the Saudis, the Qataris, the Emiratis—they all want to do business with China. China is the future. The United States is not the future. China is. And so China wields some enormous influence on that. So I think there are some dynamics underway here that are outside the control of the United States, particularly on the economic front.

#Nima

Yeah. Colonel, Larry said that the war would be devastating for Iran, and many people know that in Iran. They're talking every day, every minute, about how this war has been devastating for Iran so far and what the consequences would be if the war continues. But the main point on their side is, what else do we have?

#Lawrence

Well, exactly. And I'd make Larry's point even stronger if I can. If you apply the final solution—if the final solution for Bibi Netanyahu is the use of nuclear weapons—you are not going to do anything more to defeat Iran. You're just going to make them more resolute, and you're going to make them unleash everything they have on everybody inside. So this is not something they should be contemplating from a very practical point of view. They do not have the power to do it. They think they do, and people with nuclear weapons generally tend to think that way. Take the North Koreans, for example.

They do have an inventory of weapons, but it's a deterrent. That's about it. If they were to unleash every one of those weapons on South Korea, they would be ultimately defeated. There's no doubt in my mind about that. The question is, is it worth that kind of destruction and that kind of ignominy to do that? Because you're going to disappear. There'd be no question about the reunification of the peninsula at that point. So all to say, nuclear weapons are not a game-ender necessarily, unless they're possessed in the types, models, missiles, and so forth, and the huge capacity for destruction of the whole planet that we and Russia possess.

Now, that is a very, very dangerous accumulation of weapons—world-ending if they were all used. But I don't want to make light of nuclear weapons, certainly, but it's not something that Bibi ought to be counting on as something that will end everything in his favor, because it won't. It'll make an even worse pariah of him than he already is. When you look at these people, you look at the people around him, like Lapid and Naftali Bennett, and even some of the ones who pretend to be a little less draconian, they really are all cut from the same cloth. They came from the same cloth the Nazis came from, the same cloth Hitler came from. I'm sorry, but that's the truth.

And if you look at what they're doing and what we're helping them to do to international law, which no longer really exists... Just our attacks on the high seas, killing now over 200 people, as I understand it, without due process, have killed international law. So we've murdered whatever we put in place after World War II with reasonably good intentions. We've murdered it. It no longer exists. How much further do you want to go to degrade the world? And I haven't even started talking about Zelensky and what he's doing in Ukraine and what the Russians have threatened to do in response to that. We're looking at a conflict that could spread like wildfire really quickly. And we're looking at, as Larry just said, the real power being on the other side. Yeah.

#Nima

Larry, do you see the problem I'm talking about as being in the United States, or is it outside the United States, basically in Israel? The problem with Donald Trump is that he's desperate. He wants to get out of this war. But what would be the main obstacle? That obstacle is in the United States. I'm talking about the people who are supporting Israel. Or is Israel itself the main obstacle?

#Lawrence

Let me offer one thing before you go, Larry. And I'm only offering this because Josh Paul had just sent me the latest article. He's got an anti-AIPAC pact going, and he just sent me the latest analysis that they've done of this move in the Congress in the NDAA, just to show you how much we have not defeated this relationship. The Congress is moving in the NDAA for '27, the defense budget for '27. They're moving to mask all the arms sales to Israel, take it out of the State Department process, take it out of the foreign policy process, and put it strictly under DOD without any oversight whatsoever. I know about this because Rumsfeld tried to do this in a narrow way. That tells you we are still connected lock, stock, and barrel to Israel. That means there will be no visibility for arms sales. We will be in the most unique relationship we've ever been with any country with regard to arms sales. We'll be the same. Lockheed Martin will be working for Israel and Israel for Lockheed Martin, and so on. Yeah, what he said.

