

Iran ASS*SSINATION Plot BLOWN, Russia's New Weapon SHOCKS West | Larry Johnson

Larry Johnson joins at 19:11 to cover the headlines of the shocking decapitation strike attempt in the lead up to the funeral for Iran's slain Supreme Leader, as well as new military developments in the Ukraine conflict changing everything! <https://www.youtube.com/@UCewRbK22LRnNi6N3EcGjbow> <https://sonar21.com/> https://www.youtube.com/@counter_currents_channel LIKE the video and Subscribe for more in-depth geopolitical analysis Leave your thoughts in the comments below! Support the Channel: Patreon: <https://www.patreon.com/dannyhaiphong> SUBSCRIBE ON RUMBLE: Rumble: <https://rumble.com/c/DannyHaiphong> Follow Me on Social Media: Twitter: <https://twitter.com/DannyHaiphong> Telegram: <https://t.me/DannyHaiphong> Support the channel in other ways: <https://www.buymeacoffee.com/dannyhaiphong> Substack: chroniclesofhaiphong.substack.com Cashapp: \$Dhaiphong Venmo: @dannyH2020 Paypal: <https://paypal.me/spiritho>

#Danny

Welcome back to the show, everyone. The big news is the huge revelation that has just come out that Iran thwarted an assassination attempt on its top diplomats, Chief Negotiator Mohammad Ghalibaf and Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi, during talks with the United States to end the war. Now, back in April, Iranian security forces notified Ghalibaf's plane of an intelligence plot that indicated Israel was going to attack the plane on the way back from Islamabad negotiations, two U. S. officials told the New York Times, and that Israel's fighter jets had actually entered Iran's airspace from Iraq. The plane made an emergency landing in northeastern Iran, and Ghalibaf and the rest of the negotiating team traveled back to Tehran by land.

The U.S. takes credit for tipping off Iran about Israel's intentions. Now, this comes as Yemen today announced that they intercepted a Saudi warplane that was approaching an Iranian civilian aircraft inside Yemeni airspace, responsible for the 200 stranded, wounded, and sick passengers on a plane landing at Sana'a International Airport, forcing the Saudi aircraft to leave the area. The statement by Yemen's Ansarallah warned that any repeated violation of Yemeni airspace would be met with a full response targeting Saudi airports and vital sites on land. And elsewhere in the Ukraine conflict, Russia has stepped up the use of a new unmanned aerial vehicle, a drone that it has just brought into service in the conflict—five jet-powered drones with the capability of going.

#Danny

Over 500 kilometers per hour with a 90-plus kilogram payload, mimicking a ballistic missile and absolutely thwarting Ukraine's own drone interceptors, leading Ukraine and, of course, NATO to deplete their missile interceptors on these drones. Having a major impact on the conflict as we

speak. Everyone, hit the like button. We're going to get more into these stories as the show progresses. That helps boost this program in YouTube's algorithm. We may have a special guest as well coming on too, should Alexander be able to make it or not. But here is the first story in full. So this comes from the New York Times, the Times of Israel citing the New York Times, that during talks on ending the war, the U.S. warned Iran that Israel might try to kill its top negotiators.

Now, the report cited current and former U.S. officials alleging that they believe Israel may have been planning to kill top Iranian negotiators in the weeks following the April 8th ceasefire that halted the war. Now, this shouldn't come as a surprise. We had Mohammed Marandi on these planes. Remember, he went to the Islamabad negotiations as a media representative, and he warned that he might not be able to come back from these negotiations because there were plots to possibly take these planes down. So, in light of these concerns, U.S. officials asked their counterparts across the region to warn Tehran that Israel may try to target Mohammad Ghalibaf and Abbas Araghchi.

This means, of course, the mediators, especially those countries—Qatar, Pakistan, etc.—that were involved in the talks. Officials quoted by the Times noted that when the war began on February 28th, and as Israel worked its way through killing much of Iran's senior leadership, Araghchi and Ghalibaf could have been legitimate targets. Now, Ghalibaf and Araghchi were both targeted in those initial February 28th strikes, with Ghalibaf being said to have just made it out with his life and was very lucky to have lived through those horrific illegal strikes that took so many Iranian civilians over the course of just several days.

Once the ceasefire was declared in early April, the two men were selected to represent Iran's position in ceasefire negotiations, which U.S. officials say any attempt to kill them would have likely blown up the talks. Well, no, no shit. They would have blown up the talks. This has been a major problem since the very beginning, of course, of the hostilities—not even just from February 28th, but, of course, back during the June 2025 12-day war, where the United States and Israel used negotiations as an excuse to conduct decapitation strikes on Iranian leadership. So we continue. Iranian security forces were notified. So I talked to you about the plane. The plane had to come down. An emergency landing had to be done for Ghalibaf's plane because Israel had already started the operation.

