

US Strikes BACKFIRE as Iranians Declare War | Johnson & McGovern

Former CIA Analysts Larry Johnson and Ray McGovern discuss day three of renewed war as Iran an attack on the funeral for Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, and Kuwait & Bahrain attempt strikes on Iran with US support. 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/spiritofho> #iran #iranwar #trump #israel

#Danny

Welcome back to the show, everyone. As you can see, I'm joined by Larry Johnson and Ray McGovern returning to the show. First, let's get to the news. So yesterday was the final day of the funeral for Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and his family in Mashhad, Iran. During this time, there was a reported terror incident that occurred. A few Iranians were killed, I believe, from the security forces, but no further attacks came, and there was nothing that came of it at the funeral itself. But what did happen at the funeral was that 43 million Iranians ended up attending what was six days of ceremony, with many noting that, and of course Israel making up stories about Iran wanting to assassinate Trump, but there were chants of "We are the followers of Imam Khamenei, and we seek revenge."

Now, a gentleman, Donald Trump, today said after two days of strikes that now Iran is the one begging him to come to the table and talk, and that the United States has agreed to do so, but that the ceasefire is over. Iran has denied these claims entirely, saying they're just not true and there will be no talks until commitments are fulfilled. Uh, Larry, we're heading into the weekend. There are destroyers, there's an aircraft carrier, carriers lining up, getting closer to Iranian shores, threats of a renewed blockade. What do you make of what's happened over the last 72 hours, especially the last 24, as the United States said they chose diplomacy over strikes again?

#Larry Johnson

The United States said it chose diplomacy over strikes?

#Danny

That's what it said. They are talking to the Qatari mediators, the mediators in the background, but the ceasefire is over, says Trump.

#Larry Johnson

Yeah, a little bit of a contradiction in there. Look, this was all a staged provocation by the United States when it started. Let's see, we're Friday. So it started on Tuesday when they tried to put four ships, five ships through the Strait of Hormuz without following the Persian Gulf Strait Authority guidelines, protocols put out by Iran. And according to the MOU, the only country in the world, in the universe, that has the obligation, the responsibility to ensure safe passage of vessels through the strait is Iran. The United States signed off on that. And in response, or in tandem with the U.S. acknowledging Iran's primacy in the Strait of Hormuz, the Iranians issued those protocols. And the protocols stipulated that any ship wanting to pass the Strait of Hormuz must submit it.

They've got a website, an online application stipulating name of captain, name of ship, ownership of ship, destination of ship, cargo on board ship, and the crew. And, you know, basically Iran is using this as a backdoor embargo. Anything owned or associated with Israel in any shape or form would be denied so as to shut Israel down. Everybody else, though, can come on through. Well, instead of going along with that protocol, the United States encouraged even the Saudis and Qataris to tell the Iranians to screw off. We're going to do it on our own. They went through, and in the protocols, it states very clearly that ships that do not comply with the PGSA protocols will be denied passage and /or subject to use of force.

No surprise there. Iran did exactly what it said in the protocols. They didn't violate any law. They didn't violate any clause within the MOU. At no point in the MOU did the United States say, Iran, you cannot determine who gets to use the Strait of Authority. We will not accept that. No, it didn't say that. They didn't say that if you try to enforce your control, we're going to attack you. Didn't say that. But in fact, the United States, in violation of the first paragraph of the MOU, attacked, launched combat operations against Iran. Iran retaliated. So they had two rounds of this. Iran retaliated, then the U.S. retaliated, then the Iranians retaliated to the U.S. retaliation.

And since then, I haven't seen any additional evidence that the United States is going to escalate, fire back, because if they fire back, Iran's going to escalate. They've already, in that second round, Iran went from hitting bases in Kuwait and Bahrain to also going after the U.S. base at Al-Udeid in Qatar and the Jordanian base at Muwaffaq al-Salti. So, you know, I do know that Pakistan, with Qatar, has been busy behind the scenes trying to salvage talks, trying to get the Iranians and the United States back together in Islamabad. They were trying to do it for tomorrow. That hasn't come off. Maybe by Monday. We'll see. I personally think the Iranians would be advised to walk away from this. It's done. The United States is not a reliable negotiating partner.

#Danny

Well, Ray, we had 43 million Iranians attend the funeral of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, and that is quite a number given the country is 90 million. And it came as the United States was striking their country. What do you make of these simultaneous developments and what's been going on the last few days?

#Ray McGovern

Good question. I'm amazed that when Trump was told about this turnout, he was amazed. And he put it as saying, "I thought they were all against the government. My God." You know, I mean, I wish that were funny. Anyhow, if Mossad told Trump a couple of months ago that there was going to be a public insurrection in Iran because the people hated their government—well, I mean, they may have hated it, some of them may have hated it, but they don't hate it now. If that number is right, 43 million, that's a lot of people. Trump is lying again.

When he says the Iranians are really pressing him to restart the negotiations, I mean, fool me once, fool me twice. How many times has he said that? And it's not been true. So, like Larry, I don't think the Iranians are going to do anything with respect to real negotiations until the hostilities really stop. Now, if I'm correct, and Trump has said, okay, we're going to stop now, and now we're going to negotiate, I mean, what is there to negotiate? The main point, in my view, is something that Larry has been harping on for two weeks now, and that is, well, it's not only Larry, it's his good friend Donald Trump, right?

