

# Col. Larry Wilkerson: Iran's Quds Force chief: Red Sea Chokepoint next Hormuz

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## #Nima

Hi, everybody. Today is Tuesday, June 2nd, 2026, and our dear friend, Col. Larry Wilkerson, is here with us. Welcome back, Larry.

## #Larry

Good to be with you, Nima, although it's not a good time. Things are really falling apart. I mean that. Yeah.

## #Nima

Larry, yesterday there was a storm between Israel and Lebanon. Israel announced that they're going to attack Lebanon in Dahia, in the southern part of Beirut. And the city is gigantic. Dahia is a very populated area, and they wanted everybody to evacuate their homes, all of their homes and everything there, and get out of the city.

## #Larry

And quite a few people are there who've already evacuated further south from Beirut.

## #Nima

Yeah, exactly, exactly. And here, before getting to what happened yesterday, which I'll focus on later, between Iran and Donald Trump and between Israel and Donald Trump, here is the main problem that Israel is facing, which was mentioned by Israeli UN ambassador Danny Danon. Here's what he said.

## #Speaker 03

A drone used by Hezbollah. This is what we are dealing with. Now, Hezbollah are using different kinds of drones, a few of them with fiber optics. These drones weigh less than two kilograms. They fly low. They are very difficult to detect, and by the time you hear one above your head, it's too late. It can fly undetected for tens of miles, and all of a sudden, you see it above your head. A thin cable is what makes this drone different. It does not rely on a radio signal. It cannot be easily jammed, unfortunately. It gives the operator a live video feed and direct control until impact. This is modern warfare—cheap, precise, deadly.

**#Larry**

Which you have seen operational in Ukraine for what, 28 months, 30 months, whatever, maybe longer. So why are you just now—big question—why are you, your vaunted Israeli military and intelligence complex, just now coming up with this?

**#Nima**

First of all, he said Hezbollah. The pronunciation is Hezbollah, which means "Hez" means "the party," and the second word, "Allah," means "God"—so, "the party of God." And he says Hezbollah. Many of our audience the other day asked, is it Hezbollah or Hezbollah? It's Hezbollah.

**#Larry**

Probably because they're trying to make it a pejorative. They're trying to corrupt it, I would guess.

**#Nima**

Yeah.

**#Larry**

They miss nothing in terms of propaganda. Nothing. They miss drones and the damage they do to tanks, but they don't miss a point on propaganda, especially in that sense.

**#Nima**

And this is the reality, Larry. They're facing it right now against Hezbollah. They have no solution for these FPV drones.

**#Larry**

The solution is to go as fast as they can to the north and kill everything in sight.

## **#Nima**

Exactly. That's what they wanted to do yesterday. They wanted just to destroy everything in Baalbek, in Beirut, the way they did, by the way, in the West Bank, in Gaza. We've seen that. How is that going to play out for Israelis? And then we had the Iranian government coming out and—no direct talks, indirect talks, no messages, nothing. We're not going to have any sort of negotiation with the United States. And Israelis have to evacuate the northern part of Israel. We're going to attack the northern part of Israel as soon as they attack Daesh. That's why Donald Trump called Benjamin Netanyahu. I'm sure that you know what Axios reported on that. Nobody would believe what Axios says, but at least we know that there was some sort of call between the two, the prime minister of Israel and Donald Trump. What is your understanding of what has happened yesterday?

## **#Larry**

Well, my understanding is that Trump told him to knock it off. And my understanding is that Netanyahu said temporarily yes and then went right back to what he was doing and has no intention of knocking it off. And that Iran has picked up on that, and we can await the strikes, because I don't think Iran is kidding around when they say they're going to now help Hezbollah hit the north, and they're going to make the pain Israel feels even deeper and greater. And I don't see—I still go back, Nima—to the fact that we have, I made a check yesterday to make sure I'm pretty accurate on this, we have neither done in the past, nor are we doing now, nor do we have plans to do direct talks with the Iranians, nor apparently now do they have plans to do direct talks with us.

So all we've been doing, as I've said many times, is talking through intermediaries—Pakistanis, Omanis, and so forth. No one's met. No one's talking to one another. So we are talking past each other, over each other's heads, under each other's feet. There's nothing meaningful going on in the way of diplomacy. All we have from the United States is delaying tactics—delaying tactics that involve breaking the ceasefire periodically to exhibit the fact that we still can do this or that with regard to the Iranian Navy or whatever. And almost nothing else happening. I don't know about the clandestine world, but I can't detect anything happening of consequence. And an administration that apparently, from Kane to Hegseth to the Central Command commander, Bradley Cooper, to anybody else involved in the chain of command, can't figure out what to do.

They're lost. They have no idea what to do. Not only are they lost, they are coming to the comprehension—I don't see how they could not—that they are losing, that this is a conflict. They're losing, and the longer they stay at it, not only the more people they're going to kill or get killed, but the deeper is going to be the profundity of their loss. And all I had to do was take out, as I was telling him before we went on the air, I have about a 20-by-30 space where I can put down a fairly large map, but even then I can't encompass the distances we're talking about with precision. But some of these maps are pretty good. So I took a look at the Chinese railroad that comes in through the mountains in Mashhad and directly into Tehran and then goes elsewhere. And by the way, it finally, apparently, is destined for London.