And it's highly likely, as this report indicates, that the U.S. knew about it. And who knows? The U.S. might have actually been a part of it as well. In March, while fighting was still ongoing, a Pakistani official told Reuters that Israel had taken both Araghchi and Ghalibaf off its hit list after Pakistan requested Washington not target them. At that time, the official said Islamabad had warned the U.S. that if either or both of the men were killed, there would be no one else to talk to about negotiating a ceasefire. Hence, the U.S. asked the Israelis to back off. Now, in terms of the validity of the story, I will say what is valid is that the Israelis, with likely U.S. support, attempted another decapitation strike.

And with the July 4th funeral—and that will be days long—of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, the slain supreme leader who was assassinated during this war, with that now imminent, coming up in just a matter of hours, it is now Iran on high alert for any potential violation of the ceasefire, including an attempt to decapitate Iranian leadership at this funeral. There are concerns about this. There are so many concerns about this that there are sources close to Iran's chief negotiator, again, Mohammad Ghalibaf. It has been reported that a source close to the negotiator said that Iran—and this actually sounds like this source could be Israeli, we don't know, because we've heard this from Israel so many times—but that Iran is actively contemplating a preemptive strike against Israel.

The military is on its highest alert right now, with hundreds of missiles and drones prepared for a coordinated attack. The source said intelligence suggests Netanyahu, facing October elections, may attack Iran again to boost domestic standing. With a new U.S. amphibious deployment in the Gulf, and Tehran viewing J.D. Vance's admission that a ceasefire is just a tactical pause as proof that U.S. diplomacy is nothing but a bluff, Iran sees the posturing as an existential threat. Iran is done waiting. Military bases in the Gulf have already been hit hard before. This time, the focus shifts to Israel—100 missiles and drones in a single, overwhelming strike. Simultaneous closure of the Strait of Hormuz and Bab al-Mandab Strait is on the table.

Iran is ready. And Iran has to be ready. Let's be quite clear that the threat of war is by no means over. Now, the threat of U.S. victory and Israeli victory could very well be said to be over, but that doesn't mean that the United States and Israel are not going to try something very soon. Benjamin Netanyahu and the Israelis have been very vocal, unlike Israel—you know, unlike the United States, unlike Donald Trump, who will manipulate the markets and say one thing, "Oh, Iran is doing everything we want them to do right now," which is his statement as of today, versus, "Oh, we're going to hit them hard. We're going to—what did he say in recent weeks? He said the Islamic Republic of Iran will no longer exist."

One day he threatens and then maybe actually conducts limited strikes. And another day he says, Iran's doing everything we want. We're friendly with Iran. Everything is going well. Israel is a completely different story. Israel is singing one tune, and that is a return to war. And this story about Mohammad Ghalibaf and Abbas Araghchi being targeted at maybe the most sensitive time for the United States. Remember, at this time, the United States needed desperately to get out of the war. This was months ago now, where oil prices were through the roof. Inflation has been through the roof. The United States had just taken an absolute beating to their military bases.

And Israel had absolutely no capacity, with the United States, to achieve the objectives of destroying the Iranian government. So what had to happen was a ceasefire, a pause. And that is what the United States has wanted to pursue in part, but has been having trouble with the sticky problem of what it means to take another pause right now when you are clearly on the side of defeat. Remember, during the 12-day war, the United States pretended like it wasn't a party to the conflict until Operation Midnight Hammer, which dropped some so-called bunker buster bombs from B-2

bombers and supposedly obliterated Iran's nuclear enrichment program. Of course, all of that was just a myth, and Iran has been enriching uranium ever since.

But the fact of the matter is that the United States played as if it was a mediator or as if it was only mildly assisting Israel in Israel's operation. And Israel, of course, took the brunt of the beating. This war was far different. This war targeted U.S. military assets directly — the Fifth Fleet gone, radars, air defense radars gone, THAAD interceptors gone, 40-plus aircraft gone. This is how Donald Trump talks about Iran. But truthfully, it is the United States which has lost billions upon billions, tens of billions, maybe even hundreds of billions of dollars' worth of U.S. military assets. And that is why this war had to be paused. Now, Israel is very much looking to go back to war — yes, in part because of Netanyahu's political career, but it's not just Netanyahu's political career.

We have to understand that Netanyahu is simply a manifestation of what Israel actually is. And there really is no political opposition that would stop the Israeli regime from wanting to pursue war with Iran. The truth of the matter is that Israel sees absolutely no way that it can achieve its objectives of Greater Israel with Iran in the picture. And truthfully, Israel doesn't have any capacity to achieve Greater Israel anyway. So that desperation, that realization, is causing Israel to become even more rabid, more warmongering, more genocidal in its actions.

And so therefore, war with Iran has to be on the table, even if Israel doesn't have the capacity to fight Iran on its own, making U.S. support absolutely critical. And what better way to gain U.S. support than conducting a decapitation strike on Iran's leadership and forcing Iran to hit Israel hard, therefore dragging the United States, no matter how reluctant it may be, into another weeks-long to months-long kinetic conflict with Iran at this juncture. There is no better way to do that than to try to once again eliminate Iran's leadership. Now, Iran's supreme leader, Mojtaba Khamenei, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei's son, is not even attending the funeral of his slain father.