#Larry Johnson

Now, wait a second. What did I do to you, huh? Well, no, no.

#Ray McGovern

I'm saying that after you went to Donald Trump, he himself said, "We're running out of oil. My God, we're running out of oil. We got to get that Strait open." That's why I agreed to the MOU. Yeah. Oh, well. And that's sort of complicated. I think I understand that from Larry's various explanations, but it is the case that the U.S. desperately needs it so they can get some Saudi and other crude in there to make the kind of jet fuel and the kind of stuff that powers trucks and buses and stuff. So if that's still the case, well, Trump has just tried a couple more escalations. But now he's going to talk. Now he's going to persuade the Iranians to open the Strait? I don't think so. So it's a real kind of corner he's backed himself into, and God knows what he's going to do. Trump probably doesn't even know either.

#Danny

Yeah. And Larry, I wanted to bring this up as there was a bit of a pause. I mean, there were some reports that Kuwait and Bahrain—I didn't see these verified—supposedly tried to strike Iran with U.S. intel support. Nonetheless, this was what came out yesterday: that Israel has told the United States

that, conveniently, Iran is seeking a fresh plot to assassinate Donald Trump. And this came as CNN was reporting actively that the United States is trying to do a strike-pause pattern, meaning that behind the scenes the United States is trying to talk to the Iranians, with the U.S. striking and then pausing to avoid escalation and let diplomacy work. This is according to CNN. Larry, help us make sense of that. This appears to be a real troubling pattern where the United States escalates, can't escalate further without massive damage, catastrophe, crisis, and then pretends—or maybe, I don't even know if they believe they're pretending—to engage back into talks, often citing that this is leverage. How do you help the audience understand this?

#Larry Johnson

OK, there are several loose threads here, and I'll see if I can weave them together to resemble something coherent. Number one: now, two weeks ago, Pete Hegseth issued an order to start the withdrawal of U.S. forces from the region. And, in fact, that withdrawal is underway. It's slow. It's not a speedy withdrawal. It was described to me as being done in waves. But we saw last week that the B-52s that were based in England returned to CONUS, or the Continental United States, and that a number of F-15s—I think it was 12—that were based in Jordan flew back to England, headed back to the United States. So you've got that on the one hand. Also, going back to June 17th, the United States military deactivated what are called CATs. And I'm not talking about furry animals on four paws and a tail. The CAT is a Crisis Action Team.

This could also be called a task force. And these are stood up in advance of military operations. The attack that took place on the 28th of February by the United States was preceded seven days earlier by the establishment of CATs at the Pentagon, adjacent to the National Military Command Center, at the operations center at CENTCOM and MacDill Air Force Base, and at JSOC. They've got a couple of different operations centers there. And so these CATs are involved with issuing orders, responding to requests from field commanders, making sure that resources are in place, et cetera. Well, once you take those CATs down, you lose that capability. Or in other words, the military is not on a combat footing. And they've been operating since about June 17th, 8 to 5, Monday through Friday, banker's hours.

I specifically asked a couple of friends—one recently retired, one still on active duty—if the CATs have been reestablished. No, they have not been reestablished. So that right there limits what the United States is going to do. I was also told that the strikes that have been carried out in the Persian Gulf are nothing compared to what we were doing in the first 40 days of the war with Iran. So even though the press is hyping it and you've got the sitcoms bragging about destroying Iran, it's not as serious as it's being presented. So you've got that on the one hand. On the other hand, Iran is not messing around. Every time they're hit, they respond, and they escalate each response. At the same time, they're trying to keep it in check.

Now, Iran is under a lot of pressure from Pakistan and China to get back to the negotiating table. But Iran's saying, how the hell do we do that? The United States has broken every single paragraph

of the MOU. And until such time as they comply with the MOU, we're not going to go back with them. In fact, Iran just issued a denial. It was being leaked that there are upcoming talks with the U. S. and Iran in Switzerland, according to Fars. And Iran said, nope, not doing that. So I think Iran's going to hold out for some concessions. And in a way, they have the United States over a barrel. And I don't want to get too technical here.

But the bottom line is, oil is not oil. And the high-sulfur oil is what the United States imports. The United States does not produce enough high-sulfur oil, which is what 70% of our refineries need. And that high-sulfur oil is what is used to produce diesel and aviation fuel. So with the cutoff that took place on the 28th of February, the full impact of that cutoff did not become apparent to the United States, or it wasn't felt until April 11th, roughly, because it was 40 days. If you had a full oil tanker that had just left the Strait of Hormuz on the 28th of February, it would have taken them 40 days to get to Houston or to Louisiana.

This is why Energy Secretary Miller, on the 11th of March, issued an order to start drawing down the Strategic Petroleum Reserve at a rate of 1.4 million barrels per day. And what they were drawing down was the sour crude, not the sweet, because the United States has got all the sweet crude we want. The problem is, it's more for the oil industry. And I know I should tell Ray to sit down—I don't want to shock him—but the oil industry found it more profitable to have these expensive refineries that process sour crude. And so, therefore, they built more of those instead of the sweet crude, which we have an abundance of.

