

Col. Larry Wilkerson: Israel's Grand Strategy Is Coming Apart – Here's Why It Matters

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#Nima

Hi, everybody. Today's Tuesday, June 9th, 2026, and our dear friend, Col. Larry Wilkerson, is here with us. Welcome back, Larry.

#Lawrence

Good to be with you, Nima.

#Nima

I want to start with what J.D. Vance said last night. We know the attacks — Iran, Israel attacking Lebanon, the Iranian response to the Israeli attack. But before getting there, I want to play what J. D. Vance said about the situation between the United States and Iran.

#Speaker 03

How concerned are you about Israel spying on the United States and freelancing in Lebanon?

#Speaker 04

Well, look, I think obviously the Israelis and I—excuse me, the Israelis and the United States—we have a lot of shared interests, but we also have some situations where our interests diverge. And I think where the president has been very clear here is that while Israel obviously has some objectives that it has, the United States' main objective in Iran is to ensure that Iran does not have a nuclear weapon. And we've actually, thanks to what's happened over the last few months, but really over the last year and a half, created the space necessary where the president believes, and I think he's right, that we can get a long-term settlement to Iran's nuclear deal. Now, Israel may like that, they may not like that, but fundamentally, we think this is in the best interest of the United States of

America. So we're going to keep on pursuing it because that's what the president of the United States was elected to do. That's what we have to do in order to properly serve the American people.

#Nima

Yeah. What is, in your assessment, in your understanding, hearing what J.D. Vance just said, hearing what Donald Trump said just moments ago about in two, three days he's going to get some sort of deal? And he was telling us for such a long time—you remember, you know, I would say more than 40 times he said that—and in two, three days we're going to get an agreement with Iran. What is your understanding of the current situation and the ongoing sort of messages between the two sides?

#Lawrence

Well, J.D. Vance has become like a broken record in many respects. He keeps playing essentially the same message with different intonations every time. I love the slip-up there. Note at the beginning of his remark, he says "between Israel and I." Then he changes it to "the United States." J.D., do you have a personal situation here? You bet you do. You bet you do, because you want to run for president, and you better not say anything adverse to Israel's interests, because you will never gain the White House if you do. That's essentially what he's admitting to. Then the second thing I would remark on is, I may be in error here, but I think I'm right, because I don't watch Fox News much.

But I did happen on the story—I believe it was in the New York Times, maybe the Wall Street Journal—but it was about the Nielsen ratings. Those are our ratings on who gets watched the most, and how long, and what shows, and who has the most attraction to the American people. That dude talking to J.D. Vance from Fox News was one of the top ones, as I recall. So he's speaking to the MAGA group, and the MAGA group, all to say, still dominates. It still dominates. Now, clearly, the network news, both visual and narrative, is not doing as well as it used to. But at the same time, Fox is doing better than any of the rest—and that individual.

So, targeted—going to the person who's going to talk to the most MAGA people, is most believed among the MAGA people, and delivering his message there. What is the message? It's the same old thing. I mean, I can't believe that even the dumbest MAGA dude out there, male or female, old or young or middle, isn't aware of the line they're being fed now and who's feeding it to them—in this case, the vice president. And the line is still, I don't think this administration, from the vice president to the president to the secretary of war, they're going to spend \$125 million, Nima, and probably more than that, to change the name officially in the Congress to the Department of War—a retrograde step if there ever was one.

But this is a retrograde administration. It's not "Make America Great Again." It's "Kill America." That's what it's all about. But all of that going on doesn't mask the fact that they have, I won't say outright lost the war, but they never had a chance of winning it. So what's the difference? And they're not

going to win it now. And Bibi is showing, characteristically, that he is more interested in staying out of jail—therefore he must win the upcoming election in Israel—than he is in obeying Trump, because he is still killing people in Gaza. And oh, by the way, he's still killing people in Lebanon.

He's still killing people in Gaza. He's still killing people in the West Bank, in East Jerusalem. Got a wary eye cast over Syria. And he's attacking Iran again. So he's not doing anything that the United States president claims he has ultimate power over him to make him do. And he's not doing it because the people who oppose him in this upcoming election and may well beat him are taking him to task for paying any attention to the American president. And increasingly, I think Trump's reputation in Israel, because of these phone calls and such, is falling off too. Not necessarily because he told Netanyahu to get screwed, but because they see the premier—Netanyahu in this case, but ultimately Naftali Bennett or whoever—actually taking orders from Trump.

And that didn't sit well at all. Eighty-some percent of the Jewish residents of Israel are still very much in favor of everything that Bibi has done to this point, in each of the places he's doing it. And oh, by the way, in Gaza, it's really become treacherous. It's become treacherous from so many different aspects—people making tons of money, lots of Egyptians, lots of Israelis making tons of money off of charging \$200 for a carton of eggs, even more for enough gas to run your stove for a 10-hour period—just exploiting the Palestinians who are left, the Gazans who are left, to the maximum for money.

So it's a... And Nima, I read a piece in the Jerusalem Post. If I talked about this with you before, please stop me. And I had never heard of this guy, but I probably should have. He's a pretty established historian in Israel. And he wrote a piece that was based really a lot on Halford Mackinder and Mackinder's theory of the land state versus the maritime state, and vice versa. And his contention was that what's happening now is really three nuclear weapons are being, quote unquote, deployed against the United States and against Israel. One of them is the Strait of Hormuz.