And that is because there are legitimate reasons to believe that there will be more assassination plots in the wake. Now, Iran has done an incredible job in the last several months of tightening up its intelligence. We saw this after the attempts by rioters who were backed by the United States and Israel, who just laid waste to thousands of people's lives, disrupted the Iranian economy, and attempted to honestly foment what was a regime change operation that ultimately failed and ultimately led to the United States and Israel making the absolutely fateful and miscalculated attack on February 28th. It's because they couldn't get the job done.

The ways in which Israel and the United States generally like to get the job done with countries that they know they cannot take on militarily is by proxy and through covert action. When that ended, then the strikes came. And this is why you have Mojtaba Khamenei, the new Supreme Leader, not even attending his father's funeral. And there are many people who are attending that funeral, by the way. And they are, you know, we have independent journalists. I was invited. I ended up not being able to go. But nonetheless, there are going to be over 100 states represented. There are going to be days-long ceremonies.

It's going to be a massive rebuke and rejection of everything that the United States and Israel have done, once again demonstrating that even if the United States has the capacity and Israel has the capacity to try to continue the terror, continue the warmongering, they do not have the capacity to break Iran or to defeat Iran. And that's only getting worse, everybody. This is only getting worse. We are now having breaking reports that Iran has already announced with Oman a deal to manage the Strait of Hormuz. This is reported by The Cradle today. The Islamic Republic of Iran and the Sultanate of Oman have reached an agreement on the joint management and regulation of the traffic of the Strait of Hormuz, Iranian Parliament Speaker Mohammad Ghalibaf announced on July 3rd.

The announcement was made during a meeting with Chinese officials visiting Iran to attend the funeral of the late Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, killed by Israeli-U.S. strikes on February 28th, which are set to begin tomorrow, July 4th. During my visit to Oman a few days ago, based on Article 5 of the Memorandum of Understanding, we reached an agreement on organizing maritime traffic. He added that Tehran and Muscat are determined to implement this, and we will certainly consult the Persian Gulf littoral states as well. The Israelis are undoubtedly seeking to undermine the understanding between Iran and the U.S. However, the deterrent power of Iran and the region will prevent them from reigniting the war.

At the same time, we must reduce these tensions through a well-organized strategy and careful political measures. Ghalibaf also expressed appreciation for Beijing-Tehran relations and thanked Chinese officials for their cooperation. In the Strait of Hormuz, we resolved the issues affecting the passage of Chinese vessels as China stood by us during difficult times. He stressed the Islamic Republic will not allow any U.S. interference in the Strait. Now, what's really important is that Oman had already announced that service fees on shipping in the Strait of Hormuz will occur, and this agreement includes those fees. So this is big news because the United States has been trying to dangle Iran's own stolen assets in front of its face — three billion, mind you, three billion measly U. S. dollars.

It wouldn't be so measly to Iran, but three billion U.S. dollars is really a drop in the bucket compared to the economic damage that the United States has caused just in this war alone, which is said to be, I believe, in the hundred-plus billion-dollar range. Nonetheless, Iran has now cemented an agreement with Oman that has the Strait of Hormuz under their joint managed control, where obviously they're going to manage their respective regions of the Strait of Hormuz that hug their borders, and they're going to be charging a collective fee for these services, in contradiction to the Trump administration, which has said, hey, Iran, we'll pay you three billion dollars' worth of your own stolen assets in order to drop this fee that they're using negotiations over the memorandum of understanding, which we've covered on this show is not negotiable.

Right. These are not negotiable points. This is an MOU. This is a memorandum that says these are the basis for any talks at all. You meet these, or we don't talk. And that has been Iran's consistent

position. The United States, of course, has had no consistent position on this matter. And so it looks like the United States and Israel are trying to start another kind of war. It is likely that we are going to see war on many other fronts pop up in the coming weeks, including on the Yemeni front, where you already have Saudi Arabia saber-rattling with Yemen once again.

And this because, remember, Saudi Arabia still has a criminal blockade, a genocidal blockade backed by the United States on Yemen because of Ansar Allah's valiant resistance. And this deliberately targeted, in particular, this incident that happened just this morning, deliberately targeted an Iranian civilian aircraft that was breaking the blockade in order to assist sick passengers on what looked like a medical civilian aircraft. Oh, look at who it is. We have our special guest here today. Alexander couldn't join us, but we have Larry Johnson. Larry, how's it going?

#Larry Johnson

Yeah, I'm the guy that screwed you over yesterday. You said, "No, I'll be there," and then didn't show up.

#Danny

No, everyone's busy. This is a wild week.

#Larry Johnson

Well, that's true. I mean, I do my own scheduling, so it's not like I've got some team of people working with me. Yeah, me too. And you're always good about sending out reminders. And I literally looked at my schedule, and my brain registered 2 o'clock. I got to 2 o'clock and I realized, oh, shit, I have hosed Danny Haiphong.