#Larry

Well, yeah, look, the primary pressure on Trump is being channeled through the domestic Zionists, both Jewish and Christian. And you're getting it through the likes of Lindsey Graham, even Richard Blumenthal on the Senate side, the money side. You've got Miriam Adelson. You've got Bill Ackman. So you've got all of this pressure on Trump, and from the neoconservatives too. They're not relenting. But what they're up against now is that the mask—AIPAC—in the past, if you tried to argue, as John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt did in their book, that AIPAC exerted all this enormous influence, and they were attacked in an attempt to ostracize them—no, that's not true, that's a conspiracy theory. Well, that whole conspiracy theory got ripped apart with what was done to Thomas Massie.

They didn't mask it at all. They tried, and they got exposed. So the turn against Israel among the under-50 crowd in particular, but I'd say even people that are the age of Col. Wilkerson and myself—there's a growing number of us that are just saying, you know, this is a toxic relationship, and it has to end. So, you know, Israel will continue to score some of these Pyrrhic victories for right now, but I think the direction we're heading is that the United States will be in a position where it's no longer going to be committed to the complete defense of Israel. And Israel's going to be... I question how long it can survive under the strain that it's facing because it does not have unlimited military resources.

And so they can bomb the hell out of Lebanon. But what they're trying to do on the ground—Hezbollah is lighting them up every day with these drones. Israel already has suffered. They're

suppressing their casualties. They're suppressing the number of killed and wounded. But even the number that have been publicly reported exceeds the number that were wounded in the 2006 invasion into southern Lebanon. So they're already suffering more casualties on that front. They've tamped it down. They try to pretend that there are just only a couple of dozen killed in action. Nonsense. The number of these drone strikes—you see them over and over—and they're hitting the back of these vehicles, hitting tanks. They took out an Iron Dome the other day. So...

#Lawrence

Yeah, I mean, this illustrates it.

#Larry

So Israel cannot sustain this kind of loss. They're too small a country, and they don't have the economic basis to do it. Is this the one where you see the guys scrambling? Yeah, they're scrambling out, jumping out the back, and you got at least two that were still caught in there, two or more. So, you know, Israel's never faced anything like this, and they obviously have learned no lessons from the war in Ukraine.

#Speaker 04

Yeah.

#Lawrence

You know, there may be no state of Israel as we presently know it left to share, defend, or sell arms to. Yeah, yeah.

#Nima

Colonel, yesterday one of the Israeli commanders said that when this whole game of drones started, we thought it was a technical issue for Israel. Right now, with the use of drones and the way they're using these drones against air defense systems, communication systems, soldiers, it's becoming a strategic problem for Israel because, for the time being, they have no solution for that.

#Lawrence

You know, that's the reason I'm being told—I won't say strategic, but it has strategic implications, but certainly operational and tactical reasons—that he said, go. Don't stop at the next river. Don't stop at Beirut. Go. Go until you've rooted them all out. And you ain't going to do that. You know, when you go like that and you have a mission of rooting them all out, they just fall in behind you. They go around your flanks and fall in behind you and do it to you again from the rear. I mean, this

is untenable. And it's going to turn out like it did in '82, when we essentially had to go in and bail them out and got ourselves into a real mess. Had Battleship New Jersey in the Eastern Med hurling 16-inch rounds into the hills. Just stupid, dumb. But we created that situation on behalf of Israel because we had to pull their ass out.

#Larry

And let's recall that as a consequence of that intervention, the U.S. Embassy was blown up in Beirut. And then the Marines—they call it the Marine Barracks—but the location where the U.S. Marines and French Marines were based, they both took some significant hits. 241 dead Marines. So, yeah, this is...

#Larry

And when Reagan agreed to that, apparently I'm told that Cap Weinberger was just livid. He was not consulted.

#Lawrence

One Marine told me that that day, 243, I think, Marines and two Navy corpsmen—that day was equal to the first four hours on Tarawa. So, hell of a casualty rate.

#Nima

Larry, today I talked with Ambassador Chas Freeman. You were talking about how Israel is trying to see the whole region. And when it comes to this guy, the Israeli spy, American-born Israeli spy Jonathan Pollard, he said that the question right now for Israelis is the next round of the fight, which is against Turkey. And this guy, as Ambassador Chas Freeman mentioned, is representing the majority of the people in Israel. That's why we have to hear these people—how they feel, how they think, how they see the situation. And here is what he said.