And then I looked at the Caspian Sea and the routes and the ports on the Caspian Sea, both in the south and the north. And if you're talking about logistics—what wins most wars—and certainly wars that are this far away for the United States, which is why we did Desert Shield and Desert Storm. Desert Shield was putting 600,000 troops and all the supplies and such that were necessary. Powell's characteristic remark about it was when he was asked, why did you send five carrier battle groups? And he said, because I didn't have six. In other words, we put the kitchen sink on the ground in Kuwait and elsewhere. That's the only way you deal with this kind of disparity in depth, strategic depth, logistics, and so forth.

Now, Iraq wasn't quite the same situation because it's on the other side of the Persian Gulf. And so you had at your back Saudi Arabia, you had the Gulf Cooperation Council in general, and so forth. You had Kuwait as your forward movement center. We have none of that now with respect to Iran. They have great depth on the other side—strategic and otherwise, even tactical depth. And with the railroad and the Caspian, they have inexhaustible supplies coming in from Russia and China. We need to stop. We need to stop before this defeat is incredibly deep and profound, and before it starts something globally that looks a lot like a recession followed by depression. And that's got this administration, I think, in tatters. It can't seem to figure out where it is or what it needs to do, mainly because what it needs to do is back down.

**#Nima**

Larry, we have two scenarios: one on the part of the United States, the other on the part of the Israelis. Benjamin Netanyahu doesn't want the United States to get out of the region.

**#Larry**

No.

**#Nima**

They want the United States to stay there, I would say forever, because this is gonna facilitate what he has in his mind, which we know is just to destroy and capture more land from Lebanon, from Syria, from Gaza, from the West Bank—maybe all the West Bank—while the United States is somehow getting involved in some sort of conflict or some sort of war with Iran. And they're gonna do their job on the other side of the region. How do you see the way that Donald Trump and his administration see what's going on?

**#Larry**

Well, that's an interesting phrase you used after my map reconnaissance—the other side of the region. What is the other side of the region? Where does it stop? Does it stop at Iran's border? Does

it stop with Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan? All of whom are involved in this, and all of whom are providing conduits for Russia and China. We are up against not just Iran, but we're up against Central Asia recognizing where its bread is buttered. And its bread is buttered not in the West; it's buttered in China and buttered in Russia—Russia from the point of view of its sitting atop them and able to do things that they would not like, and China in terms of its developing them majorly.

This railroad stops at almost all of the points of the previous empires in history that were dynamic, productive, and are so again, big time. So that's what we're up against. More and more, I read this. If there's anyone in the Pentagon with a strategic mindset—any Colonel, Lieutenant Colonel, whatever—really thinking about this and doing what I just did, sort of cursorily but nonetheless, I think, indicatively, understands we're fighting China. We're not fighting Iran. We're only fighting Iran as a proxy of China. We're fighting China. And this is not a fight we're going to win. And it doesn't portend well for the real fight with China, if that's what we're planning on sometime in the not-too-distant future, because we're losing the preliminary skirmishes.

And oh, by the way, we're losing the preliminary skirmish in Ukraine, too. And it looks very much like Putin has decided not only is he going to send Oreshniks into Kyiv and into—where was the other place on the Dnieper River? Um, he sent some into, uh, yeah, Dnipro. It's looking like we're going much wider there, much more profoundly there. Putin is talking about eliminating the title of "special military operation" and calling it a war, and declaring war on Ukraine. That would be the first step, I think, to a much wider war with strikes on NATO targets in NATO countries other than those that about Ukraine—for example, like Poland.

So this is a recipe for marching to a global conflict, the likes of which the world has never seen—and I include World War II in that—and the likes of which have, for example, driven Peter Thiel even to go to Argentina. I mean, this is more or less beginning to fulfill what his comments have indicated he believes: that the welfare states of the world, the democratic, liberal democratic states of the world, are all collapsing, falling apart. And you need to have, if you're one of these sovereign individuals like he is, you need to have multiple places to go. And you need to have things that can work for you in those multiple places while the principal origin, if you will, is falling apart, disintegrating, dismembering itself. And that's what we're—I think that's the serious nature of this conflict that we don't grasp right now.

We go up to Congress and we talk about \$1.5 trillion for a military that's losing. We talk about, actually, the national security budget being somewhere around \$2 trillion plus. We talk about DNIs. We talk about secretaries of defense or war, and this is all cosmetic. We're being destroyed by our own mistakes, and we don't seem to know how to rectify them. I have to believe that there are some people in Beijing, Moscow, and Tehran who understand the nature of this conflict in its strategic proportions that I've just sort of sketched, and they're not going to back off of that, because every day that goes by they get deeper into this strategic defeat of the empire. And

although China would not like to see it be precipitous and harming them, they're fully willing, I think, if there's no other choice, to go ahead and back those proxy allies—I'll call them that—up front in doing what they're doing to the U.S. empire.

And Katie, bar the door, that's what's happening. I think we're up against real power in the world, power that surpasses our own, and we're going to lose. And we have no—and this is it, boiled down—we have no one other than maybe a lieutenant colonel or colonel or whatever in the Pentagon who dares speak up, who conceives this or understands this. So we're in deep trouble. And all this we're talking about is just noise. Bibi Netanyahu's noise. The Knesset's vote to dissolve the Knesset, the first step in having early elections, just happened. And I don't think Netanyahu is going to win. And the president is leaking words, leaking words that since Netanyahu won't admit his guilt, which apparently is a requirement for a pardon from the president of Israel, he's not going to pardon him. So what does that mean for Netanyahu?

