

Col. Larry Wilkerson: Israel's Drone War: Why Lebanon Is Just the Beginning

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#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, 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 is, before getting to what happened yesterday, which I will focus on later, the issue 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

Yeah. 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. Yeah, yeah. 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 scenario.

#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 Israel. Israelis have to evacuate the northern part of Israel. We're going to attack the northern part of Israel as soon as the attack dies. 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 still go back, Nima, to the fact that we checked 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, which 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. We have great depth on the other side—strategic and otherwise, even tactical depth. And with the railroad and the Caspian, you 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 a 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. Okay.

#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 going to 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 going to 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 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. 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. He sent some into, 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—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 abut 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 proxies—allies, I'll call them—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 one. This is it. Boil it down. We have no one, other than maybe a lieutenant colonel or colonel or whatever in the Pentagon who dare not 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's 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 in his 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 today, it reminds me of the strategy of the Israelis—it's like 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. 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 put 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's 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.