

Iran's Missile Strike TORCHES US Bases, Trump STUNNED | Johnson & Wilkerson

Larry Johnson and Col. Lawrence Wilkerson discuss shocking developments in the Iran war including a preemptive strike on US bases by Tehran and a US-Saudi bombing campaign in Iraq that has the region bracing for renewed escalation just days after the US's own self-imposed "ceasefire."

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#Danny

Welcome back to the show. As you can see, I am joined by Larry Johnson and Colonel Lawrence Wilkerson to break down the latest developments. So first, we have Iran's surprise strike on Muwaffaq Salti Air Base in Jordan. Iran announced that it launched several ballistic missiles at this air base in Jordan, in particular against A-10 fighter jets in this air base, destroying them. That is what Iran is claiming. Now, Iran also says that three oil tankers were given a warning in the Strait of Hormuz and struck and brought to a halt simultaneously. CENTCOM says that these strikes were all intercepted. This is what they said here. And here's the reality: it seems like there was actual impact. Now, Iran is saying a source close to Ghalibaf said that the meeting between Netanyahu and Trump was actually the reason why this base was struck overnight, because there were plans for a U.S. operation, and Iran says they were thwarted.

Now, Trump says that he is going to beat the effing shit out of Iran to Fox News. And this is all coming, gentlemen, as U.S.-Saudi strikes—this is an interesting and surprising development—on Iraq have killed 20 Popular Mobilization Forces. Now Saudi Arabia is blaming Iraqi resistance for strikes on its oil company. And this, gentlemen, is a big one: four, and I've seen reports of five, IRGC members were killed in those U.S.-Saudi strikes. So let's get to your reactions, gentlemen, on this latest news. It seems like this war has opened up on many fronts very quickly, despite the lack of U.S. strikes on Iran in recent days. How about we start with you, Larry? What the hell is going on? I don't know.

#Larry Johnson

Well, that's a good question. Okay, so let's start with the Saudis deciding to open up a three-front war. They started by attacking Yemen, or the Houthis, Ansar Allah. And Ansar Allah responded in a very strong fashion by upping the blockade on Saudi ships and hitting this petroleum refinery, the

most modern one in the world, and inflicted major damage on it. So then the Saudis responded by using their proxy force to attack Yemen, and then once again the Houthis responded by hitting another oil refinery in the east part of Saudi Arabia. But the Saudis blamed it on the Iraqis. So yesterday, the Iraqis get attacked by the United States and the Saudis. Now, this group that's being attacked, it's actually formally part of the government of Iraq. So this is the United States and Saudis committing an act of war against the nation of Iraq.

They're going to respond. They're going to retaliate. And so here are the Saudis putting themselves in a position where they have lots of targets that can be hit. And in terms of manpower, Iraq dwarfs them. Iran dwarfs them. And I think the Houthis are on par, or maybe a little larger. I think, you know, you're looking at 20 million Arabs in Saudi Arabia. So right off the bat, the Saudis are expanding their combat operations. You know, the last thing you want to do is expand your conflict when you have limited resources. And they do have limited military resources. So I expect we're going to see nothing immediately today or tomorrow from Iraq. They'll probably wait until tomorrow, Friday, Saturday, because the Shia pilgrimage, the Arbaeen, is underway.

And they don't want the pilgrims to be targets of attack by either the Saudis or the United States. So you've got that going. Then this curious attack by Iran. I say curious because it was just sort of like it appeared out of the blue. Now, the United States insists—you can't get it straight—whether it's five missiles or six missiles, but we intercepted them all. Yeah, really? I have seen video of strikes. So, you know, they're using the same tactic the Ukrainians have used: just deny everything, claim it's just the opposite. Maybe nobody will look into it. But the fact that the Iranians came out and said, no, we're going after A-10s, I tend to believe them. And I think what they're doing is they recognize the United States is going to gear back up for military strikes anyway, so they're preempting it.

So the bottom line is, despite the optimism that reigned over the weekend that the talks are back on track, the talks are going nowhere. I don't care how much intervention by Pakistan and Oman and Qatar there is. The Iraqi position is very firm, and it's not going to change. If the United States wants to re-engage, it's going to have to force Israel out of southern Lebanon, lift the blockade, lift the sanctions, unfreeze the assets immediately. Not at some point in the future. Unfreeze the assets now. Show that you're going to comply with that agreement. Then we can talk about nukes. But the United States' position is 180 degrees from that. No, no. We've got to talk about nukes before any of that. And Iran said, no, not going to happen.

#Danny

Well, Colonel Wilkerson, your thoughts about this, maybe beginning with Iran and extending outward.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

I think Larry's absolutely right. And I would go further and say, as I did on the previous podcast I was on, go back a year when I was saying the propensity of the conflict in Ukraine and a conflict in Southwest Asia at that time were to break out beyond the homicidal, genocidal, whatever you want to call it, killing of Palestinians in Gaza. The potential for these theaters of war to connect and become elongated, as it were, and connected is going to ripen with every day that goes by because war has a tendency of affecting borders and affecting people on those borders and affecting people who are indirectly impacted by the effects of the war you're looking at.