Increasing desperation because he knows he's going to jail. He knows his career is going to end in ignominy. It's going to end with him being in jail, just like Ariel Sharon was, and probably in his death in jail. And that is anathema to him. He's not only not accomplished his major goal, which was to do all that he's done, including Gaza, the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and wow, Syria fell into his hands too. I'm not sure he was planning on that. But Iran was the *pièce de résistance*. Iran had to go. And he had the United States in his clutches, and the war was on. And now it's not looking good for him. And I would be surprised if he survives through this election. So what are we looking at? We're looking at the final solution. I understand he actually used that term, that phrase. Again, we're playing with dynamite—nuclear dynamite.

## **#Nima**

Actually, I don't see, Larry, the situation, even with Syria, improving for him or somehow getting better. It's getting worse as time goes by.

## **#Larry**

I'd be willing to bet you that a lot of Hezbollah supplies are flowing across the north of Syria, maybe with Erdogan's permission or overwatch. Maybe with Iraq's permission or overwatch, you know? Yeah, go ahead and do it. Just like my son said, that border's teeming. Every hour of darkness is people selling gasoline, selling drugs, selling food. I mean, down there on the border, couldn't find any terrorists. They were all contraband traders. That's how they do business. And the idea that you can stop that so that Hezbollah doesn't get any more munitions is just pure nonsense. And it's the same thing, I think, with Iran, because you've got the Caspian and you've got the railroad and you've got lots of people with lots of stuff pouring in.

## **#Nima**

Larry, somehow when I compare the United States and these 800 bases all around the world, it reminds me that the strategy of Israel is going to be a noose around our neck right now.

## **#Larry**

That's what they are.

## **#Nima**

It seems to me Israel is doing the same on a reduced scale. What do I mean by that? Because they're going to Syria, they're going to Lebanon, to the West Bank, to Gaza. And we know their ego is writing a check that their body cannot cash. This is the problem with Israel today. But they're going to the Litani River in Lebanon. They're talking about Beirut. They're talking about Damascus, going to Damascus. This is a country that doesn't understand its physics. That's why they're overstretched, if I can use it that way.

## **#Larry**

Well, it's what happens to you when you start losing at something you think is profoundly important not to lose at. Instead of backing up and taking a check, and maybe cutting back on your wishes and your desires, maybe readjusting what you're doing, you double down and triple down, particularly if you happen to be the leader and you are in increasing political trouble. And I think he is. Not just this Knesset, first Knesset round to dissolve and have the elections early, but also the talk in Israel right now is not necessarily as pro-Netanyahu as it was, say, two or three months ago, or at the point where we started, what, 28 February, that we started this. There was a real tick in euphoria. We finally got the target we want. We finally got Iran in our crosshairs. We finally have got the empire behind us. This is going to be over quick. It wasn't. It isn't. And now they're beginning to realize that. And so I think they're going to turn on Netanyahu viciously before this is over with, and maybe even before the elections.

## **#Nima**

Larry, when it comes to the phone call between Benjamin Netanyahu and Donald Trump, do you think that the Axis is reporting the reality of what has happened? Because we know that they reported the same thing during the Biden administration. They said Biden called Benjamin Netanyahu and said, "You're not going to— you're a son of—" something like that, the F word. But when it comes to Donald Trump, how do you see the way the war is putting a lot of pressure, by the way, on Donald Trump—the war in the Middle East—because of the reality of the Strait of Hormuz on one side? On the other side, we see how Benjamin Netanyahu and the Israelis and the Zionists have a lot of leverage on the Trump administration. No president in the United States I have ever

seen in my lifetime has been that much in favor of Israel or done whatever Benjamin Netanyahu is asking for. Who is Donald Trump today after seeing the reality of what has happened in the Strait of Hormuz?

## **#Larry**

Well, it's not just Donald Trump. Look at what Johnson's doing in the House right now with Section 224, I think it is, of the House version of the National Defense Authorization Act. They're actually trying to eliminate the need for a renewed 10-year memorandum of understanding, MOU. That's the way we've essentially, every decade, guaranteed 3.8, 3.9, whatever, billion dollars going to Israel every year—and more when it's needed, as was the case with October 7th and the days afterwards. Now we're going to eliminate it, and everyone was trying to figure out, why is Netanyahu talking about this? Why is he talking about not needing the United States anymore? Why is he talking about there not being a renewal of the MOU? Well, we now know.

This Section 224 of the House NDAA under Johnson's supervision right now is essentially creating a mechanism whereby the United States and Israel will go into a marriage, and we will be married in the security complex. And the people in this marriage—it's not going to be a man-wife marriage—it's going to be a marriage of the U.S. defense industry, that is to say, Lockheed Martin, Grumman, Boeing, RTX, and others like that, and their technological development laboratories and everything else about them, and Israel's counterpart. And there's going to be no oversight, or any oversight there is is going to be in the Defense Department, and we know how sorry that oversight is. So there won't be any Leahy Law.

There won't be any real check and oversight when Israel kills people with our weapon systems that it isn't supposed to be killing—like civilians and women and children, like Josh Paul resigned over. There won't be any need to expose this sort of absolute ignominy in terms of killing civilians all the time because there won't be any oversight, none whatsoever. This is going to bury Israel into the United States security complex irretrievably and almost as if we were the same country. In other words, their wildest dream—to be the 51st state of the United States and be the most powerful state—will be brought to bear and to being by this legislation, at least for security purposes.