#Speaker 05

We don't think geostrategically. Forget about Jolani. Forget about Donald Trump. I am principally worried, first of all, for the welfare of our Druze brothers across the border, but secondarily, if Jolani and his Islamists actually reoccupy that area, we will have the Turks right on our border. We eventually will. We eventually will, and I'm not so sure that we will have as easy a time with the Turks as we've had with the Iranians. I've been following Turkish military doctrine, and the storm is coming in the Middle East.

The storm is coming. Yes, of course. And they're a member of NATO. And even worse, they're a member of NATO. So I look at Iran as a problem we absolutely have to finish. And I'll explain what I

mean by that. Gaza, same thing. And Hezbollah. Why? Why am I fixated on this now? Because we have to be prepared for the next war, which will probably be against Turkey and Egypt. I hope not, also, but you know, hope was the last demon out of Pandora's box. And there's a reason for that.

#Lawrence

In Israel, to be a pontificator like that, do you have to be a tubalard? Yeah. Jabba the Hutt. With a beard. Yeah, with a beard.

#Larry

No, I mean, this is the level of lunacy that is difficult to describe in words. I mean, we sit there and watch this and think, you know, he's just an aberration. Unfortunately, he's not. And for him to sit there and think that Israel can fight, engage in a war with Turkey, I mean, the Turkish army is, you know, the second largest army in NATO. I say de jure; de facto it was Ukraine. Ukraine had the second largest army but wasn't an official member of NATO. But the Turks, the Turks are actually, unlike the Israeli Defense Forces, the Turks are actually competent, and they have a professional army. The Israelis do not have a professional army.

They are largely a reservist group, and the lack of leadership, the lack of adequate command and control, the lack of training — they're more like a marauding band of thugs. And it's been reflected in how they operate in the field. So for him to sit there, and I don't think he's, again, some outlier, it is a reminder to people that even if Bibi Netanyahu goes, the threat that Israel poses to the region remains. And it's going to remain as long as the Zionists are in control. And that's why, you know, what Iran's calling for is the destruction of that version of Israel — a Zionist version of Israel that is an ethno-supremacist state.

And it is almost, it's along the same lines as what Nazi Germany was. Because, you know, when the Nazis passed the Nuremberg Laws, those Nuremberg Laws were basically identifying and punishing a group of people for their genetic identity. And Israel is engaged in sort of the same phenomenon. You know, they mask it a little bit with, as long as you are, quote, Jewish people, but even if you're born Jewish and convert to Christianity, then you're excluded. But again, it's this ethno-identity that rewards certain groups of people and punishes others. And that, as long as that exists, is going to be a toxic effect upon world peace.

#Nima

Yeah.

#Lawrence

Yesterday, um, on a podcast, Nima, I suggested to my interviewer that, uh, Turkey might be an element in this if Netanyahu goes too far north. And I got these looks of total disbelief. "You don't think that would really happen, do you?" I said, not only do I think that that might happen, I would hit them in the rear if I were Egypt. I would coordinate with Ankara and I would hit them in the rear, and I'd ask Baghdad if they wanted to come along for the ride, because never will this state of Israel, as polluted and as Larry has described well, foul as it is, been more vulnerable. And if you want to get rid of it, and you want to get rid of it decisively, that would be a perfect way to do it.

#Nima

But necessarily, that doesn't mean that's the way Benjamin Netanyahu feels about Israel. He says Israel is no longer merely a regional power; it's already a global power. I don't know in what sense he's feeling that way.

#Lawrence

In the sense that he's tucked into a fading empire, but nonetheless an empire. That's why he can feel that way. That's why he can say those things. And I actually think he was smart enough to be, before we got really deeply buried in this last aspect of this struggle, he was going around to other capitals checking out whether or not he would be able to shift his flag when the time came that the empire the other way was fading so fast that he no longer wanted to be a part of it. The man's not stupid. He's not stupid. You go back and look at his trips around the world at a time of some criticality, and yet he was going to these other places ostensibly to seek their help with his current struggles, but what he was doing in part was looking for new campgrounds, new places, new super daddies, because they can't do it by themselves. I mean, they may have aspirations to eventually be able to be, you know, the new empire in the world and have it be Jewish.