And it's an incredibly powerful one because it's geographically fixed, can't be moved, and it is essential for the moment, at least until pipelines obviate it, to a lot of global commerce. So that's a nuclear weapon, and Iran controls it. The second nuclear weapon is more... it's more indebted to Mackinder's theory. And that is that the landmass, such as it is, has shifted just a bit. And I don't mean the geography actually moved. I mean the power centers within that geography, exploiting that geography nonetheless, widened to an extent, as was in the original theory. And what's happening is you have Iran now a major component of the Russian, Chinese, and I think Central Asian landmass.

So you have an overpowering 67, 68% of the world that is occupying this now increasingly viable, because of land routes rather than maritime routes, economic structure. Maritime routes are still important to an extent, but at any moment they may fall into high seas piracy, much the same way they did several hundred years ago, when you may recall that Britain initially was very much involved in the slave trade across the Atlantic and then got a new prime minister, a new foreign

minister, and all of a sudden they started fighting the slave trade viciously on the high seas. We were the most guilty party, and they were attacking our ships and everything else.

That's what we're headed for in the maritime realm, while the land realm is relatively peaceful and successful economically and otherwise, politically, economically. I think there's something to that. And then the third—he doesn't stop there. Those are the two nuclear weapons Iran is now in possession of, like the Strait, or a party to, like this new land configuration. The third nuclear weapon is a real nuclear weapon. And he's convinced that that's there too. It's either coming from Pakistan or it's already there, built by the Iranians themselves, and it only awaits evidence that it exists.

And the purpose for that, going into a narrower definition of that nuclear weapon, which is, of course, an actual nuclear weapon, he talks about deterrence, and he talks about they have to do that, as Kim Jong-il had to do it, because that was the only way to survive. And with Israel possessing a nuclear weapon—again, I come back to the Omani foreign minister—Israel is the problem in the region. Now, Israel is the problem in the region not only because of its slaughtering methodologies, but also because it is the only state with a nuclear weapon that is poised against the rest of the region. And this will balance the scales, so to speak. So they don't have to use it. They don't even have to test it.

Mossad just needs to know they've got it. I think he thinks they will test it, but that's to be seen. I think he's right in all three components of that analysis, which means, Nima, there is no way Donald Trump is going to get out of this except by doing what J.D. Vance just did—obfuscate, state the same thing over and over again, say that diplomacy is succeeding, have an occasional tit-for-tat strike, have an occasional U.S. Apache helicopter go down in the region, God knows for what reason, have all these things going on and stretch them out until the midterms when you can consolidate your control over the United States. That's what I see as base policy now for the Trump administration.

Let this go on at a low simmer, as low as you can keep it. Try to keep Bibi Netanyahu in check. Hope he's defeated. Hope he goes to jail, and then start a new sheet of music, if you will—that's the same thing without Bibi—trying to deal with Lapid or Naftali Bennett or whoever happens to take his place. But I don't think they have a strategy. I do not think they have a strategy other than rope-a-dope. You know what that means from Cassius Clay's fighting days? You bounce off the ropes all the time. That's what Trump is doing. And J.D. Vance is a spokesperson in that regard. And he almost screwed up as he started by saying it was his personal position. Nope, United States' position.

#Nima

Larry, can I add number four? A nuclear bomb in the region, which would be the new equation of the region—that for Israel, there is no red line for the acts of resistance to attack Israel. I'm talking about Iran and Yemen.

#Lawrence

Well, that comes out of the second one in this guy's estimation—the new leverage Iran has because of being a part of the Mackinder landmass and having Russia and China behind it. And being connected, being connected—I saw two more railroads. I didn't even know, I didn't know there were three railroads. There are three railroads. I knew about two of them, but there are three railroads that actually come through that area and now debouch in Iran. I mean, you've seen these Chinese railroads, the freight railroads alone—they can be 150, 200-car trains. They may take 13 hours or 14 hours, 14 days, 13 days, or whatever. One of them, I'm told, has had a train—I don't know how big it was—but a train actually traversed it in 25 hours.

Now, that would be 100 miles an hour or whatever, you know, the whole distance, and it'd probably be an unloaded train. But the average time, I'm told, for the big one at least, is 13 to 14 days. But that's chicken feed when you're talking about ships and the cost of ships and the danger of going through places like the Bab el-Mandeb and the Strait of Hormuz now. The Houthis have let it be known that the Bab el-Mandeb is back to its previous status. Nobody crosses through who's friendly with Israel. So you're talking about a lot of pressure being brought on the world economy that is being relieved for this Mackinder-like landmass because they don't depend on it. They'll take advantage of it when they can and when the rates are right, but they don't depend on it. Everything is land now.

#Nima

When you look at Israel and the way they're attacking in the southern part of Lebanon, Larry, they know they attacked an empty building in Beirut, in the southern part of Beirut, in Dahia. They didn't kill any Hezbollah forces, but they killed ordinary people—at least two or three of them were wounded, something like five casualties.

#Lawrence

They're not killing Hamas fighters, by and large, in Gaza either. They're killing Gazan civilians, 24, 30 a day. Moving the yellow line, the old tactic—yellow line's in one place at night, the next morning the yellow line's somewhere else. If you're on the other side of the yellow line as it has moved, you get killed. They're doing the same thing, but these aren't Hamas fighters. These are Gazan civilians. But it's their strategy, by the way.