#Danny

No worries at all. No worries at all. Well, we've already gotten started, but first, your comment on the story that I opened with, which was that the New York Times reported that U.S. officials believed, and now have confirmation, that Iran's negotiating team was targeted by the Israelis during the Islamabad talks. And that this has been a longstanding issue, with the U.S. supposedly saying the Israelis should not participate in and should take Ghalibaf and Abbas Araghchi off their hit list. What do you make of these?

#Larry Johnson

Well, I'm wondering, why is that being reported now? That story is like two months old. Pepe Escobar and I talked about it two months ago. So it's like, all right, so you've discovered that the sun rises in the east, huh?

#Danny

Yeah, that's breaking news headline right there.

#Larry Johnson

You know, in fact, I had an exchange with Professor Morandi back then. I was advising him at the end. I said, hey, hopefully you guys are taking some precautions about getting home, because I wouldn't put it past the Israelis to try to whack you. And, in fact, they did. They altered their return route. They ended up landing in one place, taking a train. So, you know, this is the Israeli method of operation, you know, their M.O. So you're looking at right now, the sort of new one is, oh, Mossad's going to kill the Ayatollah, the new Ayatollah. And you're going, I mean, everybody's talking about it. I did a couple of podcasts last night with your buddy Suleiman Ahmed. You know, he's obsessed with it.

Mario Nawfal, he's obsessed with it. And, you know, I can't make the argument, oh, the Israelis are not that crazy to do something like that. No, because the crazy argument doesn't hold water. They are that crazy. But, you know, the circumstances right now surrounding this seven-day memorial service, funeral service, commemoration, whatever you want to call it, you've got 100 nations there. You've got Medvedev. You've got the Chinese sending a high-level delegation, the head of the Communist Party. You've got India, Armenia, Pashinyan, of all things, of Armenia is there. I'm not sure about Aliyev of Azerbaijan, but the Azeris at least have sent a delegation, in part simply because the Ayatollah was Azeri.

He wasn't Persian. So, if Israel were to try something that egregious right now, it would end up uniting the world against them beyond what the world already is against them. But you come back to, okay, you kill one guy. He's not the glue holding Iran together. And I think another action like that would result in Iran continuing to hit Israel with missiles until Israel was destroyed. I don't think they'd stop this time. And some can make the argument that Iran, you know, shot itself in the foot by stopping in mid-April. They should have just continued, because by not continuing, they've actually given Israel breathing space to conduct its military ops in Lebanon.

#Danny

You know, I don't know what it's worth, Larry, but we also have reports, and this would all kind of align with the broadness of this funeral. This, what seems to—I mean, it's a well-timed report on the April talks, given that you do have this huge gathering—that it would be something that Israel, I'm sure, is thinking about targeting as well. And you have Channel 14 News, the Israeli outlet—I don't know what it's worth—but it is saying also that Gulf countries at this very moment are incredibly concerned about the state of this deal, the state of the MOU, and that it is opposing—they believe Washington is neglecting Gulf allies. And they say that there's sharp criticism right now of the United States' policy behind closed doors, fearing that they will have to pay the price for whatever final

agreement actually comes into being. What do you make of this? I know you've been on the beat of how the Gulf countries are doing, managing—what is it, the United States attempting to snatch victory from the jaws of defeat here?

#Larry Johnson

Well, number one, the three countries—Kuwait, Bahrain, United Arab Emirates. Anybody surprised by that? The head of the UAE, or the various emirs that run the UAE, they've been Israeli whores for decades. You know, they're very closely integrated with the Israeli security and intelligence units, so their voicing this kind of concern is not a surprise at all. But the thing they have to deal with is the closure of the Strait of Hormuz, and then the subsequent bombing of their port of Fujairah that sits on the Gulf of Oman has really hurt them financially.

So they're no longer in the strong financial position they once were. We are starting to get now with sort of Iran opening the Strait of Hormuz. You're starting to get some ship movement out of Iran to Jebel Ali, which is the largest free trade port in the world. So that's the first time I've seen some ships either going in or going out of there in four months. That's meaningful. Bahrain and Kuwait, you know, they're really irrelevant. You know, they don't like it, too bad. What are they going to do? They have no military power.

Bahrain was host to the U.S. Fifth Fleet headquarters. They're moving out, they're not going back. That place has been blown to hell. So Bahrain's leverage with the United States, you know, the passengers say, "Hey, if you don't do X, Y, or Z, we're going to, you know, not let you use these sites." In fact, Bahrain, before this war, actually did have enormous leverage over the United States because one of the—let's call it communication sites—it's a site that communicates with satellites. It's tied into some sort of space defense military capability. That's all I've known about it. And that got blown up. And once that's blown up, all of a sudden, you know, they no longer—you know, they could have used that as leverage in the past. Now they don't have that as leverage.