But I think that's a long way away, even if it were achievable. And he's got to have a lot of help along the way. So he's very shrewd about looking for new help, just as Mohammed bin Salman is in Riyadh. This whole region has got to either change dramatically and become more or less self-sufficient—that is to say, get rid of the potentates and let the people begin to have something to say about their government—or it's got to find a new daddy to protect them in their current configuration. Because we're done. We are done.

#Nima

Larry, what else can the GCC countries do? Because they feel a lot of pain right now. They don't know what to do. Even that country called Oman, which has nothing to do with anything that is happening in the Middle East, in West Asia—Donald Trump yesterday said he's going to blow them up. And just think of Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and other countries in that region who desperately need this trade for most to be opened up. And they're not getting it as we talk about it anytime soon.

#Larry

Well, the reference I made to this Art Berman earlier, one other fact that he brought out that I had not heard—but I don't think he was making it up—is there are firms out there that do analysis about what's actually happening to oil. And even if the Strait of Hormuz is reopened today and everything starts flowing, 700,000 barrels of oil are no longer available. The damage that's been done to wells will make it basically impossible to recover anytime soon. So the world is going to be dealing with a substantial loss of a significant supply of oil that's critical for things like diesel.

So this is the thing—there is no unity among the Gulf Cooperation Council. On paper, yes, but in reality, no. So what are their options? And this is where both Saudi Arabia and Qatar appear to be acting jointly, or at least the unifying point is China. They are denying the U.S. use of military facilities in their country. Qatar, I am told, has informed the United States that basically you've got to shut down Al Udeid within the next nine months. So they're moving toward the point of, if that's true, that is a huge, huge loss for the United States because that's been the center for U.S. military operations in the Persian Gulf region for at least 25 years.

Wow. And that's where you had the Combined Air Operations Center, the CAOC, operating. And we do have recent evidence that the Saudis did impose some limits on U.S. air refueling operations in their territory. So if all of that is true, that the Saudis and Qataris have decided, you know, the future does not lie with the United States. The future lies with China and with Pakistan because, notice, the security relationship between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia has increased over the last three weeks. And I'm told that one of the guarantees that the Paks gave was a guarantee that there's a nuclear umbrella over Saudi Arabia now, thanks to Pakistan.

#Nima

Larry, Colonel, I wouldn't be surprised if we see some sort of alliance or partnership among the countries in the Middle East. I'm talking about Iran, Pakistan, and Turkey. And since Pakistan is protecting Saudi Arabia, Saudi Arabia would be part of that. And Qatar definitely would be part of that. And it's all about the Israeli behavior because they have to do something about it. They cannot continue with this sort of insanity that is going on in West Asia. And everybody is getting hit by this war. It's not just about Iran and the GCC countries.

#Lawrence

I think people like Erdogan and probably others were thinking that the United States would come to its senses at some point, that we would have better policies and better actions emanating from Washington. They are now convinced that not only are they not going to get that change, it's going to get worse. So you're right. They've got to start thinking. And it takes me back to the period—some of it was happening prior to 1914, for example—but it happens throughout history with empires. Secret treaties are made, codicils are decided in secret, and no one else knows about them

except through their intelligence means, which sometimes discovers them, sometimes doesn't, sometimes makes them more powerful than they really are, and the opposite.

So we're entering a period like that, I think, in this great struggle between the power in the East, which is taking over, and the power in the West, which is going away, where there are probably going to be codicils and treaties like that again that we won't know anything about until the bombs start falling, so to speak. And you're describing some of those that might result. And the unique thing—well, not unique, but the dangerous thing—in the past with these sorts of treaties and secret agreements is that they're often made with two different powers or in two different directions policy-wise, and you decide at the last minute which one you're going to honor.