#Nima

I don't know if you heard what Ben-Gvir said. Ben-Gvir, the Israeli minister, said he's calling for kidnapping Lebanese women and children to break Hezbollah's morale. To break their morale, you have to—it's just unbelievable.

#Lawrence

Ben-Gvir is unbelievable. Yeah, he's unbelievable. He's the one I think is going to be first on the docket at the International Criminal Court when people wake up and do something about this in the distant future. I really think it will happen. Just as it happened with Radovan Karadžić and Milošević in Serbia. Now, that happened really because the United States threw its weight behind it. Because—you ready for this, Nima?—the real reason we did that was because we were being accused of only backing the court when it picked on people in Africa who were Black, like Charles Taylor. And so we looked around, we being, uh, who was the guy? I can't think of his name. I just lost his name.

But the great diplomat who was in Pakistan as our emissary—he was before that in former Yugoslavia. Dick, Dick, Dick... can't think of his last name now. But anyway, they were looking around for someone they could get that would balance the scales at the court—a white person. And so they picked on Radovan Karadžić and Milošević in Serbia because they were in the news at that time and they were doing some pretty brutal things. So was the other side, but we were on the other side, so we picked them. And I think Karadžić either went to the court and died in the process of the trial, and Milošević did pretty much the same thing, I think. I think he was hauled out to go before the court and then he passed away.

God knows how he died. But that, you know, we will do this again somewhere. Europe will do it again somewhere. We'll come to our senses to a certain extent, but there will be other reasons too, as there were with Yugoslavia, former Yugoslavia. But we'll put these people before the bar. I doubt anybody like Netanyahu will. I think Netanyahu will do a Sharon on us. Sharon left office and died. And one of the reasons he died was he was actually, I think, afflicted with a form of cancer that was pretty virulent. But he also died conveniently, let's put it that way. And I think Netanyahu will die conveniently too. And maybe Mrs. Netanyahu too. And I will be first to stand on their grave and clap.

#Nima

We have two leaders, the President of the United States and Benjamin Netanyahu. When they started the war, they had some sort of overlap in their objectives because they wanted to do something in Iran. They wanted to do regime change or whatever they had in their mind. They were locked.

#Lawrence

Both of them thought they were going to overthrow the regime in Iran and turn Iran into, at best, a Bantustan nation with all kinds of little other things scattered across it—you know, a little Kurd, a little Azeri, a little this, a little that—all over the place. I bet they even thought in Israel that there'd be a little Jewish enclave with the 50,000 or so Jewish citizens. I got news for them: they would

probably fight them tooth and nail. But it didn't happen. It didn't happen. That was Mossad and Bibi Netanyahu's advice to, prediction to, outcome of this war will be to Donald Trump. And Donald Trump swallowed it hook, line, and sinker.

#Nima

Yeah. And looking at where they are today, you know, we have again two leaders who are seeing the future totally differently, because Donald Trump, as it was mentioned, Axios—there is a report on Axios that a U.S. official said to Axios that the continuation of the war for Israel, for Benjamin Netanyahu, is so important because he wants to stay alive politically in Israel.

#Lawrence

And probably stay alive, period. Because when you go to jail, you die pretty quick in Israel. I mean, I'm not saying somebody takes you out, but I'm just saying former prime ministers in jail do not last long.

#Nima

And on the opposite side, we see Donald Trump, to stay politically alive, he needs to get out of the Middle East. He needs to do something about it. And the two right now, the two agendas are totally different on the part of Benjamin Netanyahu and Donald Trump. And the desperation is just increasing as time goes by.

#Lawrence

Trump has two sides after him for this. Now, the one is kind of clandestine, but it will get more in the open as we go along. The one side, of course, is the opposition in Israel to what he's telling Netanyahu to do. And Netanyahu, of course, is not corresponding with that too well. And then the other side is the people like Tom Cotton and others in Congress who are vehemently opposed to Trump telling Netanyahu anything. So he's got this painful group in the Republican Party. And I suspect that if you counted heads, for various reasons, not least of which is AIPAC and its control.

You have more heads than you think who are utterly opposed and are going to ensure that in the Senate and the House, this new arrangement with Israel actually passes for the NDAA to be Israel's as well as the United States'. And so he's got to contend with that. And I'm not totally sure he's willing to contend with that in a way that won't be rupturing of the Republican Party. And two, he's got to contend with Israel. So this is not an easy thing for him. The American people are caught somewhere in there because the majority of the American people of all age groups, particularly under 65, are not fans of this war or are vehement opponents of this war.

So you've got all this cacophony of political forces going on that Trump has stirred up with this stupid war that were already latent in Trump's dealings with the country in the first place. And now they're just showing their ugly heads everywhere. We're going to see some legislation, I think, to protect Israel in both houses of Congress that's going to make what's happening with the NDAA probably pale in comparison. Because these guys and gals are going to scramble to do everything they possibly can legislatively to lock Israel in a box that's impregnable before anything changes. I don't think they're all that confident that Trump's coup, such as those that are in the Congress, know about it or are in league with it.