So the key players with respect to going forward are Qatar and Saudi Arabia. And again, Qatar's leverage was based in part on Al Udeid Air Force Base, the largest base in that whole region. When Iran took out the radars there and then also hit what was called the Combined Air Operations Center, the CAOC, basically the United States withdrew its forces. So the CAOC, which used to be located in Qatar at Al Udeid, is now located in South Carolina, I think. I've heard Shaw Air Force Base. So you have a de facto withdrawal of U.S. forces from the region. They can say, oh, if you don't do X, Y, Z, we're going to withdraw our forces. Well, your forces are already withdrawn. You're not in Bahrain. You're not in Qatar. So the U.S. leverage on that front has slipped dramatically.

#Danny

Yeah. And how does that affect any future attacks? Because it seems like Israel is chomping at the bit. I was talking earlier about how Netanyahu seems like every time he publicly talks now, he's

speaking about a future attack. Does this withdrawal impact future attacks? Would it mean that if the United States were dragged, or maybe appeared, or made it appear like it's being dragged back into war—even if it wants to go back to war—would it affect things, this withdrawal?

#Larry Johnson

Well, so the U.S., it's not just the withdrawal I talked about with Bahrain and Al Udeid. My understanding is that Pete Hegseth signed an order now more than a week ago.

#Larry Johnson

Bringing U.S. forces that were deployed there for the war, that were in place before the 28th of February. Those forces are now being withdrawn. So the air assets—F-35s, F-15s, F-16s, A-10s—and troops on the ground, specifically the 82nd Airborne and the 75th Ranger Regiment, are being withdrawn, or at least the orders were issued. And, you know, it's anticipated it's going to take, you know, three weeks, maybe four weeks to get that all done. And then there would be another wave of withdrawals.

So in the midst of this withdrawal, you're seeing a disengagement of the United States from its previous military posture. So Israel can't necessarily rely upon the United States being there to retaliate and escalate at the drop of a hat. The other thing I look at, though, is what I call the underlying bureaucratic support structure. More than a week before the attack on the 28th of February, the United States military, through the Pentagon's National Military Command Center, CENTCOM's Operations Center, and other units that monitored and dealt with drones, air operations, and naval operations, stood up what are called CATs—Crisis Action Teams. These Crisis Action Teams bring together all of the various military and also other non-military assets like the CIA and the National Security Agency.

And they put them in this, you know, operations center, and they were working, you know, 24/7—so 12 hours on, 12 hours off, seven days a week. So when you've got that kind of operation in place, they're doing the planning and ordering resources, et cetera. Now that's not happening. Now what's going on is they are down to working five days a week, eight-hour shifts—so just five to nine or nine to five, five days a week. So let's call it the war apparatus that was stood up to attack on the 28th of February. That's now inactive. So that's why I say, no matter what they claim, there's a buildup, I maintain what they're saying—the aircraft flying in are not building up, they're taking away. But we had another real curious comment yesterday. You may have heard it—they talked about, "Watch out now."

The Marines are on station. The USS Boxer is there. And I'm listening to that going, what's wrong with these people? The Boxer pulled out of San Diego on March 18th. Now, you know what? If those Marines had been in a rowboat, they would have been in the Persian Gulf by now, just by rowing themselves there. But instead, that USS Boxer, it arrived on station from March 18th. It was on

station by, like, April 26th. Why are they now coming out and claiming that this is some new deployment and some new capability, when in fact it's been on station there for the last two and a half months? So these games that are being played just tell you that the United States is trying to keep up a posture like, yeah, we're really here, you've got to watch out for us, when in fact we're withdrawing.

#Danny

Well, another possible point of withdrawal, Larry, is the announcement of this deal with Oman to manage the Strait of Hormuz. Now, as you know, the United States has dangled Iran's own stolen assets in front of it to the tune of just \$3 billion of, what is it, \$100 billion in stolen assets, to say to Iran that they need to drop this fee structure. But now it appears, as of today, that there is a deal between Iran and Oman to manage the Strait of Hormuz, and it includes these fees. Talk about what this means, and is the U.S. going to stand down from this demand that fees not be taken for shipping through the Strait?

#Larry Johnson

Well, you know, Iran had been in talks with Oman like this more than three weeks ago. So this is not so much a surprise move. It's just a reminder that this is not some spur-of-the-moment decision by Iran. The United States has been trying to get Oman to back off, get Iran to back off, and they're not going to back off. So, you know, Iran, if you go look at the MOU that the United States signed with Iran, paragraph 5 stipulates that it's only—now, let me read this to you—upon the signing of this MOU, the Islamic Republic of Iran will make arrangements, using its best efforts, for the safe passage of commercial vessels with no charge for 60 days only. And this safe passage is from the Persian Gulf to the Sea of Oman and vice versa.