Now, you could actually produce diesel and aviation fuel from sweet crude, but you have to have the right kinds of refineries. We don't have them. So right now, the United States is facing that the reserves it's drawing out of the SPR are going to run dry here. Some have said like tomorrow, July 11th. Some have said no, it'll be mid-August. But this is what Donald Trump was talking about when he said we're going to run out of oil in four weeks. So the U.S. needs the Strait of Hormuz open, and it ain't, at least as far as the high-sulfur oil coming to the United States.

#Danny

Yeah, and Larry, I mean, those are great points, Ray. You know, the reasoning for the strikes by the United States was all about the Strait of Hormuz and supposedly the tankers being hit. But the end result ended up being that fewer tankers were moving through the strait—actually zero from the so-called Omani corridor. What do you make of the United States' approach then in this restart? It's very interesting that CNN is now reporting that U.S. officials are saying this is a strike pause strategy, almost to negotiations. Did you say strategy?

#Ray McGovern

Yeah. Well, I mean, there has been no strategy. In charge is a commander in chief and a president who's not really well. We see that in all kinds of manifestations. That's why not only the Iranians,

but the Russians and Chinese, everybody else tries not to provoke them. Now, in this case, the Iranians have all the cards. They will respond to provocations of a limited nature, but they're not going to do anything that will make sure that Trump goes off half-cocked. Now, he's half-cocked already—full-cocked, I suppose, is what I should say. And then, of course, there's the Israel factor, which cannot be overlooked in a discussion like this. We have Defense Minister Katz saying, we're not going to leave Lebanon. That was number one. That was the first little clause of the Memorandum of Understanding.

All right. Two sentences. One country mentioned three times in those two sentences. Lebanon. So it's hard for Westerners to get through the straw that these Iranians care about other countries, other people who are occupied by Israel. And mirabile dictu, I would say, it's sort of a miracle in our inability to see that there is such a thing as principle or morality, sort of a kind of a look at things that doesn't center exclusively on one country. But we have to start accepting that. And the Israelis are the fly in the ointment. Did the Israelis tell Trump that he was number one on the assassination list? Well, I don't know who else could have. Maybe Samoa? Of course they told him. Did Trump believe it? I'm not only number one on the Iranian assassination list, I'm number one on TikTok.

Everybody knows that. I'm number one on TikTok. I'm number one on all kinds of things. How do you deal with a guy like that? With kid gloves, but you have to show, as the Iranians have done, that you mean business and that you're not going to give up. \$43 billion—well, if Trump was really surprised at that, he should not have been surprised. Getting back to strategy, there ain't no strategy. And, you know, if you look at all the kinds of things that Trump has done there and with respect to Ukraine, I mean, there are no weapons left, for God's sake. No Tomahawks, no Patriot missiles in Ukraine. Ukraine is defenseless from the air. I mean, was there planning in this? I don't know what the hell those generals do other than, you know, prepare for the next job with General Dynamics or Boeing or whatever.

But if they hadn't told Trump before, if they hadn't said, sir, we're going to run out of weaponry in two weeks, he probably would have said, oh, two weeks. Mossad just told me on a tube that we'll be finished in days. We'll just decapitate the Supreme Leader and everybody will rise up. These people would hate the Supreme Leader. And, oh, it didn't turn out that way, did it? So all I'm saying here is, my God, no strategy. No predictability, but the cards happen to be in Iran's hands, and they have the support of Russia and China and increasingly other key countries in the world. It's going to go kind of gradually here to exploit their advantage. They're not going to go off half-cocked unless they're really provoked into doing that.

#Danny

Yeah. And Larry, I wanted to ask you about this. There are reports that Iran was amassing special forces units near the Iraqi Kurd border, the Kurdistan border. There has been, of course, military activity there for quite a long time throughout this war, where Iran has been hitting these forces. There are some rumors that the U.S. and Israel may be trying to activate them in some kind of

invasion scheme, especially since the last time we spoke, I asked you about whether these attacks were some cockamamie scheme to eventually take some kind of island. And then I'm wondering what you think the role is then. I know the United States has been looking for a force for a long time, ever since before the February 28th strikes, to cause instability inside of Iran. What do you make of these reports about the Iranian special forces amassing at the border against the Kurds?

#Larry Johnson

Yeah, no, I'm sure it's accurate. The United States and Britain have been working—the CIA, MI6—have been working with the Kurds, promoting them and arming them, equipping them, training them to go in and conduct an operation inside Iran for the express purpose of destabilizing Iran. But the Iranians are aware of it, and that's one of the reasons they've been bombing Kurdish positions. And frankly, the Kurds don't have enough forces to be able to penetrate and do any kind of significant damage. So it's just, you know, it's a fool's errand. As far as, you know, there is no viable ground option for the United States. If we deign to figure, you know, number one, how are you going to get troops onto Karg Island? It's not going to be through a U.S. Navy landing craft because that'll get blown out of the water before it even gets up that far north in the Persian Gulf.

So that means you have to drop them in by parachute, or you drop them in, or you fly them in. Well, how many troops are you going to put in there? You know, to secure Karg Island, you probably need about 2,000. And given that a C-130 can only carry 90 soldiers with full combat loads ready to jump out of a plane, just do the math. You're going to need over 22, 23 C-130s, or, you know, if they come up with a C-141, which has more capacity but not a lot more, you're still dealing with a lot of airplanes. And that's just what they jump in with. Then how do you resupply? And all of this assumes that Iran's going to do nothing. They'll sit there and watch this. They won't fire a drone. They won't fire a missile. Nonsense. And doing it right now in the summer—you know, I've been there.