Many of them, I think, would just go along with it, like the Roman Senate did—as soon as Octavius had won his wars and came home triumphant. The Roman Senate just became, you know, a rubber stamp. I think ours would too. But it's going to be a really vicious fight to figure out where it's going, and then where the American people are going to go once they're confirmed in their minds that their government has deserted them. This is far more serious for us—I'm not saying for the world—it's far more serious for us than Donald Trump knows, than the Congress of the United States knows, than the Supreme Court knows, than any governmental power knows.

It's far more serious for us. And it's going to get deeper and more profoundly serious as time goes by, approaching the elections and afterwards. And there's no out. Regardless of how many times they—Vance, Trump, whomever, Rubio, etc.—tell the American people that we're winning, the American people are going to increasingly realize we are not winning. The more they tell us that they are just short of a victory in diplomacy, the more the American people are going to realize they're lying through their teeth. This has not got a good outcome. Not for us. And I haven't even talked about Ukraine.

#Nima

If we assume, Larry, the grand strategy of Israel is Greater Israel—let's assume that, which in my opinion it is—the ultimate goal of Israel is Greater Israel, then where is Israel today compared to what it was before this war started?

#Lawrence

Embattled. Embattled on multiple fronts, none of which it has total control over. Embattled on the international stage, even worse than it is embattled in these wars, because the international stage is turning 60 to 70% against them. Even the Europeans are now finally talking about sanctions on West Bank settlers and things like that—seriously talking about it. And I think in peril of its life, certainly in peril of its life as a Jewish enclave in the Levant, which is what they've turned into their sole purpose in life, willing to protect with nuclear weapons. And I don't think the world cares for that at all. I think that's going to grow and deepen in its profundity. And we're going to see a rejection of the state of Israel as it presently exists that will become more and more concrete as

time goes by and people exercise diplomacy and other means of dealing with this pariah state. And I don't see any future for a Jewish state in the Levant, period.

#Nima

They define a yellow line in the southern part of Lebanon because they want... it changes every day. I don't know what that yellow line is, because before coming to this live, as we talked about before, Hezbollah just infiltrated the northern part of Israel. There's supposed to be some sort of buffer zone, some sort of security zone for Israel. There is no zone, and nobody would respect that. Maybe Hezbollah would impose some sort of buffer zone in the northern part of Israel.

#Lawrence

They should turn the cards on the Israelis. Yeah, do the same thing. We got a green line—step across the green line and we'll kill you. Oh, the green line just moved. That's what Israel does with its yellow line in Gaza. It puts it down on the ground, says, do not cross this yellow line. And then in the night, it changes the yellow line. And the next morning, some Palestinians wake up on the other side of the line. They kill them. And they have perfect justice, perfect proof, you know—they're on the other side of the yellow line. Well, you moved the yellow line in the night and didn't tell us. Okay, Hezbollah, do that back to them.

But I don't think Hezbollah is going to have to need—I don't think they need that. If they can infiltrate the north to any extent that it becomes untenable for Bibi and he has to divert troops up there to actually protect them rather than be on the offense, that's going to be disastrous for Israel, and it's going to stop his momentum in Lebanon, which is probably what Hezbollah intends—at least to slow it down, if not stop it completely. Because they're running out of troops, Nima. They're running out of people to draft. They're running out of people to call up. And the call-ups that they have initiated are not being complied with fully. So they've got problems. Lots of problems.

#Nima

I think for those people who are worried about Israel, the basic, you know, the foundation of their sort of, you know, understanding is the case of the Palestine theory—what Israel has done in the West Bank, what Israel has done so far in Gaza. They're talking about 70% of Gaza. They're talking about all of the West Bank being annexed to Israel. And if they're talking about it, it doesn't mean that they're gonna get it, but at least they're talking about the capture. And we know that it's settlers in the West Bank—they captured the land. There is no West Bank. Look at those pinpoints on the map. That doesn't mean Palestine, in my opinion.

And this is the problem for Israel, I think, as an outcome of this war—that the acts of resistance, there is no red line. For example, with the latest attack on Beirut and the immediate response from Iran, we've seen that the equation is changing. That's why they cannot do it. They cannot continue

with this sort of attitude. And the United States has its own limitations when it comes to the Middle East. The United States doesn't have those big, beautiful bases that Donald Trump was bragging about before this war started. This is the problem. And where are they going to stay, in your opinion, if they try to support Israel in the region? Well, right now—huge questions.

#Lawrence

It is. And right now, the Israelis are complaining because we have crowded them off their own aprons at their own airports. Our planes are taking all the available space at their own airports because we don't have any other place to put them. Maybe a few in Jordan, maybe a few in Iraq could still make it, but I doubt the latter because Iraq is increasingly—Baghdad is increasingly—looking at us as the real problem, like they have all along, but they just wouldn't say it. But yeah, we're all going to have to nestle down in Israel eventually in order to keep conducting these wars. And that's going to put us cheek to jowl. There's not enough apron space. There's not enough maintenance space. There's not enough airport space, taxiways, runways, and so forth for that.

But that's what we wind up doing, and God forbid, that's probably what we deserve—to all be cheek to jowl with one another when Iran puts the coup de grâce on us. And that's something I wonder about, Nima, because ultimately the defender now, with the viability and strategic prowess of the Palestinians, embattled as they are, particularly in Gaza and the West Bank, is Iran. Secondarily, the Houthis. But mainly Iran. Iran with backing now, as the theory purports—and I think it's right—from China and Russia to an extent, China majorly, Russia as it is able to without taking its eye off Ukraine, but still formidable. So when are they going to announce the same policy with regard to persecution and murder—brutal murder—of the Gazans in Gaza, as they are now doing for the Lebanese in Lebanon, ostensibly for Hezbollah, part of the axis of resistance?