OK, right there, the United States agreed that only the Islamic Republic of Iran will make the arrangements for these commercial vessels to get in and out of the Persian Gulf. They didn't say the Republic of Iran in consultation with Oman, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Turkey, whoever. No, it didn't say that. It didn't say the Islamic Republic of Iran in coordination with the United States will. It didn't say that. It said very simply that it is the Islamic Republic of Iran that will make arrangements for the safe passage of commercial vessels. That means Iran's in charge. That's where Iran came out with the Persian Gulf Strait Authority, PGSA. And they've got protocols.

And those protocols are: if you are a ship or a ship owner and you want to come in or out of the Persian Gulf, submit your application paperwork to the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps, and they'll give you a thumbs up or a thumbs down. That's how it's done. And notice that also in that MOU, it does not say that, hey, Iran, if you try to stop a ship from going through, we, the United States, have the right to retaliate and attack you. It doesn't say that. So that's why Iran went after

the ship, the Ever Lovely, a week ago today. That was well within its rights, because basically the United States acknowledged Iran's in charge of the safe passage of commercial vessels through the strait.

What most of the median Americans aren't asking is, why did Donald Trump feel the urgency to sign the MOU in order to get the Strait of Hormuz open? And the simple answer is, the United States, as Trump said at the G7 meeting, is going to be out of oil in four weeks. Now, he wasn't talking about oil that is refined to make gasoline. He's talking about the special oil with high sulfur content that comes out of the Persian Gulf, which U.S. refineries are set up to turn into diesel and aviation fuel. We could take the West Texas Intermediate, and yeah, that could be refined and turned into gasoline. The problem is, we don't have those refineries.

The refineries we have are structured, or built, or designed to deal with what's called sour crude, as opposed to sweet crude. And so the sour crude is the one that's got a lot of sulfur. And they have other special systems in place that get that sulfur out, actually take the sulfur, because that's another product that can be sold. It's got economic value. Right now, I looked at Chris Miller, or Chris Wright, the Secretary of Energy. He spoke, I think it was on March 18th, and really said, okay, we're now releasing 1.4 million barrels of oil per day from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve.

Well, when you do the math on that, that means the United States had, as of that date, 120 days left of supply. Well, guess what? Where are we in terms of number of days since then? We're at 111. Now today, 112. We've got eight days left. And when that hits, all of a sudden you're going to see dramatic spikes in the price of diesel and aviation fuel, which is going to put a further economic damper on the U.S. economy. So that's why Trump came out and said that. I mean, finally, you know, somebody got to him, briefed him, and explained how desperate the situation was. And so he said, holy shit, yeah, we've got to get this thing open.

#Danny

Well, Larry, now maybe we can talk about the Ukraine conflict, because since the last time you've been on, there was this massive Russian strike that is still being talked about to this day. And in particular, I wanted to ask you about this that came out in Euronews. It says the Ukrainian Air Force spokesperson has said that Russia has stepped up—wrong—

#Larry Johnson

Yeah, I got that wrong. Doesn't that say Iran and Oman? Always happens. Anyway, so here is...

#Danny

Here it is. Russia steps up use of jet-powered drones beyond the reach of Ukrainian interceptors. They're talking about the Geran-5, which is, I believe, the newest of the Geran series of drones,

which is wreaking havoc, especially in these massive attacks like we saw just about a night and a half ago. Could you talk about the significance of this? Russia seems to be experimenting with newer weaponry in these newer strikes on Kiev. And some have even said that now Russia may be pursuing still a war of attrition, but one that places increasing pressure on Kiev directly through bigger and bigger strikes on the capital. What's your take on this?

#Larry Johnson

Well, yeah. In fact, these strikes the other day, I know that—were you supposed to have Alexander Mercouris on now instead of me?

#Danny

Yeah, yeah, yeah. He was supposed to come on. He didn't end up coming, though, unfortunately.

#Larry Johnson

Yeah, well, okay, so I'll repeat some of the things he was saying the other day on his own broadcast. The Ukrainians got hit. There's a part of Kiev that is, you know, think of it like the Kremlin, you know, this walled area, this enclosed area that's sort of off-limits. Russia, in the previous four years, had never attacked that area. They did this time, big, you know, in a significant way. They took out major factories, production facilities that were involved with drone production, with guidance systems, with munitions. They hit two hotels where reportedly Western officials, NATO officials, were staying and reportedly were killed. And they hit the underground bunker where Volodymyr Zelensky normally would be hiding out, but he took off for Ireland when all this was happening. So Alexander Mercouris was saying that this very well could be laying the groundwork for the Russian invasion and recapture of Kiev, which would be in the Russian military plans.

And I think that's exactly right. Zelensky's threats against Belarus in the north will probably just give the Russians further justification, if not incentive, to establish, to put troops there, and they'll be better positioned to go into Chernihiv, another oblast. And so, in combination, their gaining control of Sumy and Chernihiv, they would be ideally positioned to push into Kiev. So this war—this war is moving decisively in Russia's favor, and yet we're doing it. The Western propaganda is so intense right now, describing how Putin's on the ropes, the Russian economy's a disaster, the military's prepared to revolt, that Russia's suffering double the casualties of Ukraine, which is just pure nonsense. This is an absolute demonstrable lie. But nonetheless, the West perpetuates and spreads these rumors in order to, I guess, try to encourage people to stay in the fight, keep throwing money at this bad boy, because the ones who are stealing that money haven't gotten their full share yet.