And dare I say they don't give a shit about any other purposes? That's what they're working on. And the American people are utterly ignorant of this—that they will have no say anymore over how much of their tax money, how much of their weapons, how much of their technology, how much of their lab work goes directly to Israel. Oh, and how much of Lockheed Martin's and RTX's and Grumman's and everything goes directly to Israel and Israel to us. And that's as bad as the other way around because we know that ICE and ICE's brownshirt status is partly because they've been trained by Israeli police.

So this is—we're growing closer, not further apart—when the American people are, in high percentages now, the lower the age group, the higher the percentage, saying break this connection.

We do not want this pernicious connection with this state called Israel. Yet Johnson is over there, over there, doing this, creating this new law. And if the Senate doesn't stand up and be counted and do something about this, then we're stuck with this. We're going to have this even when the American people are saying we don't want it. So at a time when we're losing to Iran, Israel is losing to Lebanon. Israel has not defeated Hamas. Israel has not totally obliterated the settlers or the Palestinians in the West Bank.

Israel has not done what it wants to do in Damascus and elsewhere in Syria. Israel has not completed its war against Iran. It's, you know, got to do war. At this moment, we're losing too, and we're their big daddy. You can't make a worse scene for this president to be confronting, and you can't have a worse leader to be confronting it. He doesn't know what to do, Nima. He's lost. He's lost, and he's to-ing and fro-ing and tacking and coming back. He doesn't know what to do. You know, I almost want to say I feel sorry for him, but I don't, because I know what kind of a grifter and a jerk he is, because even as he's doing this, he's still making money—big money.

## **#Nima**

His personal life is just booming.

## **#Larry**

It's incredible. I guess you saw the—what's her name? The ambassador who was a part of the old—I've lost the names now. Zampolli. The exposure that she gave to the business of Epstein and what they were saying about who introduced Melania to whom. This is another story that's growing. And I don't doubt she's probably telling the truth. What's her name? I've got it somewhere. Oh, it's Amanda Umberto. You probably know her. She's an ambassador, I think, now. But she's in that photo with Melania and Trump and Zampolli. They're all there together, grinning at the camera. You can't—Paolo Zampolli—you can't make this stuff up. I still think, I think that maybe the blackmail, if there is blackmail, is in Mossad's hands rather than Netanyahu's.

And they were allowing Netanyahu to use it as he would to blackmail whomever he needed to blackmail, whether it was a U.S. Congressman, Senator, Representative, or whether it was the President of the United States. And now that he's falling out rapidly with the leadership structure in Israel, such as it is, maybe they pulled it back, and maybe Trump knows that. Were I the leader of Mossad, I think I'd get that word to Trump: we've got it, we might use it on you, but we're not planning to right now. And he can't. Wouldn't that be something? I mean, he'd be caught between a rock and a hard place par excellence. I don't know that for a minute; I'm just surmising. But I do think this Epstein business has a lot more to come out of.

## **#Nima**

We don't know anything about that.

## #Larry

No, it's all been obfuscated. Pam Bondi, I think, is kind of letting everybody know that she really didn't have anything to do with it. It was lawyers. It was other people. I couldn't really do anything. I was paralyzed by all these lawyers. You were supposed to be the nation's number one lawyer. A lot of this is going to come out afterwards, but afterwards it's too late. I read an analysis this morning that someone sent me. I didn't want to read it because I've read so many things like this, I'm getting tired of it. But this was so well written and so good that I read the whole damn thing. And it's a very historically based analysis of how major empires dismember themselves after the moment of demise—that is to say, when they realize finally, and their people begin to lose confidence, whether it's a Roman centurion or whatever. And then it just goes so fast, you can't even— And then I picked up the piece and read about Peter Thiel going to Argentina and what he had said about why he was going to Argentina. I mean, you can say this guy's an esoteric South African who writes and reads silly stuff, but it ain't totally true.

Some of this stuff makes sense. The disintegration of liberal democracy, the disintegration of the welfare state in particular—and I don't use that in a pejorative sense. I mean, a state where a lot of the revenues of the state go to taking care of people who are not Peter Thiel's class. You know what I mean? In other words, they take care of the poor or make a reasonable attempt to. That's gone, he says. That's gone. You can't maintain that. We've proven you can't maintain it. It's physically impossible. You destroy yourself economically. I'm going somewhere else. What did I tell you about these guys jumping ship? They jump ship when the time comes, and they go off to other places and watch the empire disintegrate and pick up the pieces as they can and reestablish themselves as they can.

I don't know if you've seen this new look. It's a brilliantly done Apple TV, I think. It's about Coco Chanel and Christian Dior, and World War II in Paris, and just before the war, during the Nazi occupation, the Nazis retreating, and then the post-war situation and how Coco Chanel was a collaborator and did this and did that and had real problems reestablishing herself after the war. And Christian Dior was thought to be, but wasn't. He was pretty much a patriot, more interested in his sister and her fate in the resistance. And she was captured and treated horribly, sent to Ravensbrück concentration camp. He thought she was dead.

But anyway, it's a brilliant look into the mentality of things like the Gestapo, the SS, the Nazi hierarchy in general, and into how the French just caved, basically, except for a few, many of whom were communists. The British, for example, quit funding the communists in 1944 because they realized they were the fiercest fighters in France, and by God, the war was going to be over, and they were going to have to fight them more than for Joe Stalin. So they quit funding them. They kept on, though. They were the fiercest members of the resistance. So we're looking at a world that's falling apart, Nima. It's falling apart. And its principal power for the last 70-plus years is leading the collapse.