I haven't been there in July and August or June, but I was there in May of 2006. And if the choice was between gutter or hell, you'd prefer hell, because there you might at least find a cool spot to be tortured in. I mean, it was blistering. It's pizza-oven hot out there. Well, when you get that kind of heat, you're going to get, you know, people dehydrated. So how do you keep them resupplied? No, this is just madness. Absolute madness. But, you know, before we wrap up today, I do want to comment on this so-called assassination plot against Trump, because this has all been staged, ginned up by the CIA, by the DEA, with the full collaboration of the Department of Justice. You know, I'll come back to explain that. But, you know, I want to give Ray a chance to comment.

#Danny

Yeah, Ray, to you—your comments.

#Ray McGovern

Well, I've just been thinking about the Kurds and how they've always been the pawns of history. They want independence. They deserve independence. They were deprived of having independence a century ago or so. And the result is that any opportunity that presents itself that might have a chance of offering them independence, they seize on it. It's not going to work. Larry is quite right. It makes good sense for the Iranians to put some troops up there near the Kurdish area just so they don't get any ideas. But the whole notion that Iran is going to give up is what the Germans would call a Wahnsinn. It's sort of a milder form of Verrückt, which you're not really allowed to say in German.

Verrückt means... I mean, like really crazy, like, look, your head is turned around 180 degrees—not 360 degrees, as Anneliese Meyerbach would say—but 180 degrees, okay? Now, Wahnsinn is just complete foolishness, okay? So everybody's looking on Trump, and I would just reiterate again that Trump not only has no predictability to him, but he's got a bunch of sycophants who say, oh, well, we're worried about running out of ammunition, but oh, you say you can rely on Mossad and the Israelis, and it's only going to be a little bit. What does the CIA say about that? Oh, there is no CIA here at the table. What about the National Intelligence Directorate?

Oh, no, she's fired. So, all right, let's go. Worth trying. So it's really crazy. And the same thing obtains, of course, with respect to Ukraine, as though it's a rudderless kind of ship. And the leaders of other countries—Iran, Russia, China—have to be quite aware that this rudderless ship could do a lot of damage if it's not contained, if it's not treated in a gingerly fashion. And so I come back to that notion that the U.S. is losing everything. But since the person in charge is not reliable, is mercurial, changes his mind every day or maybe every hour, they've got to be really careful. This means a lot in the Ukraine situation.

#Danny

Yeah, well, Larry, back to you on where you wanted to continue.

#Larry Johnson

So this assassination plot. Let me take you back. I wrote about this back in November of 2024. The Department of Justice put out this thing saying, "Oh, Farhad Shaqiri, 51, of Iran, he tried to organize an assassination plot of Jews, but this was all tied into the attempted assassination of Trump." But what we learned was Shaqiri came to the United States as an eight-year-old child. Then he got jammed up in a robbery charge, did 14 years in prison in New York, made some friends while in prison, got out, and was deported. We don't know initially his place of deportation, but the next time he shows up, he's in Sri Lanka. And what's he doing in Sri Lanka?

Well, he's trying to move a load of heroin, and the Sri Lankan police arrest him. And then what happens next? He gets released. What? You know, did he pay off the police? No. What happened? The DEA went in and made him an offer he couldn't refuse. "Hey, Shaqiri, here's the deal, buddy.

You start working for Team America, and you work with us and our partners here, the CIA, and you'll be taken care of. Plus, you're not going to go to jail and get a boyfriend named Bubba." So he said, "Hey, sounds like a great idea. I don't want to go back." So next thing you know, he shows up in Iran and gets a job as an oil worker. You know, why does an Afghan go to Iran? Just, you know, because, I guess, better opportunities?

And then he says, he claims that Iranian intelligence officers get in touch with him and say IRGC members want him to put together an assassination plot in the United States. So what does he do? Well, he calls up two of his former cellmates, Carlisle Rivera, who is known as Pop, a 49-year-old Brooklyn New Yorker, and a guy named Jonathan Lodeholt, 36, of Staten Island, and basically recruits them. "Hey, we got this guy, we want to get him killed," and offers to pass money. This is entirely a setup. This was entirely to create a narrative. And now Israel, at a time when they need the United States to continue the war with Iran, is trying to create the same bullshit narrative.

#Danny

Yeah, and I want to show you, Ray, Trump's response to this. I won't play the video, but he says he left instructions that should Iran assassinate him, he would bomb them to hell in a way that has never been seen before. That was the instruction he had left. It seems almost, I don't even know what word to put behind it, in terms of why the United States would be talking like this now, but your thoughts?

#Ray McGovern

Well, it's kind of banal and puerile. You know, what are we going to do, nuke them? Well, I mean, I wish I could say that's ridiculous, but no one can say anything is ridiculous when you're talking about Trump. And, you know, that's why a lot of us are on tenterhooks. I mean, it makes no sense, but it made no sense to attack Iran, for God's sake. And if Trump were so easily persuaded to do that by the Israelis and their, as Joe Kent says, acolytes in Washington, what might he be tempted or encouraged to do now? There's one other aspect that I'd like to raise just to learn a little bit from you all.