#Danny

Hmm. Larry, some have said that Russia has used, especially when it comes to its technical and technological military capacity, just 1%. And I'm wondering what you make of, you know, whether it was the Urozhnik then or now with the Geran-5 drones. What do you make of—it seems like there's always some panic that's being felt in the West about Russia's military capabilities. Maybe you can talk about the Geran-5, as well as what I've seen go around, especially on social media, those covering the conflict saying that, yeah, this is probably just about 1% of what Russia can actually do if it were to escalate its use of what it's been building up all of this time.

#Larry Johnson

Well, actually, I would argue the opposite. I would say the West has been downplaying Russia's capabilities or dismissing them as not genuine, not authentic, which is damn dangerous in my view. That's been one of the reasons, you know, you've seen these constant increased provocations with now, you know, Germany talking openly about going to war with Russia. They're not the only ones, with Starmer, you know, basically robbing the British public of much-needed money for war. Just, you know, simple things like repairing roads and infrastructure in Britain and devoting that money to build weapons, some mid-range missiles to be used to attack Russia.

And this is why Sergei Karaganov, he's a leading academic in Russia. He's the dean of the New School, which is, think of it as sort of a new version of Harvard in Moscow. But he's been talking about the fact that Europe has lost its fear of Russia, that that loss of fear is leading them to take more and more reckless actions, and that the failure to, if you will, reestablish the fear of tangling with Russia, that this could ultimately result in a nuclear exchange or the use of nuclear weapons on Europe. And, you know, Sergei said they might even come to need to use a tactical nuke in order to, you know, frighten Europe enough to say, you know, back the hell off, we don't want this.

So, you're correct in noting that Russia continues to develop and make great advancements in its technologies, both with drones and with missiles. Already, you know, Russia operates with hypersonic missiles—at least four or five varieties of hypersonic missiles. The West doesn't even have one proven hypersonic missile that functions in combat. So Russia continues to develop new technologies, new capabilities, and they're systematically applying those against Ukraine. And so, like right now, you know, if you go back to 2022, the Russians mounted one major operation against Mariupol. They captured Mariupol. They also retreated and gave up territory in Kharkiv and Sumy.

In 2023, the effort was focused mostly on retaking and capturing Bakhmut. In 2024, it was Avdiivka. The point was, there were not like multiple combat operations and pressures. I mean, they were fighting all along the line, but not with any intensity. It was usually isolated in one area. And the same in 2024, just Avdiivka. 2025, Pokrovsk. And that lasted into the start of 2026. Now in 2026, we're seeing a completely different activity level. Russia is operating in Sumy, in Kharkiv, in Donetsk,

in Zaporizhia, in Dnipropetrovsk, and in Kherson. And there are significant operations in each of those areas. Now, the primary one is Donetsk, and that is falling more rapidly under the complete control of Russia than many experts had anticipated.

#Danny

Well, Larry, speaking of nuclear weapons, we had Finland just a couple of weeks ago lift their ban on nuclear—what was it—nuclear hosting. And now the same goes for Lithuania, which is also moving to lift a nuclear weapons ban as well. This is coming as the NATO summit is just days away. It seems like no matter how bad the conflict gets, Europe—which I still believe takes orders from the United States in many ways—the U.S. is not really paying attention to this conflict right now in public. But how significant is it that, no matter how bad this conflict gets for those who are backing it, it seems like NATO itself is doubling down on nuclear provocation, let alone the Ukraine conflict that has laid the basis for that?

#Larry Johnson

Yeah, and that's one Russia's made clear. Not just Medvedev—Maria Zakharova made the comment the other day. These countries, they take these steps, they are making themselves targets and threats that Russia will deal with, and deal with force. They're not going to sit back and wait to see if they actually have a nuke and then decide to act. No, this is one where they will be preemptive. And the world, you know, the West will holler and scream about it, and Russia will say, basically, too fucking bad. We're not going to sit here and let you do that. You know, it's a reverse Cuban Missile Crisis as far as Russia is concerned. So this is, again, what Finland and Lithuania, Latvia—if they all go down this route, it's a route that will doom them as countries.

#Danny

Yeah, and I made the argument that the reason why—one of the big reasons why—Russia takes the kind of approach that it does is not because it doesn't have the capacity to, let's say, steamroll Ukraine and put the conflict completely out of order, uh, and, you know, end it once and for all. It's not that it can't do that, but that the level of destruction and the level of, uh, you know, absolute horrors that would have to go into that mean that it might not ever be able to bring Ukraine back into any kind of mutual relationship that is beneficial for it. And how many times has Russia said that they believe Ukrainians themselves are brothers and they share a kinship?