## **#Nima**

Larry, what do you make of this new attitude of Congress about merging the two militaries, the U.S. military and the Israeli military? Because for those people who are arguing that Israel is a strategic liability for the United States, at the same time, it's going to be a strategic trap for the United States, in my opinion, because the United States has to fight all of these wars that Israel is just at the beginning of. Those wars they're talking about — the war against Turkey, Egypt, Iran — it's going on and on and on. In my opinion, it's not going to end anytime soon, and it's going to be against the whole of West Asia, basically.

## **#Larry**

Well, this is the neoconservative pathway that was constructed by people like Kagan and others who drafted the Clean Break strategy and managed to get everything they needed to put it into action, however imperfectly. And Iran was the last target on the list. And in that strategy is where I saw the most opportunistic and the most definitive look at how we used Israel rather than the other way around. They probably thought they were using us. I don't dispute that, but I think we, in a strategic sense, were using them. But for that strategy — that strategy which from the very beginning was flawed majorly — we went ahead and conducted it anyway. The biggest mistake, the Council on Foreign Relations, I think, put out a report not too long ago saying that the most tragic strategic mistake the United States had made in its history was the 2003 invasion of Iraq.

Someone was talking about it the other day, Mearsheimer, maybe someone like that, maybe it was Walt, and said, wait until they get a hold of this war with Iran. So the Clean Break strategy, it did all of this. And it was using Israel as its tool, while at the same time, many of them, Jewish Americans and others, were in fact in symbiosis with Israel, if you will. You know, working for both, if you will. I remember one person telling me, I remember Doug Feith saying this, Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, you can't tell me this is against America's interest if it's for Israel. Israel's interest is America's interest. Richard Perle said that also. So these neocons developed this whole thing and pushed presidents into it, whether it was Bill Clinton, whether it was Barack Obama, George W. Bush, they pushed them into it.

Now we're paying the piper for that. We're paying the piper because it was a flawed strategy from the beginning. It was a misinterpretation of both the Arab and the Persian world. It was a misinterpretation of Israel's place in that world. It was a misinterpretation that went from 1948 forward and who really owned Palestine. It was all flawed, and yet we pursued it to the maximum, with the maximum power and money we could put up against it. Now it's all falling apart. It's all falling apart. Now you can't tell who's leading whom and what's happening to this or that aspect of it, but you can tell one thing: the triumphal parties in this are China, Russia, Central Asia in general, and increasingly Iran. That's the reality.

What do you do about that if you're president of this mess now? What do you do about it? You know what embarrasses me, Nima? What embarrasses me is the only person that I know who has come out and said that killing 200 people on the high seas without due process and having zero impact on the drug flow into the United States of America, and yet continuing to do it — that is a black mark on the American military as deep and as profound as the black mark put on it when it machine-gunned those Filipinos in the trench in Manila back in the day. It's a hell of a black mark. And the only person, apparently — and I can't find it anywhere, but someone told me yesterday he had done it.

The new Southern Command commander said to Congress in testimony — must have been closed testimony, I don't know. But he said that the drug supply is the same or greater. We have not impacted it in the Pacific or the Caribbean. And we're doing this. And he left it at that. But this is a huge black mark on the military to have no one standing up and saying, I'm not doing it. Petey, you go do it. You get in that plane or that ship and you go do it. I'm not doing it anymore because it's unconstitutional, it's against international law, and it's heinous to murder people when you really don't know conclusively what they're doing on that water.

And even if you know you're having zero impact on the drug flow into the United States of America, which the military has told you for 30 years is the case — I've been there in the briefings. I've been there and heard the admirals and the generals say, we haven't decreased the flow of drugs, we haven't increased the cost of drugs on the street in New York or Chicago, we haven't done a thing about American drug intake at all. With all of these efforts, all of these bombs, all of these things we've done, even when we were doing it roughly legally — no impact, zero impact. What do you have to do to tell someone they're failing and to stop it, especially when it's illegal like this?

## **#Nima**

Larry, when I look deeper at what Robert Kagan wrote in The Atlantic, he basically says that what has happened in the Middle East is a checkmate for the United States. But look at the content of the article. It reminds me of someone who was advocating for this war for such a long time. He's not against the war with Iran.

## **#Larry**

It's like someone saying the gas you used in the concentration camps, in the showers, wasn't good enough.

## **#Nima**

Exactly. And his main concern, when you read the article, his main concern is not the United States. It's that the more the United States stays there in the Middle East, the more Israel loses in the

Middle East. He sees how Israel is losing everything. That's why he's asking. There is no other solution for what Donald Trump is trying to do in the Middle East. The only solution would be putting troops on the ground, which is impossible — looking at the reality, it's impossible. So the only solution for Donald Trump is to get out of the Middle East, get out of West Asia, which is what he's suggesting. But you feel that his main concern is about Israel.

## **#Larry**

You better believe it is. You know, I get these emails from—I don't think you'll mind my saying it, in fact, you'd probably like it—a guy by the name of Eddie Hasbrook. I don't know if you've ever heard of him, but he's very much into the anti-draft movement and believes that the draft is absolutely unconstitutional and, you know, shouldn't have a draft at all. Well, he just sent me an email based on surveys and polling data saying, for young people in America who would be subject to this new way of doing computation for the Selective Service, it's all gonna be automatic, you know. And I'm reading it, I'm reading through it, and I'm reading the percentage of young people he's interviewed and what they say.

