

Larry Johnson: Hormuz on Fire: Is the US-Israel-Iran War Starting NOW?

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#Nima

Forty minutes ago, we learned from the Middle East, from the UAE, that drone and missile alerts were activated in the UAE. It's basically related to what's going on in the Strait of Hormuz and the control of the IRGC. It seems that they're using some sort of ships or passing through using non-designated routes in the Strait of Hormuz, even though they have to use the designated routes in that area. And it was maybe some sort of drone going in that direction, and that was the main reason for these alerts.

But something's going on, Larry, in the Persian Gulf, in the Strait of Hormuz. One of them is the way that the United States—I think it's totally related to what has happened with the recent visit of Marco Rubio to Kuwait, Bahrain, and the UAE. They're trying to make some sort of division within the Arab states, the GCC countries. And what's so important is that he didn't go to Saudi Arabia, or Qatar, or Oman. And you see, he's making some sort of move, because this is a political move on their part. And basically, they're putting a lot of pressure on the Omani government.

#Guest

Well, it's a stupid political move. I mean, Kuwait, Bahrain, they're irrelevant. They're like oil spots in the Persian Gulf. They have no military. They have no significant oil supply. You know, it's really sort of a sign of desperation on the part of the United States. If anything, it's a rejection of the MOU. What Marco Rubio did was in violation of the MOU. One part said, stop doing the threatening. Well, this is an indirect way of threatening Iran. And this was not about promoting peace at all. The United States wants to keep the war going. The only good news is the United States is now in a real dilemma that if they spark this war back off, they're going to create a major energy crisis for themselves here in the United States. And it's, you know, I don't want to see that, but that apparently is what Rubio is doing. This made absolutely no sense. If you're involved with negotiations, you have a coordinated message as a government. Donald Trump's government is a schizophrenic mess and working at cross purposes.

#Nima

Even with the political pressure on the Omani government, I don't see that much leverage for the Omani government when it comes to the Strait of Hormuz. It's totally, basically run and controlled by the IRGC. So what sort of change can the Omani government bring to this scene?

#Guest

Well, has the Omani government said anything? No. Okay, so all you have is this one. There was one statement put out, and it appears that that may have been from a random government official as opposed to the official policy of the central government. So this is, you know... uh, he can't rule out that the United States continues to use its intelligence organization, you know, through the CIA, to try to, you know, recruit people that will do things that will, you know, contradict the peace process, the MOU. The United States doesn't want this war to end, that's for sure.

#Nima

Doesn't want the war to end?

#Guest

No, no. You know, this ceasefire and everything is temporary. They want to destroy Iran. The United States is not interested in having a modus vivendi with Iran. And from that standpoint, I hope the Iranians understand that. The United States wants out of this right now because it's in trouble. It's facing the loss of the oil supply coming out of the Persian Gulf. That has pushed U.S. reserves for creating diesel and aviation fuel to the lowest. Right now it's a 13- to 18-day buffer. And then after that point, you're dependent upon whatever a refinery can produce. And we're getting ready to come into the hurricane season here in the United States, and those refineries are down along the coast.

If we get a hurricane that wipes out just one of those refineries, the U.S. economy will be dead because both the ability to supply aviation fuel and diesel fuel will be severely hampered. And right now what they're trying to provide is—they're still losing ground. They're not building up stores of that fuel. It's just the opposite. So you've got to ask yourself why. Why then do you send Marco Rubio out to try to stir up problems like this? And, you know, apart from that, the UAE is, you know, it's larger and has been wealthier. But again, the UAE right now is in grave financial straits simply because their sources of income have been cut off. You know, the oil that they were shipping out through Fujairah is not going out through Fujairah.

The banking sector has basically relocated to Singapore. The money that was coming in there has moved off to Singapore. The trade going through Jebel Ali, the second largest free trade zone in the world, that's dead. The real estate market, dead. Tourism industry, dead. So, you know, it's been that way now for about four months, and it's going to be that way for five months, until the United

States agrees to actually settle the war and agree to Iran's terms. Otherwise, the Strait of Hormuz is probably not going to be operating in a full, free-flowing manner. And I was just going to look here to see what's the flow out there right now. Do you look at marinetraffic.com? Yeah. Have you looked at that site?