But when you think about it, if they're to put credibility to our own claims, Hamas is part of the axis of resistance too. And wouldn't it be nice for Iran to suddenly assume the entire role of defending the Palestinians? What would the Saudis do then? What would the Egyptians do then? What would the Jordanians, quislings that they are, what would they do? What would all these states that are supposed to be the defenders, the first line for the Palestinians, do if Shia Iran became the defender of the Palestinians and the only one putting forth real effort and possibly success? That would change another dynamic of this struggle, I think—maybe be a fourth nuclear weapon in terms of its impact.

How long do you think it would take the world to shift its opinion away from a neutral position—that's the best way I can describe it—although it's changing fairly rapidly, with respect to Israel and its bloody-mindedness in the West Bank and in Gaza in particular, and shift to sympathy with Iran? If Iran became the sole defender of the Palestinians, a knight-errant for the Palestinians. I can't imagine there isn't some thought about spreading their mantle of protection, genuinely spreading it.

They've already vocally spread it, but genuinely spreading it to the Palestinians in Gaza, and essentially saying to Israel, the next time you kill another Palestinian across your yellow line, expect six or seven rockets to land on Tel Aviv.

#Nima

I think with ongoing negotiations—today I talked with Professor Miranda—it seems that Iran is serious about Gaza and Palestine. They're putting out, with the Trump administration, these messages back and forth. They're mentioning that it's going to be Lebanon and Gaza and Palestine all together. It's not going to be just Iran.

#Lawrence

Good.

#Nima

They're not going to back down. And it's not just about... because the head of the Council of Experts in Iran yesterday announced it's going to be the whole axis of resistance mentioned in Lebanon and Palestine. They're going to defend them. I think the whole concept is that if they can get something with the United States, they get it. It's not going to be an agreement. It's not going to be anything like an agreement. It's something like what Donald Trump got from the Houthis, from the Yemenis: you're not going to shoot at us, we're not here, we won the war, we destroyed everything, we did the regime change in Iran, and then we're going to get out of the region. Then Israel stays with the axis of resistance. How far can they go against the axis of resistance? I think these are huge questions. Many people can argue and say that Israel is just smashing, destroying the countries. But destroying the buildings doesn't mean that you're getting the land.

#Lawrence

Yeah. You know, the thing that would excite me the most would be that Tom Cotton, Lindsey Graham, and a number of those wonderful senators who think Israel is the cup of tea of the world would just pick up their stakes and relocate to Israel. Convene the United States Senate in Israel, as it should be, and leave us all alone in the continental United States. Just pick it up and take it over there and rule in the land that rules you. Leave us to our just desserts, whatever. I mean, that's what we're talking about. We're talking about the legislature of this country, in whole, in majority, being totally enthralled to a foreign power to the extent that they ought to pick up and go convene their Senate in Tel Aviv.

Just combine them. Let's not do this deal where we just put 224 into the NDAA. Let's just make it what it should be. Move your asses to Tel Aviv and join the murderous Bibi Netanyahu in that grouping. Help to govern Israel. Get out of this country. Leave this country. It'll never happen, of

course, but that's essentially what we're talking about in terms of the trauma that confronts this country now over this conflict and is going to confront it far more dangerously as we approach the midterms. And the American people, I think, try powerfully to change that and are prevented from doing it, basically, by Trump.

#Nima

The question is, if the United States stays in the region the way that it is—they're staying right now, they're there right now—what would be the outcome for Israel? Just about the attack, the Iranian attack on Israel, just a few missiles went to Israel and they hit the targets, by the way. I'm not talking about it—let me just bring up the photo, the satellite images that show... Here is the satellite image that shows the Iranian missile. You know, the censorship in Israel. But in this footage, in this photo, it shows the accurate hit of a hangar at Ramat David Air Base—Ramat David Air Base—by Iranian missiles two days ago, Larry. And this is the way it is right now. And the United States, what can they do for Israel?

#Lawrence

How much longer will it take if some of the photographs I've seen—and they're not long-time photographs, they're very recent photographs, last 96 hours—if the photographs I've seen of all the apron space, the ramp space, even space that's been created beside the ramps that will take the weight of an F-35, for example, if all of that is occupied, both Israeli and U.S., if there's no more airport space left in Israel—it's a small country after all, very small, what, the size of New Jersey? How long is it before the Iranian missiles start striking U.S. materiel, U.S. aircraft, U.S. facilities in Israel? I don't think very long. So we're looking at a new dimension there too, because I don't think the Iranians would be frightened of doing that. If the beast is going to sit down with the little beast, then he's going to take the risk. That could happen. It could happen easily now because we're so co-located and so close together in key places. That was an interesting shot there. That was a hangar.

#Nima

Yeah.

#Lawrence

It was at Ben Gurion, or where was it exactly?

#Nima

No, it was at Ramat David Air Base. Okay. Ramat David Air Base. Yeah.

#Lawrence

Yeah, I'm told that that one is just overflowing with airplanes. Because let's face it, we don't have any place to put them otherwise.