Okay, implement a draft, country falls apart. America would fall apart. There would be no 1939, 1940. And even there, with the legislature and the people, it was a close-run thing because we weren't, you know, attacked yet. Pearl Harbor hadn't happened. Very close-run thing to get the draft installed, and then an even closer-run thing to get it extended when Roosevelt wanted it extended and Pearl Harbor hadn't happened yet. I don't even think if you had something like a—because this is an all-volunteer force, has been for years, for generations—so if you were to put ground troops in Iran and they were swallowed up and every one of them killed or captured, paraded on television cameras in Tehran, you would not get a real movement in America to react.

That's what these polls showed. There would be no young people who would be positive about coming in and getting themselves killed in Southwest Asia in some kind of follow-up action. So we're in trouble, Nima. I mean, deep, deep trouble. Trump's just the symptom of it in many respects. He's a nauseous, contemptible symptom, no question about it. It's like we got Nero at the end. By the way, one person was talking to me about that the other day, and I said, you do realize that the Roman Empire lasted well beyond Nero. It wasn't exactly the same, but it did last for quite a while. It's a different situation today. It's a different situation.

I take this guy who wrote the article about dismemberment seriously because I could see where we would fall apart—literally fall apart before our eyes. Texas would go one way, New York would go another way, California would go another way—not geographically, but certainly politically and ultimately in terms of the Union. It wouldn't be 1860, 1861, somebody leaving because they had an issue with slavery or an issue with whatever caused the Civil War, states' rights, whatever. It would be because they were sick and tired of Washington and other things.

Better fate as Texas than as a part of an empire that's disintegrating before your eyes. And we haven't even reached that point yet. The big piece in this article was about the economic disaster that's coming and what it's going to do—what it's going to do to the average American, what it's going to do to virtually everyone—but particularly what it's going to do in combination with some of the other things that are going on, like AI and so forth. Really a disheartening article, but very well written and very well sourced in terms of history. You can see it happening. I mean, my friends tell me America will never fall apart.

Not like some of these other places did. It's not going to fall apart. Okay, what guarantees you that? Because, as this author points out, some of the most important state, or what you might call national, characteristics adhere to America today. We have so many disparate groups among us with their own agendas, with their own feelings about the American dream and either not being able to achieve it or having achieved it and having it taken away suddenly. We've been buying things on the world's pocketbook. Really, we've been living on the world's pocketbook because our dollar allowed us to.

We've been living not on our productivity, not on our incredible manufacturing base, not on anything like what we were living on, say, at the end of 1890. We're living on other people's willingness to buy our debt. And that's not a good adhesive when it begins to unravel. It's a very splintering adhesive. It goes, and all of a sudden, people are looking around and realizing, my God, there's nothing here. Then you've got problems. You've got significant problems. Even if you're still surviving with a pretty decent superstructure, warehouses all around, AI going up everywhere, highways teeming with cars and so forth, all of this is on someone else's dime and has been for some time—people loaning us money.

## **#Nima**

I don't know if you heard Rubio today talking about the summit in China. What he said doesn't show any positive outcome out of that summit in China, because he said that we are dependent on China—something like 90% of rare earth minerals coming from China. And how important is that for the chips, for the production of chips, for the military-industrial complex, with these weapons being depleted by this war of choice of Donald Trump in the Middle East? And that's why you see Marco Rubio in Armenia signing a deal with the government in Armenia about rare earth minerals. I don't know how much of what they need can come from Armenia. This is just amazing, what's going on with the Trump administration.

## **#Larry**

There's actually, as I've said many times before, there's actually a lot of this in the United States. But we won't go after it because it requires eminent domain to be implemented in a massive sort of way. You have to go into places where people live with palatial homes and so forth and say, get out.

China has not had a lot of problem with doing that. Look at the Yellow River Dam when they built that. What was it, two and a half million people or something? Oh, move over here, we're going to build a dam. Can't do that in this country. You create all kinds of politics and people standing up to stop you, and environmental interests and so forth.

I'm not saying those things are bad, but it does give you a certain sclerosis when you have plenty of natural resources left in a particular category, but you can't mine them, you can't get to them because people live there. So, you know, do we, at a moment of desperation, change all of that and just rape, pillage, and plunder our own country in an attempt to save ourselves? It might happen. It might happen, but I think it's going to be too late. I think it's going to be too late. Australia, same way, with a little bit less problem. Canada, same way, with a little bit less problem too.

But you do have to be extremely environmentally degrading and extremely uninterested in the environment if you're going to go after this stuff lock, stock, and barrel and get it, whether it's lithium or some other ingredient you need desperately. We do have a lot of it, but we just aren't mining it. I suspect Brazil is in—I would guess Brazil probably has tons of things that it just doesn't know about yet. You'll find out once you finish raping the rainforest. And I understand gold is a real problem again all across the face of the earth because the price has gone up so high now that people are wildcatting gold mines and things everywhere. Doesn't matter where you are, if there's gold, they're doing it. And they're tearing up the environment majorly in a lot of places.

## **#Nima**

By the way, Rubio mentioned Brazil today. He said that Colombia and Brazil are somehow some sort of problem for us.

## **#Larry**

Right-winger going to win in Colombia? I don't see that. What do you think that would—would that mean a different Colombia in terms of its relationship with the United States? Or would it mean...

## **#Nima**

No, no, no country in Latin America is going to be something like, you know, what we have in Argentina. Argentina is just different. No one. You get the right wing, left wing here in Brazil, it's not going to be anything like Argentina. It's totally different.