#Nima

Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

#Guest

Yeah, so looking at it right now, there's not, yeah, no ships. It looks like one ship that's headed for Singapore. It's just off of Kemp's Island. I see one other ship that's headed as well, way over by CITIC. And so there's virtually no traffic going through the Strait of Hormuz right now.

#Nima

Larry, when it comes to these three countries, basically right now in communication with the United States, and Rubio went there—Qatar, I'm talking about the UAE, Bahrain, and Kuwait—none of these countries are geopolitically or regionally important for Iran. I have never heard of them as being... UAE was important because Iran was somehow using the financial system of the UAE before the war started.

#Guest

But in the aftermath of the war, and during the war, you see the total disconnection between the two sides, Iran and the UAE. But when it comes to Bahrain or Kuwait, they're not important at all for Iran—militarily, economically—they're not important to anybody other than themselves. I mean, really. So you go and try to enlist them in creating opposition to the Saudis and Qataris—they're not important players. Bahrain thought it was important because of hosting the Fifth Fleet headquarters, but that infrastructure has been damaged almost beyond repair, or if it's going to be repaired, it's going to be quite expensive.

#Nima

Yeah, the new report in the Wall Street Journal shows that, you know, the damage to the U.S. Navy's Fifth Fleet in Bahrain was, you know, so huge. And it says that the strikes damaged the command and headquarters, at least a dozen other buildings, and two satellite—it's GSC-52B satellite communication terminals. And the estimation is something like 400 million dollars, not including debris removal, fortification work, and replacement.

#Guest

It's more than that. I know that you're reporting what the Wall Street Journal said, but my understanding is one of those satellite systems alone was well over a billion dollars, because one of them is involved in something that's very highly classified. And all I know is it's highly classified. This site is highly classified, and it's really caused significant damage to the U.S. national security infrastructure. Now, what that is, I don't know. But, as I said, significant damage was done there in Bahrain. You know, they don't have a military force to speak of. All they have is location. And right now, they can't do anything to force or compel Iran to open the Strait of Hormuz to just any kind of traffic.

#Nima

It says the two destroyed satellite communications terminals were estimated to cost about \$20 million. I don't know how.

#Guest

Yeah, they're wrong.

#Nima

Larry, do we have any sort of understanding of what's going on in the southern part of Lebanon? We have a new sort of war happening between the two sides in Beit Yahun, with four casualties on the part of the Israelis. It seems four of them were wounded and one of them was killed. On the part of Hezbollah, it seems the same way—it was even worse on the part of Hezbollah. But the two sides are fighting right now, and I don't know what the tolerance of MOU is about the issue in Lebanon, because there is no ceasefire if they continue. And we had the Israeli minister coming out and saying that they don't want the entire territory of Lebanon. And right now they have 100% of Gaza, and they're gonna keep it. But when it comes to Lebanon, it's not the entire territory of Lebanon. It's maybe his assumption that it's just the southern part of Lebanon that's gonna be part of Israel. And he said he doesn't care about what Donald Trump is talking about—they're gonna say no to whatever Donald Trump is suggesting.

#Guest

Well, for now, they'll say no. And then if Donald Trump pushes back and starts withholding U.S. material assistance, Israel is going to be in a real bind. I mean, the Israelis, you know, when you live in a dependent relationship, when you're dependent upon others for your survival, going out of your way to piss them off is usually not a good strategy, necessarily. By that I mean, for example, the Israeli comments regarding Turkiye. Turkey, or Turkiye, is the major supplier of oil to Israel. What do they do without it? And Turkiye lets it flow because Erdogan is just such a corrupt leader. He's taking his share of money off of that, so he doesn't care what happens.

But if he finally wakes up and says he's not going to be disrespected by Israel and cuts them off, Israel's got a problem. And similarly, Israel is dependent upon the United States to keep its military operating. And so if Trump says, oh, you know, the fastest way to get on Trump's bad side is to insult him and just say, we're not going to listen to you, you can't tell us what to do. So yeah, this is not a good move by Israel. But Iran is not controlling Hezbollah. Iran can ask Hezbollah not to do certain things, but you're going to see Hezbollah, they're going to retaliate and continue fighting. They'll respond and react to what Israel's doing. And that's why they ambushed that column that started trying to move north.