#Nima

You've seen the footage of Ben Gurion Airport, all those aircraft in the open. If something happens, they can get hit, all of them.

#Lawrence

That's the next blow, I think, if Iran wants to perpetrate it. It's similar to the situation in Ukraine. If Putin wants to strike NATO assets in Lithuania or any of the countries that I think he would be more likely to strike first, were he to strike in a NATO country, all he's got to do is shoot. He knows where the targets are, and he knows who's in those targets—Brits, Americans, probably others. He knows where they are. So we're looking at two similar situations in very different circumstances, but nonetheless, we're looking at trigger points for a much bigger, wider war. I don't know what would happen if Iran really started to do damage to the United States in that significant sense, you know, say 20 or 30 aircraft in a couple of swoops.

I don't know what we'd do, because I don't think we could do anything. Except say the ceasefire was broken and, you know, attack a few things along the coast of Iran and maybe drop a few bombs in addition to what we've already dropped. Call the Israelis up to drop a few more bombs. What's that going to accomplish? Nothing except kill some innocent civilians, possibly. Probably. But it's not going to accomplish anything in changing Iran's determination to be resolute and to hold out and to do as much damage after that again to the United States. So we're just tit for tat, tit for tat. And the tits from Iran are going to be a lot worse than the tats from the United States—and Israel, for that matter. I mean, this latest bombing by Israel, I'm told, was kind of farcical.

#Nima

What's funny about the war, the attacks between Israel and Iran, is that during the war, during the attacks, we learned that Saudi Arabia was getting hit by some sort of missiles. In the initial hours, they said it was Iran. Then Iran said, we didn't hit Saudi Arabia. For what reason would we do this? Then they said it was Yemen. Then it wasn't Yemen. Yemen said, who's doing this to Saudi Arabia? Israel, every time it wants to do something there, it hits Syria, Saudi Arabia—let's hit some other countries here.

#Lawrence

Well, they're good at false flags. They're very good at false flags. Assassination and false flags—that ought to be the middle name for every Israeli soldier, sailor, airman, marine. False flags and assassinations, particularly for Mossad. They lead the world, I think. They lead the world in assassinations.

#Nima

What is the meaning there of the air defense system in Saudi Arabia? They're buying, they have bought a lot of weapons. And they're buying right now. Donald Trump is somehow bragging about a new deal coming between the United States and Saudi Arabia. But after all, if you cannot use any of them, and you cannot—even they didn't put out any sort of statement—who did attack them? Who did attack you? They don't have, we haven't heard from them. And this is the main reason. Do these people know how to use those weapons in their countries? The air defense system, I don't know. The radars they have of their own. I'm not talking about the United States. But we haven't seen any sort of capability in GCC countries.

#Lawrence

Well, there are some. I'm not familiar with the strikes you're talking about. I missed them. But there are some drones in the area now that are, I would say, at least for the present moment, indefensible against. No matter what missile structure you have, the drones are going to kill you. And the Iranians are in possession of some of these drones. In fact, the Iranians were the original creator. I think if I remember right, the trail goes from Ukraine to the general market to Iran—Iran reverse engineering and Iran setting up a new methodology for using these drones. They're relatively cheap. They're \$35,000, \$40,000 apiece, and yet they do more damage than a Hellfire missile or a Tomahawk. And they are almost, at present time anyway, indefensible against because of the technology that's used in them.

You can't interfere with the drone itself. You can't interfere with the mechanism, whatever it might be, that's controlling its flight. And it's smart enough to get within the vicinity of the target and know if there is something opposing it that might be deadly, to change its trajectory and come in from a different direction. Really sophisticated, cheap drone. That may be what's being used right now—could be being used in a false flag by Israel, because I understand they got one and reverse engineered it. But I also understand this gets so deep, I don't even know what I'm talking about. The Iranians made the one they reverse engineered. Very difficult to reverse engineer without doing it in a way that was inimical to your own use of it.

In other words, the drone won't operate the way you think it's going to operate because they did something to it. And we're in this game now. We're in this game where the tactical innovations on the battlefield are every day, virtually, and something comes up new and you don't know what happens when that new technique is used because it's not been seen before, or it's done something

that is supposedly impossible, whether it's fiber optic or it's, you know, manually controlled or whatever. So I don't know. I'm just talking out my hat right now. But I do know that the innovation on the battlefield, both in Ukraine and now in Southwest Asia, particularly on the Iranian side, is becoming probably the highest level of innovation in warfare in a long time. And the Iranians are showing their mettle in this business.

#Lawrence

That's not to say that this was an Iranian attack. I'm not insinuating that, but I would suspect the most likely perpetrator would be Israel in a false flag attack.

#Nima

There is no need for Iran, when Israel is attacking Lebanon, to attack Saudi Arabia.

#Lawrence

Israel is trying to mix up the game.

#Nima

They did that, Larry. You remember when the war against Iran started, the U.S.-Israeli attack on Iran? They started attacking some points in Turkey, Azerbaijan, the whole region. They tried to manipulate the borders of Iran because they wanted these groups, these terrorist groups, to somehow create some sort of chaos at the borders of Iran. Then these terrorist groups got in with the plan they had, with the arms they received from Donald Trump. They had it all in place, and they had two Israeli bases in Iraq preparing and providing everything.