That makes it even more complicated for people to sort things out, and that's what builds into things like World War I and World War II. And we've got a recipe for that right now, and it's written all across the face of Europe, really from the Arctic down to the Antarctic. And it's written fairly vividly for some powers. And everybody's going to start picking and choosing sides. And the traditional alliances are passé. And yet you hear Brussels yesterday talking as if everything is the same. And this drone that went to Romania indicates that we're going to have to fight Russia and everybody better get ready to do so. What are they smoking? And the Polish guy too. What's he smoking? I mean, dude, don't you know where you are? And don't you know what your history reflects? But this is what you get.

#Nima

Larry, what is your understanding of this drone going to Romania? It was a Russian drone going there, and what was the message if that was the case?

#Larry

Well, I don't think it was a deliberate attack by Russia. If anything, it could have been a mistake. It also could have been a false flag, yeah, to make it appear that it was Russia. The reason I say it is Russia would have a reason to attack Constanta—I think that's Constanta in Romania—which is the area where they're building up a major NATO base. So, yes, I could see Russia potentially attacking that location. But if they're going to attack it, they're not going to do it with one damn drone, okay? I mean, they're going to go in with the Kinzhal, the Iskander, maybe the Yars. So they're going to go and hit it and take it out.

So this strikes me as more of a false flag effort because immediately the Romanian government declared persona non grata the consul general. So there was a Russian consulate there. They haven't broken off relations fully with Russia. The Russian ambassador remains in Bucharest. But, you know, this is deliberately trying to up the tensions there between Europe and Russia. They didn't listen to a damn word that Sergei Lavrov said this week. And, you know, the old expression, you know, fuck around, find out—Romania's headed down the road of FAFO.

#Lawrence

And we got a NATO contingent up there in Finland exercising right now in an area that swallowed the Russian army. Yeah. It's just, you know, I don't know. Every time I listen to the NATO Secretary General, I think, God, I wish Jens Stoltenberg were back. And, yes, he was just as bad. Yeah, yeah.

#Nima

Colonel, today Sergei Shoigu, at the International Security Forum, confirmed the warning to ambassadors to leave Kyiv. It seems something big is going to happen in Kyiv because we had a phone call between Lavrov and Rubio. He warned Marco Rubio, and Shoigu is just repeating the same message. And Ukrainians—we had a report from the Ukrainian side telling us that maybe something big is going to happen in Ukraine.

#Lawrence

I think this is a noncombatant evacuation operation, Russian style. In other words, they're sending the message: you better, otherwise you may die. And I think they're serious. I think they're serious. And I've been told that their target is probably going to be that cell that includes us—their primary target, the one that's giving the intelligence or helping with the technical aspects of deep strikes into Russia and Storm Shadows and things like that. They know where it is. I expect they've known where it is for a long time. Maybe they're going to get some other assets, maybe in Ukraine only, but other assets that are manned by the Brits, us, others. I'm sure the Israelis are there too. So we're off to the races.

#Nima

Is Trump taking these messages seriously, these warnings?

#Lawrence

I was told—I don't know how accurate this is—but I was told by one person that Rubio was furious. And, you know, what does fury mean? You better evacuate. I mean, you better take them at their word, and you better evacuate if you want to save any of these people.

#Larry

Yeah, no, it marks a decided shift in the Russian strategy. We haven't actually seen it executed yet, but looking at history, Russia doesn't make these threats idly. When they say something, pay attention to what they're saying. They are not accustomed to blowing smoke up people's skirts.

#Lawrence

I can hear someone like Steve Miller, when he's apprised of it, or maybe even Rubio, saying, well, you know, if we evacuate, we'll have acted to the threat. They won't really strike us. Well, tell their widows that when it happens. Yeah. Yeah.

#Nima

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

#Larry

By the way, nice shirt.

#Nima

Thank you.

#Larry

You too. Yeah, you're keeping up the style standards. Wait a minute.

#Lawrence

What about mine?

#Larry

You just look—you always look distinguished.

#Lawrence

You should see my lower half.

#Larry

All right. See you guys next week. See you soon. Bye-bye. Take care.