#Nima

Do you think that the United States is talking with GCC countries to replace those satellites, that equipment, or those weapons that were destroyed in the American bases in the region?

#Guest

No, no, no, that's—no, they're trying to—Rubio's job is to try to see if we can get the—create an organized front to push back against Qatar and Saudi Arabia, who are—basically, they're going to—ask the United States to leave their countries. They've aligned themselves with the initiative being pushed by Pakistan for a regional security group that will consist of Egypt, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Pakistan, and Qatar will be part of that. You know, Kuwait, I'm sure they might welcome Kuwait and Bahrain with the right attitude. But, you know, those two countries are, you know, they're just Western whores, nothing more. And the same applies to the UAE.

#Nima

What would be the alternative for the United States to help Israel in the region? Is that going to be Jordan? Is that going to be Israel itself being used? Because it seems that the United States is really thinking about putting the bases in Israel.

#Guest

Well, they're going to try to relocate some to Israel, sure. But, you know, again, that starts defeating the point, right? The reason you had these bases in— you've got Al Udeid in Qatar— is you're only a few hundred miles from Iran there. When you go to Israel, all of a sudden you've got more than a thousand miles you've got to travel, and the average combat aircraft is going to have to be refueled twice just to get over there to the border of Iran to launch a cruise missile. So it just, you know, having bases in Israel doesn't do anything other than make Israel now a bigger target going forward.

#Nima

I think I don't see the Al Udeid base getting back to what it was before the war started, Larry. Because they know that the Americans getting back to their bases, to Al Udeid Air Base, is going to be a huge challenge, sort of a problem, which we know because the fight is going on. Even in the best-case scenario, it would be the United States leaving the fight, not fighting directly with Iran, and supporting the Israelis in the region, which is the same case with the Israelis.

Here we had the Israeli defense minister saying that the commander of Iran's Quds Force, which is Qani, has recently issued a letter and has recently been issuing numerous threats toward Israel. It seems that the image of a collaborator suited him much better than this ridiculous barrage of threats. Either way, if Iran attacks Israel, it will be its biggest mistake. Here, no hormones or firing at the population will help it. Nothing will stop us. Our forces are prepared to finish the job. Israeli forces are prepared to finish the job. And this is the mindset on the part of Israelis.

#Guest

Was that Katz?

#Nima

Yeah, Israel Katz.

#Guest

No, he's an idiot. I mean, really, not a very smart man at all, and with limited military experience. And look how well their attack on Iran worked out. You know, they failed to defeat Iran. You know, they ended up killing several thousand Iranians, including top leaders. And all it did was strengthen Iran's resolve to resist Israel.

#Nima

That's why my understanding is that if they get back to the American bases, American forces, let's put more equipment, more satellites, they're going to be complicit in the attacks with the Israeli attacks on Iran. And they're going to get hit again and again by Iranian forces. So the role of the United States, they have to be there, Larry, because if Israel wants to attack, in the case of Lebanon, my opinion is sooner or later we're going to have a big fight in southern Lebanon. Because it's so much out of control—Israeli behavior, I'm talking about.

#Guest

Well, but you're talking about Iran responding to what's going on.

#Nima

Yeah, Iran is responding to Israel.

#Guest

Yeah, at some point, I think the Iranian authorities would view the failure to abide by the terms of the MOU. The MOU agreed that there would be a ceasefire in Lebanon and that the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Lebanon would be protected. So I don't know what Iran's next move will be in order to make that happen. I think Hezbollah right now seems quite well positioned to defend itself against the Israelis, except for the airstrikes. So maybe one thing Iran could do would be to strike Israeli air bases to render them incapable of supporting airstrikes in southern Lebanon.

You know, for right now, Iran appears willing to sort of hold its anger and continue on this path because they've got the support of Pakistan and China, and even Saudi Arabia has stepped up to provide the \$12 billion that the United States is refusing to provide. So we'll just have to wait and see. The odds that Israel is going to back off and stop, I think, are low. So you're right. Ultimately, I think it's going to lead to renewed combat or attacks between Israel and Iran.