

Larry Johnson & Col. Wilkerson: Mixed Signals: War or Negotiation?

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#Nima

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, 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 that 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 in side 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... 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. 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.

#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, 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 crisis. Uh, Amnesty International 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. Um, and I think they're right. Uh, where's 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's he going to stop if he's not?

Where's 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, in the final solution, sort of reflects the same thing. Yeah.

#Nima

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

#Larry

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 the 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?

#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 this is not a recipe for peace. This is a recipe for utter destruction. And the likely result would be the utter destruction of Israel. So we can 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. Israel has 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 Qatar 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 had 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 of 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, they're talking about how this war has been devastating for Iran so far and what would be the consequences of the continuation of the war. But the main point on their side is, what else do we have?

#Lawrence

Well, exactly. And I 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 in sight. 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 Xi 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.