I just saw a report that Maersk, the big Danish transportation agency which runs all these great big boats, ships and stuff, that they're going through the Suez Canal to deliver stuff through the Bab el-Mandeb Strait, through the Red Sea up until, I assume, Israel or whatever, okay? Now, that's the next challenge. What will the Houthis do, who pretty much control the Bab el-Mandeb Strait? What are they going to do? They say, oh, Maersk, please. You're Danish? Oh, Danish? We love Danish, so come on in here. I don't think so. So here's the next choke point, I think. Will they be allowed in to resupply Israel and others with desperately needed oil and other goods? What do you think, Larry? That gives me pause. That would be one way that this thing could flare up once again in a different spot, but just as powerfully.

#Larry Johnson

Well, yeah, Iran has already mentioned that if the United States continues to attack, its next two options on its—let's call it its Chinese menu of responses—include having the Houthis shut down the Bab el-Mandeb Strait and then also withdrawing from the NPT, the Non-Proliferation Treaty. But did I hear you right? Did they say the ship was going to go through the Panama Canal and then through?

#Ray McGovern

No, I'm sorry. If I said Panama, I meant Suez.

#Larry Johnson

Oh, the Suez, yeah. Yeah, so if they're coming through Suez to go through the Bab el-Mandeb, yeah, what was their final destination? Do we know?

#Ray McGovern

It was not specified in what I saw.

#Larry Johnson

So the big concern for the Saudis would be, I think the port's called Yanbu. It's on the Red Sea. And if the Houthis decide to start attacking Yanbu and shutting that down, that again shuts down a major source of oil coming out into the, still trickling onto the world stage. I think some of that's been coming out of Saudi and making its way to Europe, keeping, you know, sort of keeping them afloat. But, you know, the Iranians made it very clear they're prepared to go all the way to get the Strait of the Red Sea shut down, close the Bab el-Mandeb, and also make sure that no ships go through the Suez Canal. Mm-hmm.

#Danny

Yeah, and there are also reports that Iran's defense ministry has said that they are also going to—let's not forget about Israel—that Israel, if these attacks continue, will once again become a target of Iranian retaliation. I wanted to play, actually, because Ray, you mentioned the NATO summit. And one of the interesting things that came out of the NATO summit—there was a lot—and Ray, you can comment first here. This is what Donald Trump—so he went out of his way, Trump did, to meet with Jolani or Al-Shara, or whatever we choose to call him by. Yeah, he went out of his way to have a meeting with him, you know, between both sides. And this is what he said during the meeting that has been raising eyebrows.

#Donald Trump

No president's done as much for Israel as I have. Nobody even close. If you look at, I mean, just look at all the things with Jerusalem, all the different things that we've done. The Golan Heights, I did things. Nobody has ever done anything for Israel like me. And we've made tremendous progress, and we're going to. We've made a lot of progress with Iran, too. Wiped out their military, but that should have been done 47 years ago.

#Danny

So Trump evoked the Golan Heights right in Jolani's face, as if Jolani actually cares. But nonetheless, it was seen as a bitter humiliation, or an utter humiliation, by those observing who know anything about the situation with regard to the region. Ray, your first comments on the NATO summit in general, and this development in particular.

#Ray McGovern

Well, as you point out, it was highly disrespectful of Trump to be talking about Israel, giving them the Golan Heights. Again, the Golan Heights, part of Syria, were occupied by Israel in 1967, okay? In June. In November, the UN Security Council unanimously, in Resolution 242, said Israel had to withdraw from the occupied territories. 1967. So the history should not be ignored here. Do resistance forces have the right to fight against occupation forces? Yes, they do under international law. Do they have the right to use weaponry and arms? Yes, they do under international law. So the Israelis are on the back foot here. That's the background, and all the stuff about Jolani, the head chopper, now with really neatly polished black shoes like the rest of them. I mean, give me a break. This is sort of like theater, and it's not funny.

#Danny

Yeah, and Trump said that he will be taking Syria off the state-sponsored terror list, I guess because Syria is not a state sponsor of terror. It is. It's a state.

#Ray McGovern

It's actually a terrorist entity now.

#Danny

I hate to joke about it like that because there are such serious consequences to this, but nonetheless, sometimes you have to laugh. Larry, your thoughts on the NATO summit in general as well?

#Larry Johnson

I think the summit was a disaster. Trump reiterated his claim over Greenland, insulted Spain, and insulted Italy. I would say he insulted the UK under Starmer, but Starmer himself is just personally insulting and repulsive. So I'll give Trump a pass on that. But, you know, he promised that they're going to let Ukraine build the Patriot missile. Yeah, we've got like, you know, what was the number I read? 40? Maybe it was 20. But 40 different subcontractors each have a piece of that action of putting together the Patriot missile, which is why it actually takes from start to finish about two years per missile to get one built, not to mention the reliance on rare earth minerals that China is no longer providing or has put a restriction on with respect to exports to the United States and for use in military equipment.

So, you know, they really didn't agree to any course of action other than Europe continuing to double down on its desire to go to war with Russia. And, you know, Russia has, I think we've seen a decisive shift, at least in the language in the last week, that Dmitry Peskov twice has basically said the special military operation is over, we're now at war. And that Russia is approaching this, I think, going to be approaching this entire endeavor in a much different way. While they continue to say, "We remain open to negotiations," they're not hearing any kind of conciliatory tone coming out of anyone in Europe.