## **#Larry**

Argentina has always been—La República de Argentina has always been—very different because its immigration patterns back in the 18th, 19th century were kind of like ours: Germans, Scots, and others coming to Argentina. I remember reading texts that kind of lamented what had happened in

Argentina with the caudillo tradition—that's what they attributed it to—Perón and people like that, and saying it could have been the United States of the South. No problem. Several times people made that prediction, that it was going to be the United States of the South. It would be so successful that it would rival the United States in terms of economic and political power. And Buenos Aires never could get out of the caudillo tradition, and so that ruined it. I don't know. But I do know Argentina seems to me—and I've not widely traveled in South America, but I've traveled in a lot of the countries—Argentina seems different. Very different from Chile, for example. Very different.

## **#Nima**

Even the president of Argentina, that guy is so out of his mind.

## **#Larry**

He's a nut. He's kind of like Trump, only in a different mode of operation.

## **#Nima**

He's a cousin of Benjamin Netanyahu.

## **#Larry**

Yeah. It's funny, these people that are kind of iconoclastic fall in with the same gang for different reasons, but Buenos Aires has always had a problem with budgets, too. Always had a problem with budgets. And that's given us inroads. It's given us inroads. I remember during the little war, you know, the Falklands War, the Malvinas War, we were working both sides of the street. And as we usually do, we were trying to keep our relations with the junta warm. At the same time, we were not going to piss Maggie Thatcher off. But we were doing some things like we did with Iran and Iraq and the Iran-Iraq War. Oh, we better keep things warm here with Buenos Aires. Oh, we got to do things right with London. It was even Sandy Woodward, the admiral who was in charge basically for the British down there, when he came up to Newport to brief us on the war, he said one more ship and I would have called London and told them it's over.

Bring us home. It's over. We can't fight this war. We can't fight this war. The submarines were what were getting him. And he said, it didn't happen, so I got the victory, you know. But he said it was a close-run thing. Very honest guy. Very honest Navy guy, which British admirals tend to be if they have a brain. Now, a lot of them don't have a brain, but if they do have a brain, they're usually pretty straightforward about how things go. Were it to happen again, I don't think England could even get down there, let alone win the war. They'd sail the carrier down there, and it would probably break halfway there. The carrier. The carrier. And what would the Argentines do? They would put a wake-homing torpedo into the carrier, probably. Look for that one to break out again sometime soon.

## **#Nima**

Yeah. Larry, don't you think that one of the ways out for Donald Trump, in his eyes—though a disaster in my opinion—could be some sort of off-ramp where he calls these aircraft carriers to come close to Cuba instead of being in West Asia? Because of Cuba. Come here and then... getting out of the Middle East and starting something with Cuba, which is a disaster in my opinion.

## **#Larry**

I am really surprised, Nima, that he hasn't done that already. And I don't necessarily mean Donald Trump coming up with the idea, but Steve Miller or someone like that. We need a distraction. We can have a distraction à la Maduro in Venezuela. We can have the same kind of thing. It's easy to do. We'll snatch Raúl Castro, bring him to the United States. It'll be a victory for Pete Hegseth in the Pentagon. Again, it'll look really good, and it'll take people's minds off Iran for a while.

## **#Speaker 03**

But even that's temporary.

## **#Larry**

It's temporary. And I'm not sure now, with the leverage that Russia and China in particular have gained over the United States, they'd let that happen. I'm not sure. It's a long way away. And China doesn't yet, except with its deep-sea fishing fleet, which is four times, six times the size of our Navy, seem to be comfortable operating militarily at a distance like that. So it would take a real change in Chinese doctrine and tactics for them to do that. But I wouldn't be noticeably surprised were they to do that. And I certainly wouldn't be surprised were Russia to do that. Because it wouldn't take much. It would just take relief coming at the time that they anticipated action, and the relief being caught in the action, and their responding to that.

That's all it would take. And I'm watching these submarine fleets really closely. No one else is. I don't even think the Pentagon is doing its duty with regard to watching these submarine fleets. And I have a hard time because I don't have enough contacts anymore to do it, but I'm watching the diesel submarines in particular. I'm fairly confident in my intelligence that the Chinese have several in the North Arabian Sea that are more or less tracking things. I've even heard rumors that one actually had a problem and had to surface within the sea screen of one of our carriers in the North Arabian Sea, and it almost resulted in a shoot. I don't know what they would have done, and I don't know what the problem was if they did have a problem.

But I would be very surprised if there aren't a number of, probably, diesel-electric submarines and maybe even others in that region tracking our ships. Unbeknownst, except maybe occasionally an active sonar or a passive sonar hit and, you know, what was that? Where was that? Four hundred

meters off the starboard bow. Okay. It's very difficult water to work in. It's probably the best submarine environment in the world in terms of convergence zones, temperatures, salinity, those sorts of things that make acoustic and passive and active sonar difficult to do, and therefore difficult to detect submarines. But I'd be very surprised if they weren't surveilling us. And if you can be surveilled, you can be killed. It's that simple. It's that simple.

I told you the story about our exercises in the Pacific where a Los Angeles attack submarine would be in the exercise, and it would be playing the orange force or the red force—the enemy, in other words—and the exercise would be ongoing. And the submarine playing the enemy submarine would surface four or five hundred meters off the port or starboard bow of the carrier, or at the stern, and say, "Bang, you're dead," over the guard channel—243.0, I think it is. They'd just come up on guard and say, "Bang, you're dead." The embarked admiral and the captain commanding the carrier would be sorely embarrassed. But the American submarine playing the enemy submarine would have surfaced and sent a radio transmission saying, "Bang, you're dead." They would have killed it because it got through all of their surface, subsurface, and air screen and got within torpedo firing range.