And so part of this, Larry, like all these countries that are bordering Russia, especially the Finlands of the world, they don't want to share that same relationship with Russia. And so it makes me wonder what, to any benefit, provoking Russia in this way could really bring, because it's almost as if they actually do believe the notion that Russia is just always bluffing and it's actually on the back foot against Ukraine. So why not just continue to poke Russia—poke the bear? But what do you make of this? Because to me, I see what Russia's doing in Ukraine not as some kind of weakness, but as a

very concerted, maybe a following of principles rather than a lack of capacity. But your thoughts? Well, again, the meme, the narrative that's being promoted in the West and that is being spread and repeated endlessly in Europe...

#Larry Johnson

About Russia as this ravenous imperial power bent on conquering and destroying Europe and taking control of the world, you know, that it's somehow rapacious, that it's worse than the Soviet Union. Now, at that point, you've got to step back and go, these people are delusional. Russia—it was not until NATO, in the 2008 conference, I believe, where they decided to push and expand NATO—that Russia then started rebuilding its armed forces. It wasn't building them up, and it certainly was not conducting military interventions in other countries around the world. And it has been one, as Scott Horton wrote in the book **Provoked**, it has been one provocation after another that really goes back 31 years, starting in 1995 with NATO creating a de facto headquarters in western Ukraine at Yavoriv.

So this constant portrayal of Russia as this aggressor, when their foreign policy has been just the opposite. You know, they're not the ones that blew up the Nord Stream pipeline. You know, they were actually seeking to build and foster economic relations with all these countries. You know, I was fortunate to spend quite a bit of time with General Abdi Aladinov. General Aladinov is a devout Muslim, you know, doesn't drink and performs the prayers five times a day. I mean, he is an authentic Muslim. Yet he is a fierce, fierce Russian nationalist. And it is this, I guess, this commitment to these fundamental values that the West finds so abhorrent. I think that's why the West wants to destroy Russia. Because if Russia succeeds in promoting this kind of mentality, it stands as a direct challenge to the degeneracy that dominates in the West.

#Danny

Yeah, well, there definitely is a clash of values, especially in particular to the kind of world order that Russia is wanting to see versus the one that the United States is trying to dominate and continue dominating. In particular, we have maybe your final thoughts on this, Larry. We have at this funeral that's happening in Iran right now for Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, we had Ghalibaf already as the envoy to China. He met with the Chinese delegation there, talked about wanting to move the partnership beyond just the basic commercial and economic ties to a greater strategic partnership, as well as, as you said earlier, Medvedev meeting with Iran as well.

These relationships for Iran have only gotten stronger, and it seems like these three countries are seeing eye to eye on a different kind of world order, which makes Russia, in particular, when it comes to the Ukraine conflict—not just the Ukraine conflict, but its very existence—very much a thorn in the side, given how critical it is to the world in terms of energy supply, but also the fact that it is a big country, one that is growing despite a war, and one with the political stability that, should there be no war against it, who knows, the sky could be the limit. But your final thoughts?

#Larry Johnson

Well, if Alexander Mercouris was here, he would comment, and he's made a very important point on this this week, or this past week, that Iran has really sort of stepped on the relationship with China. In some previous instances, you know, China provided aid, and then the Iranians turned around and sought business deals with the United States and shut out the Chinese. So it looks like, with this meeting with Ghalibaf and Chinese officials, that Iran's maybe come to its senses and realized there's no future with the United States for Iran.

The future for Iran is with China, and they better have as good a relationship with China as they could possibly have. So I think, you know, in the course of this funeral that will culminate on the 9th of July, we're not going to see much activity by Iran, even trying to, you know, crack down in the Persian, in the Strait of Hormuz. Now, I would simply note July 11 is the last day of the drawdown from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve for the United States. So that's going to be a potentially important date and mark the start of maybe some serious economic crisis in the West.

#Danny

Well, that brings us to the hour, everybody. I want to make sure that you know that in the video description below, after you hit the like button—because that will boost the show in the algorithm so more people can hear this conversation—I've also put Transition Protocol, which Larry co-hosts with Kafe Escobar and Zulfiqar Ali. Please do subscribe to that in the video description below, or the place where you can support this channel through Patreon. Larry, any final words for the audience before we end it here?

#Larry Johnson

Yep, you can also come visit me at sonar21.com and CounterCurrents, as well as my own, where I usually do one to two short monologues a week addressing some current issues. But no, like I said, again, I apologize for leaving you hanging yesterday. That was bad form on my part. I'm sorry.

#Danny

No, it happens. It happens. We cannot be perfect. And what's the saying? We can't let perfect be the enemy of the good. We all try to be as consistent as we can and be human as well. I'm going to put those other sources in the video description below as well, where you can follow Larry's work. And be sure to hit the like button before you go. I will be doing a July 4th program, and I will be announcing that shortly. Until next time, everybody, hit that like button, and I'll see you tomorrow. Bye-bye.