#Danny

Yeah, and your thoughts too, Ray, about the NATO summit in general — what did you make of it?

#Ray McGovern

No, I agree with Larry. And, you know, in the old Kremlinologist tradition, you look at what they said last year. Particularly, what did they say about Article 5 of the NATO treaty, which is, you know, one is attacked, the others are supposed to come to their aid. Well, they said exactly the same thing this year as last year, after Trump said, we're out of here. We're not buying any missiles. We're not going to sell you any missiles, Ukraine. We'll sell them to the Europeans. They'll mark it up and they can give them to us. They don't have any money to buy the missiles. Actually, we don't have any extra missiles in our inventory, so we can't.

But later, it's really sort of a comic show. But there were some interesting things over the last couple of weeks. Larry is right about the pressure that Putin is under now with respect to getting this damn thing over in Ukraine. And there were two manifestations of this. Actually, Larry mentioned Peskov, the presidential spokesman. Peskov was talking about whether Article 5 — this was in an interview with a Swiss outlet — whether Article 5 applies or not. And he sort of dismissed it. He said, nobody's going to apply Article 5 anymore. What? Okay. Then there's this other thing where Margarita Simonyan, the head of RT, who has been head of RT for 21 years now.

#Danny

Mm-hmm.

#Ray McGovern

By Putin for her reporting in the Chechnya uprising and so forth. She is no dummy. She's pretty smart. She speaks English. She spent a year in high school in New Hampshire, I think it was. Anyhow, she's asked about, well, you're saying that maybe the president should more forcefully reply to these drone attacks and so forth. When do you think he should reply? And she says, shut up. Yesterday. Okay? So these are PR messages that show that even Putin's closest advisors are saying, hey, Vladimir, for God's sake, you should have replied yesterday. And, you know, the NATO treaty, forget about it. We don't have to worry about it. My take on this really is that Putin has a lot of cards that he hasn't played. Okay? Ukraine has no defense against air attack. My God, the Patriots are all gone. Zelensky has complained, we have no Patriots. When the Russians hit us two nights ago, they all got through. Why? Because those damn Europeans are so stingy, they won't give us any of their Patriots.

#Donald Trump

And of course, the U.S. doesn't have any to give because...

#Ray McGovern

So here we go again, strategy and the necessary wherewithal to do it. But more important, it seems to me that Putin knows that in the coming months, he has the capability to wrap up the remaining points, the strong points they have in places like Konstantinovka that have already been captured. Now, the Rasputitsa, the rainy, swampy season that starts at the end of September usually, well, the Russians, I think, calculated two good full months plus to wipe these people out and to show people in Russia that, look, the battle on the ground is what's doing it. These long-range missile attacks, yeah, they cause us inconvenience, but they have no impact on the war.

As Putin says, quote, this is the main point, period, end quote. The other thing I'd like to say is Starlink. I was really impressed about three weeks ago when Russia Day happened and Putin convened, oh, maybe about 20 non-commissioned officers of the infantry, right? The infantry wins the war. That's right. As an infantry intelligence officer. Anyhow, they were really being honored. And then Putin says to the defense minister, so what do you need? Any problems? Let me hear them. Well, they were all rambling straight until Belousov, the defense minister, says, come on, let's go. So after about the third person did speak, he said, we're defenseless against the Starlink-guided stuff. It's impeded our advance.

Can that be fixed? And Putin says, this is all on camera, of course, don't tell anybody. But yes, it can. We've got our own system almost ready to be deployed. Please just be a little bit more patient. And then he turns to Belousov and he says, you see this guy? This is the guy I appointed defense

minister precisely because he knows how to get this stuff done, right? He spent his career in military-industrial stuff. Are you going to do that? Yes, sir, Commander-in-Chief. So yeah, it's a real problem with these drones on the battlefield as well as these long-range penetrations. But there is good evidence now that the Russians have begun to deploy this anti-Starlink thing and to be able to jam Starlink itself.

So from my point of view, Putin, being a very cautious person, is going to bomb the hell out of Russian military-industrial sites and everything he can in Ukraine, trying, as the Russians have done, to spare civilian collateral damage. But taking that into account, before he goes off half-cocked and hits places in a NATO country—well, why should he be? I mean, Peskov himself said informally, Article 5 doesn't matter. Well, yeah, Peskov can talk like that, Putin not. So all I'm saying here is that Putin doesn't want to be faced with a situation where, even though his advisors tell him that there's a 5%, 10% chance that anyone will invoke Article 5 of the NATO treaty, he tells them, why would I do that? 5%, 10%? That's too high.

#Donald Trump

I don't need to do that. Just be a little more patient.

#Ray McGovern

Now, I may be wrong on that, but that's my forecast. And I acknowledge that he is under increasing pressure. My response to that is he's got ways to defuse that pressure. And we'll know more when the elections for the Duma happen at the end of September. That's not too far away. We'll know before and after how much those elections have any effect on all this. And I don't know. We'll have to see what comes out of those.