#Lawrence

Reminds me of the Bay of Pigs. Remember the Bay of Pigs? It all went in, and it all failed.

#Nima

They were so prepared, Larry. They were so prepared. Donald Trump said it: for 22 years, we were prepared for this moment. It wasn't just Iran preparing for that. It was about Israel, how Israel was preparing. For more than two decades, Israel was planning this war.

#Lawrence

And you can bet that the briefing that the New York Times reported on, where Bibi supposedly was the decider for Trump to start this war, you can bet Bibi rolled all that out for Trump. And, you know, this is the glorious preparation we've made. You don't understand. We've been at this for 20

years, intensely for 10 years. And we've got agents everywhere. We've got agents provocateur everywhere. We've got people behind every Iranian citizen. And they will rise up because we will push them up into a standing position. That's the kind of briefing I suspect Bibi gave Trump. And he bought it. Trump bought it all. And it went to hell in a bag before it even got into full execution.

#Nima

Despite Donald Trump saying that the United States is independent of oil, we know the oil market is so important for the Trump administration and for the economy of the United States. And here is what many people are asking: if the war is happening, with this chaos and with the blockade of the Strait of Hormuz — with the American blockade, the Iranian blockade, the complexity in the bubble, and that, by the way, in the Red Sea — why is the price of oil not going to, you know, 120, 130? And here is what Robert Kagan said, and his understanding of the price of oil.

#Speaker 05

If you needed to buy a barrel of oil today, it costs something like \$150 or \$140, because that's what the actual price of oil is. The oil prices we're looking at are oil futures. And I'll tell you one thing that Donald Trump has been an absolute genius at, and he gets an A-plus for it, is manipulating the market and manipulating market expectations. Watching oil futures prices go up and down based on whether Donald Trump says there's going to be an agreement or not has been pretty amusing, because Donald Trump has now pulled the Lucy and Charlie Brown football trick about seven times. The market goes for it every single time. So these prices are not reflective of reality.

And now you even see major figures like Exxon top executives warning that the inventory levels, the world oil inventory levels, which have been basically keeping supply going — there was a lot of oil out there in the system. And there were, of course, the strategic oil reserves of various countries, including the United States, which have been drawn down heavily. I think Japan's is drawn down as far as it's ever been. And what the energy experts are warning is that we're going to hit a point in the next two or three weeks where the inventory is really gone. And that's the point at which they're anticipating oil price shocks. Some people say \$150, some people say \$200 a barrel. And we're definitely talking, in any case, about gas prices in the United States potentially hitting \$6 a gallon.

#Nima

This is the main reason Donald Trump is under tremendous pressure, in my opinion.

#Lawrence

Yes, I've had conversations with people in the oil industry too, and they say roughly what Kagan was saying — just wait. And the explanation is, all that oil that flowed before the Strait was debatable has gone. It's been offloaded. It's not on the ocean anymore. It's in stocks, wherever it might have

gone to, and it's being consumed. And there's no oil to come replace it. Furthermore, as he was pointing out, the price and the price differential have been played very expertly by Donald Trump and others around him to make fortunes off the stock market. And when that becomes not opaque but transparent — that is to say, when it collapses — then we're going to have revelations and no confidence whatsoever.

And we're going to have, I think he's right with his higher expectation, because I remember the operation that we did in Beijing in 2009, when it went to \$200, \$250 for West Texas and Brent. And this is crude oil off the market. This is not futures. And you're going to have a real problem because across the United States, for example, it's going to be, as he said, possibly \$6, \$7 a gallon. And in Europe, God knows what it's going to be — \$18, \$20, \$25. But you've got the liter component there, so you've got to factor that in. And it's going to be a real shock, even more so a shock to the American people because they are not expecting it. They will grow reasonably accustomed, barking and complaining and pitching, to \$4.50, \$5 a gallon.

But when it gets up to \$6 and north of \$7, they're going to take note, real note, because it's going to really hurt them. And he's right about that. Kagan's right about the reserves, too. We bled them down. Trump has bled ours down. Extremely low. The Japanese are extremely low. Even the country that was in pretty good shape in terms of petroleum reserves, but I don't think it's worried about them as long as it has the pipelines from Russia, is China. I've not checked lately the status of Taiwan, but I would expect it's not too good, and Taiwan might go hat in hand begging to China eventually. But it's not over. It's not over till the fat lady sings, and the fat lady has not even come out of the green room yet, if you know my allusion, imperfect as it is. Remember Don Meredith and the Cowboys? It ain't over till the fat lady sings.

#Nima

Larry, I think the big picture that you've just mentioned is so important. And I don't know how important that is for the decision makers in the Trump administration or in the United States when it comes. You're just trapping yourself in a war in Ukraine, in my opinion. The United States is still trapped in Ukraine. They don't have a solution in Ukraine.

#Lawrence

And the money is still pouring in. And the CIA assistance is still pouring in. We're still doing what we were doing before, as is the EU for the most part. And you still have EU leaders in Brussels talking about, "Oh, we're almost there. We're almost there. Putin's about to crack."

#Nima

The second trap is the Middle East. And both sides, the two lobbies — the Ukrainian lobby and the Israeli lobby — are so powerful in Washington. They have a lot of leverage.

#Lawrence

They have a congressman or two congressmen, the Vindmans. Is it one or two? I think it's one. I think one got beaten or something like that. But anyway, they're there, and there are lots of others behind them.