## **#Nima**

Larry, every time Donald Trump is talking about this rate of foremost, he says we don't need this rate because we are independent. We are producing everything here in the United States. But the reality is that the oil, this light oil that the United States produces, is not good for producing diesel.

## **#Larry**

Right.

## **#Nima**

And that's why the United States is dependent on the Strait of Hormuz one way or another. And many people understand that—those people who are involved in this market, they know what they're dealing with. But Donald Trump is trying to sell that to us, to ordinary people who don't know.

## **#Larry**

You've got fertilizer, urea, you've got helium. I'm sure there are other things too, but those are the ones that have been mentioned as being substantial. And now the supply is completely cut off. And it's not cut off just because the ships can't transit the Strait. It's cut off because we killed it. Iran killed it—killed the facilities that manufacture it.

## **#Nima**

Here is, Larry, what Marco Rubio said today about what's going on between Iran and the United States.

## **#Speaker 04**

...that they are losing and lost revenue that they're not generating as a result of that. Now, we are in talks—and I say talks because talks with Iran are not like talks with Switzerland. They're very different. They require the use of intermediaries, unfortunately. But there is the prospect before us, which could happen today, it could happen tomorrow, it could happen next week, that for the first time, certainly in my memory, they have agreed to negotiate aspects of their nuclear program that just a month ago, or just a year ago, they were refusing to even mention, much less enter into discussions about. That is not a guarantee that ultimately it will lead to a deal that's acceptable to the Senate or acceptable to the American people. But we'll be able to engage them in a process to truly test the proposition of how far they're willing to go.

## **#Larry**

Why would they even worry about it, essentially, if Pakistan has guaranteed them whatever they need, whenever they need it? I mean, okay, we'll negotiate. By the way, we're going to negotiate behind a missile that says "Pakistan" on it.

## **#Nima**

Here we had a report, Larry, on the Strait of Hormuz. This new organization, they call it the Persian Gulf Strait Authority, PGSA. It says that since the establishment of the PGSA, more than 300 non-Iranian ships have crossed the Strait of Hormuz in coordination with Iran and after paying tolls.

## **#Larry**

The income has been substantial.

## **#Nima**

Yeah.

## **#Larry**

Iran's income has been substantial, I'm told. I'm assuming Oman is getting a piece of it too. That may be the reason people have said.

## **#Nima**

They don't talk about it.

## **#Larry**

They're too smart. Yeah.

## **#Nima**

Yeah, here in this report it says that out of these ships, 42% were oil tankers, 27% bulk carriers, 11% container ships, 8% LNG ships, and 13% other types of vessels. And this is, you know, mostly the countries that were passing through the Strait of Hormuz where these tankers were to the UAE, Qatar, Iraq, and Kuwait. And this is, Larry, the reality of the Strait of Hormuz. I don't think that Donald Trump, under any conditions, can do anything about what's going on in the Strait of Hormuz. Because you can call it a toll, you can call it a fee, but after all, it doesn't seem that the Iranian position can change on this rate, together with the Omanis. The Omani government may say nothing. They say, we're not part of this, we're not going to do anything. But after all, as you've mentioned, they're going to take their part, their share, and not talk about it.

## **#Larry**

Right. And I really don't think Iran wants to, and has demonstrated by the withholding of its ballistic missiles from targets that would destroy the world economy. I really don't think they want to. And I don't think China and Russia want to either. And they're advising, and Pakistan probably too. So this goes along with that. I think the Strait would be open to commerce if we just go away, and Iran would make its toll fee, and we could go to the United Nations and, you know, have a conversation about how we were going to either bless that or change it in some way that the United Nations might arbitrate, and Iran would accept and Oman would accept. I mean, there are peaceful ways to deal with this, and we could get the world back on a non-recessionary future.

And Iran would probably go along with that without any problems, my guess, as would our partners. But we're the ones presenting the obstacle to doing it because Trump has to look in some ways like he's been effective. The problem with that, to me, the challenge there is that increasingly he is doing the exact opposite. He's making himself look feckless, and he's making the American military establishment look feckless. And that to him is harmful. And politically it is. So I don't know where he's going. Like I said, at any moment he could lash out and we'd be in a different situation, which the Iranians would take care of quite adequately, I think, to our defeat, but which would lead to a lot worse global situation. Best thing to do, Nima, would be to declare victory and leave.

## **#Nima**

Exactly.

## **#Larry**

Yeah. And tell Netanyahu he's on his own. And if he keeps doing what he's doing in Lebanon, no more arms. And tell Zelenskyy the same thing. No more arms.

**#Nima**

And he has to get out of Lebanon, Larry, I think.

**#Larry**

Yep. He has to get out, just like he did in '82. Completely out. And don't destroy any refugee camps on the way out.

**#Nima**

Yeah. Yeah, exactly. Thank you so much, Larry, for being with us today. Great pleasure, as always. And see you on Friday.

**#Larry**

Friday, yeah. Was Larry going to be there?

**#Nima**

Did he say yes? We're going to do it together.

**#Larry**

Good, good. Take care.

**#Nima**

See you soon. Take care.

**#Larry**

Bye-bye.