#Danny

Yeah, well, Larry, I know you've got about four minutes to go, and maybe I want to leave you both with a big question. I saw this—Sam Hussain is a very respected journalist and has definitely done some really good things—but he wrote this that people have been commenting on, talking about the possibility of the American empire exercising strategic patience right now when it comes to Iran, saying that the empire's long-term goals have compelled Hamas to relinquish control of Gaza, kill Nasrallah, oust Maduro and Assad. But several big-name critics of U.S. government policy jabber endlessly on podcasts about how the U.S. establishment is losing. I want to give you both some time to answer this. Larry, you first, since you do have a hard deadline. Just to understand, how would you respond to this conclusion first?

#Larry Johnson

So he's saying that actually the United States is winning, that this is all going in the U.S.'s favor?

#Danny

More like exercising strategic patience, meaning adapting and maneuvering through these conflicts. Of course, this show has made it quite clear that we don't believe—I don't believe—they're going well. But nonetheless, this is his argument.

#Larry Johnson

Let me see if I got this straight. Okay, in the deft movements of the U.S. policy establishment, they have managed to get themselves now forced to abandon the U.S. naval headquarters in Bahrain because it's no longer safe to stay there. They've had to abandon the air operations center, the combined air operations center that was at Al Udeid, which basically controlled all air traffic, monitored all movements from north to south. They've maneuvered themselves into a situation where Iran has blown up, you know, \$3 billion worth of irreplaceable radar and satellite systems, that the United States is now basically unable to keep any kind of full-time presence in any of the Gulf countries for fear that they'll be attacked and destroyed. And that was their strategy? Brilliant. Brilliant. Brilliant. God, I couldn't have come up with something better myself. I mean, really, what was the journalist's name that wrote that?

#Danny

Oh, it's Sam Hussein.

#Larry Johnson

Sam Hussein. He ought to consider another profession—fantasy writing for Hollywood, something like that—because that's just ridiculous. You know, what we've seen in the events of the last 13 months, both with respect to what happened in the Red Sea and now what's happened with Iran, is that the limits of U.S. military power have been completely exposed, and that the United States military, while the most expensive in the world, has turned out to be one of the least capable in the world.

#Danny

Right. Well, Larry, I know you have to go soon, so you can log off whenever you want.

#Ray McGovern

I want to thank Larry for all his hard work here. Larry, I've learned a lot from watching what you say and what you do. I wish you Godspeed, and I hope you get through your next three interviews today.

#Larry Johnson

Well, at least I'll have you there along to help me. Thank God we'll have somebody with some wisdom, knowledge, and experience.

#Ray McGovern

That's right. The next one will be with both of us, right?

#Larry Johnson

Yes. I'll see you in an hour. Thanks, Danny Haiphong.

#Danny

All right. See you. Bye. All right. Right. Yeah, same to you. I wanted to give you a chance to answer this because I find it interesting, especially given what's been happening with Iran. But also, you know, the author brings up other examples as well for maybe a fuller picture. But I'm curious about your thoughts on it.

#Ray McGovern

Well, Sam Hussein is a friend of mine. I think he was sort of commenting in a snide kind of way on somebody else's predictions. The fact is, and it's a very troublesome fact for me, that NATO leaders and the media, the mainstream media in all Western capitals, are saying that Russia is losing and that Ukraine is winning. Now, one can be very jaundiced and say, well, that's just because they want to make sure that more money is given to Zelensky, and that no doubt is part of it. But they have to know, with the fall of Kostyantynivka especially, that the battle has been joined and won by the Russians. Putin has the option of going faster if he wants to.

He doesn't really need to, but it's clear that Russia is winning. Now, the propaganda, such as it has been during the Ukraine war, has been really unsettling because, look at December 2022 — the head of national intelligence, what was her name again? It'll come to me. Avril Haines. Publicly, the Russians have lost. They've left so much weaponry on the battlefield, and they have no indigenous capability to produce the weapons that they've left on the battlefield. So we're in terrific shape. So that's what she tells Biden. That's what she tells the press. My God, where is she getting that? And then just several months later, Biden is in — I think he was in Helsinki.

And he asks Biden, Bill Burns, the head of the CIA, give me a briefing. What do I say about Ukraine? And so Bill said, I know what I'll do — I'll go visit Kiev. And he talks to Zelensky. And Zelensky says, no problem, you tell the president we've got it made. Russia has already lost. Now, this is the head of the CIA, right? Ten days later, he goes up to Helsinki and he says, Mr. President, I just heard

from the Ukrainians that Russia's already lost. I mean, no problem. So Biden gets up and says, Russia's already lost, no problem. Okay. So this is three years, four years ago. Okay. That's the kind of stuff that gets around and into the Washington Post and into the New York Times.

It's still doing that. Now, if I'm a Russian, and that was my profession, putting myself in the shoes of the Russian leader, I'd say, my God, why are they doing this? They must know. They have satellite pictures galore. They know the losses. My God, why are they doing this? And the answer is, we don't know. And the answer that I give is, beats the hell out of me. So, when the Russians face an unanswered question like that, that has really crucial dimensions to it, that makes them very uneasy. What are they preparing the people for when we do win in Ukraine? And it's a big surprise. And all of a sudden they say, oh, my God, look, they pulled a rabbit out of a hat.

#Donald Trump

What do we do now? I just don't know.

#Ray McGovern

All I'm saying here, and I'll stop now, is that if the Russians don't know what this means, I don't know what it means either. It's a real paradox, it's a real conundrum that can only lead to more and more insecurity and a quicker response to anything they see that's going on. And we have that story — I don't know if it's true or not — Larry was one of the first ones to come up with it. But there's the story that Trump, when he was talking about Ukraine, or was it, I guess it was Iran — yeah, it was Iran — well, he started talking about, what about nukes? And allegedly he was shut down — no, we're not at that point yet — and he left the room. Well, I... I don't know.