#Nima

We know that mostly the Democratic Party is supporting it.

#Lawrence

Yes. Biden lives. Biden lives. He even got people talking about this new guy as being Obama-esque. Who is this? Ossoff? Jon Ossoff, I think. He's Obama-esque. When I read that, I say, oh, God forbid. We do not need another Obama. What we need is someone with enough courage to rule his political party from the perspective of an FDR, the way he ruled his party, and someone who's smart enough to bring around him, as FDR did, some very competent people to run the programs that needed to be run. First female Secretary of Labor in our history, for example, Frances Perkins, who is as much responsible for the New Deal as the president himself.

That's what we need, someone willing to take on the establishment and defeat it, or at least set it back. And the establishment in this case has a right wing called Israel. I don't mean that in a conservative-liberal sense, but I mean it has a wing of its entire establishment that's called Israel. Someone has got to come in with the cojones, with the courage, with the brains, with the electricity politically of an FDR and set this ship right, or the ship's going to founder. I don't see anyone in sight. I don't see anyone in sight. No one making noises like they might be capable of doing that. So where do we go? There is a historical precedent for where we go. Down the tubes.

#Nima

Larry, I know that it's not fair to ask this question. It comes from, you know, maybe you need to speculate—definitely you need to speculate on that. But what is Israel? What would Israel be the moment Netanyahu decides to step down?

#Lawrence

Worse. I think worse. I think you'd have leaders who would defy the United States knowing full well they could get away with it and use every bit of leverage Israel has to finish off the targets that it can finish off, mainly being Gaza. And that would trigger what you were just talking about earlier—Iran's full commitment to the defense of that, of Gazans, of the Palestinians, of the idea of a

Palestinian state. Arabs would be forced to increasingly join ranks with Iran, I think, maybe not physically, but at least philosophically and in the diplomatic world. And eventually, they would triumph.

And what would that leave Israel? It would have two choices. One, go down swinging and burn in hell, or elect a leadership that would transform. I don't see these people anywhere, but that would transform Israel into a truly democratic state open to all. Go back, for example, to the UN resolutions about right of return and such, and build a state that is called Israel-Palestine or Palestine-Israel, or this thing Joseph Avassar is doing. He's getting ready to—he's collecting money right now to run the election, elect a federal structure above what might be at that time the Palestinian Authority or whatever they come up with.

And Hamas and Israel, such as it is, and let that federal structure gradually absorb the lower structures in the sense that it becomes, from being a federal entity that can only deal in these constitutional issues—it would have a constitution, for example, for the first time in an Israeli state's history, or whatever you want to call that configuration—and then it gradually evolves into a single-state solution that would be for everyone and a true democracy, as far as one can be a true democracy in this world today.

That's the only solution I see for Israel that maintains it in the region with a reasonably safe haven for a lot of Jewish Israelis. But it would be a reasonably safe haven for a lot of people other than that too, like Christians and Palestinian Arabs and Arabs in general, and others that wanted to live there. It would have to buy that. It would have to govern itself that way in order to persist and exist. Otherwise, it's going down the tubes, in my view. I might not live to see it, but chalk that up when you come to my grave and tell me, "Larry, it happened."

#Nima

I think, looking at the history of the British Empire, all the projects they had are collapsing one after another. Tell me about it. Israel would be the last British project to collapse.

#Lawrence

How about the project of America? Now, granted, they abandoned it, tried twice to take it back, failed, and abandoned it. But it is their project. In many senses, it's their project. And it's on the verge of failing too. The British didn't leave a grand legacy. Unlike certain historians—Niall Ferguson, for one—however he says that, came to State and gave a briefing one time. And I remember sitting in the back and thinking, man, you are a premier apologist for the British Empire. Wrote a book or several on that, too, about how, you know, the British Empire might have stained itself in places like Crimea and South Africa and so forth. But overall, it was a force for good in the world. And

overwhelmingly, it was a force for good. And I'm sitting in the back of the room going, hmm, tell me that story again. But he's an apologist for the British Empire. I think that British Empire did irreparable damage all over the globe.

#Nima

Basically, all we have today in the Middle East—all this death and destruction that is happening—is the outcome of their empire.

#Lawrence

Look at those borders drawn by the English. Or the French. Syria in particular, in a bargain with the British. Who were Sykes and Picot? They designed the region.

#Nima

Larry, just imagine if they could do something in Iran to divide Iran into provinces. That would be the end. The project would be the most successful project.

#Lawrence

That would be peace in our time. That's the way they look at it. Yeah, exactly.

#Nima

Thank you. Thank you so much, Larry.

#Lawrence

Just one final question for you. Go ahead. Were that to come true, where do you think Israel would go then? Yeah. The regional hegemon par excellence. I think so. Oh, Riyadh? Yes. Ah, Amman? Yes. Ah, Baghdad? Yeah, restoring our rights in the historic capital, Baghdad. All the way across the Red Sea in Africa, up to Ankara? Yeah. The wildest dreams of the Zionists, the true Zionists.

#Nima

Maybe the true Zionists were the founders of the British Empire.

#Lawrence

Go back there and dig deep. You might find that.

#Nima

Thank you. Thank you, Larry, for being with us today. A great pleasure, as always.

#Lawrence

Take care.

#Nima

Take care. See you on Friday.