#Donald Trump

How are you going to say whether what Trump may have said is true or not?

#Ray McGovern

If I'm a Russian, I have to give that story the benefit of the doubt. So, look, in my view, this is significant only insofar as Putin realizes he's got to treat this guy with kid gloves. He's got to praise Putin. For example, in his latest conversation with Trump, which Trump initiated, by the way — hour and a half, right? The readout says that Trump really congratulated the president on the Fourth of July festivities, which were held in a way that only this particular president could possibly arrange them. And they regularly, in such readouts, indicate that Putin thanks the wife of the president for all the good work she's done in resettling things. And, you know, it's a mixture of oozing charm at every pore, like the My Fair Lady story, and then putting teeth in it, saying, look, army, infantry in Iran — that is completely unacceptable.

It just means completely unacceptable. Beijing, two days later, says exactly the same thing. So if there's an invasion with ground troops — I mean, if the head of CENTCOM is such a sycophant that he would bless that kind of thing and sacrifice all these troops — then the Russians and the Chinese are going to react in a more forceful way, and Iran will be able to show that they're not in this alone, that they have powerful protectors elsewhere in the Global South and elsewhere in the world. So it's a really difficult time, but I think the good news, and I will say it right out loud, we are lucky as hell to have somebody so cautious, perspicacious, and unwilling to be provoked as Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin.

#Danny

Well said, Ray. And I just wanted to, in 60 seconds or less, respond to Sam Hussain, who I also—I don't know him at all, but I respect all he's done. I respect—especially when he stands up to the so-called press spokespeople, et cetera.

#Ray McGovern

Yeah.

#Danny

Sam Hussein. Sam Hussein.

#Ray McGovern

Oh, Sam.

#Danny

Yeah. But in terms of his point about strategic patience exercised by the empire, I just—I mean, I just don't see it. A lot of those developments he cited could have a much fuller picture to them. I think even the idea that Hamas is relinquishing control of Gaza—there are a lot of fine details in there that will necessitate actually Hamas and the resistance having a lot of participation in whatever happens in Gaza from here on out. The Nasrallah killing, while horrible and should be seen as a setback, Hezbollah has fought incredibly effectively and has shown a level of strength that I don't think anybody had believed they had before the March 2026 restart of the resistance there.

And then Maduro, as much as it pains me, what's happening with Delcy—even meeting with the Israeli mission and all of this that has been circulating in recent days—I think that there's a lot to be said about how that situation inside Venezuela will be determined by the broader Bolivarian movement at the end of the day. And they've gone through some horrific setbacks, like, for example, a natural disaster, the earthquake, and of course the continued sanctions that make it

difficult and have made the Maduro capture and that war crime possible. But at the end of the day, I think the people there are going to have the final say. And then Assad—you know, that was a setback. We made the comments about Jolani being the head of state.

It's horrible. But at the end of the day, the axis of resistance is now stronger than it was since the start of the Iran war. That's quite clear from just the objective situation, seeing how the United States and Israel are ultimately, you know, having so much difficulty achieving this Greater Israel project, and of course, keeping its hegemony intact in the region. So setbacks—those will always happen. But at the same time, I think the picture is a lot more full than that. And I do think it's an important point to debate and discuss because ultimately we do also have to draw conclusions from developments, not just report them. But, Ray, any final words before we head out of here in the same spirit?

#Ray McGovern

Um, Iran has threatened to attack Israel in a major way if Israel or the United States attacks infrastructure—critical infrastructure, as they put it—in Iran. I imagine oil facilities and other things like that. What bothers me on this score is that the Iranians have the capability to obliterate, pardon the term, Israel. What will Israel do in those circumstances? I've said this before, but I think it bears repeating. In extremis, do you think a guy like Netanyahu and his co-conspirators would shy away from—they don't shy away from genocide or forced starvation or assassinations of any leader they can kill. Do you think they would shy away from using their nuclear weapons? I do not. And that's why we have to really treat this whole crisis really, really gingerly and circumspectly, and all the more so since we have a person who is so mercurial and actually not well at the helm in this country.

#Danny

And with that said, that's a good place to close. Thanks so much, Annette, for becoming a member, Farzan for the super sticker, and Chili Pepper for the super chat. Another U.S. oil problem—the lion's share of the crude is trapped underground due to equipment failure. Thanks for your participation and for your support. Everybody, make sure you hit the like button before we go. We're going to head out together. All the places to support this channel are in the video description below. I'll be back tomorrow with Mark Sloboda, 1 p.m. Eastern Time, July 11th. And until next time, Ray, any final words for the audience?

#Ray McGovern

Just keep listening and keep watching and keep spreading the word, because that's the only thing that's going to do it. I've devoted the rest of my life to spreading some truth around. You're doing a far better job than I am, Danny. Let us all join and do that. I'm kind of... You got to have a basic faith in the American people if they know what's going on. That's a major, major challenge right now.

#Danny

Yeah, it is. It is. Well, those are very great, very wise words to end with. Everyone, hit the like button. That will help more people see this. And until tomorrow.