And in this case, in Europe, it has enormous potential for spreading all the way from the northern borders of Finland down to and including Spain and Greece and other countries that are going to be impacted ultimately by the weight of this war in Central Europe. But it also has the tendency, and is showing that tendency right now, as wars have a way of doing, especially when they're waged by idiots and fools, to spread in ways that no one ever dreamed of, dreamt of, whatever word you want to use, in the beginning. And we're seeing the kind of connections that these sorts of wars, like the two central theaters we have going right now, Southwest Asia and Ukraine, sort of metastasize.

We're seeing, for example, Zelensky thinking he has an opportunity to get back on Trump's good side, if you will, or back on the Europeans' and Trump's good side by suddenly leaping into the war in Southwest Asia in ways that will reflect positively on him, he thinks. And we're seeing, as Larry just pointed out, other regional characters being dragged into these conflicts because of things that are happening that they cannot fail to respond to. All to say, I think, and I haven't even mentioned the fact that we are doing some things right now in the area where Russia has invited China to help it work on developing—you ready for this?

The total structure and perhaps the passage structure in general for the massive distance that ships are going to travel once we get an ice-free—and it's here already, they're just working ahead of time—Arctic. The ships are going to travel along that long coastline of Russia, which, of course, China shares nothing with, but now does manage even that region up there for the ships to pass along there east and west. And we don't like that. So we're up there trying to perturb that, mainly with submarines right now. But we're up there, and we're up there with full knowledge of what Russia and China are trying to do.

All to say that we can have a conflict going between the ice-free areas of the Arctic in the north, all the way down to Bandar Abbas, Chabahar, and even out into the Indian Ocean to an extent, because we have naval assets out there that are attackable. And we have a blockade developing around Odessa that the Russians are constructing. We have Erdogan looking at his own strait and what might be done with it to gain revenues for Turkey, as well as to protect his own ass. This could go regional and then global very quickly. And all of it has potential for use of nuclear weapons, every stretch of it. This is not a good thing. It's not a good development. And Donald Trump bears a lot of responsibility for putting the latter aspects of it into motion and not doing anything about it.

#Danny

Yeah, and I wanted to continue on updating on what's been going on. We spoke about this a little bit before the program. An American LNG tanker was struck by a drone at Damietta Port in Egypt. This happened today, early afternoon. And Trump said he was briefed on it, and it's more of the same. Iran is being blamed for it. We don't actually know who fired it just yet. Larry, President Trump is saying this: "There will be strikes tonight, and then I'll get your comment on what's happening here. In the meantime, we're going to be hitting them very hard because it's our turn to hit them. They know it's coming. They're asking us not to do it, but..."

#Donald Trump

You know, they tried shooting it last night. So we had five rockets shot, going 8,500 miles an hour, and all five rockets were knocked down to the ground. But they nevertheless took a shot. So it's our turn, and we'll see if we get there with an agreement at some point. But we're going to hit them very hard.

#Danny

I don't know if you all watch sports talk shows, but there's a guy, Skip—"It's my turn now." So that's essentially Donald Trump's response here. Larry, to you, please help us understand what exactly is going to happen here.

#Larry Johnson

Yeah. So if there were five missiles fired and if they knocked them down, what'd they knock them down with? Well, let's assume it was the Patriot. That means there are 10 more Patriots gone, because they had to fire at least two at each one of those missiles. Or, excuse me, 10. So, you know, two times five is 10. If there were six, it's 12. And those missiles run roughly \$5 million a missile. So that would have been around \$60 million worth of missiles fired to take out. But they didn't. That's the point. It's a lie. And, again, Trump keeps thinking this is some sort of sports activity, a game. You know, okay, you get the kick. Now we get the kick. Now you get the kick. Now we get the kick. Iran's not handling it that way. Iran has proceeded with a very strategic approach to destroying the U.S. ability to see what's coming.

Iran has destroyed 19 radar systems and/or satellite communication systems over the course of the last five months. And even Trump, in his comment, admitted that that strike that came in on Muwaffaq al-Salti, we only had minutes. I mean, at the last minute, he's admitting that the advanced radar warnings they used to have are no longer present, because that's what Iran is doing. It is dismantling, blinding the United States' ability to see what's going on on the battlefield, number one. Number two, they're forcing the U.S. to redeploy both its personnel and air assets to places outside of the traditional bases they occupied, in places like Al Udeid and the Fifth Fleet headquarters in Bahrain and the two camps up in Kuwait. So the United States is actually being forced from the area.

And that's why Iran continues to attack Muwaffaq al-Salti, just to increase the pressure on the Jordanians. And we're already seeing that happen in Jordan. There was a large number of leaders—political, military, economic leaders—that basically published an open letter yesterday to King Abdullah saying, you know, get the United States the hell out of our country. So this is about making the United States no longer welcome in the entire area of West Asia. And the last place they're retreating to is Israel. And actually, we saw a couple of very curious things out of the events surrounding Lindsey Graham's funeral yesterday. One, after Zelensky from Ukraine meets with Trump, the Ukrainian foreign minister immediately, after that meeting, immediately gets on the horn with Araghchi and going, "Oh yeah, about that attack in the Caspian Sea."

Hey, listen, we're really sorry, man. That was a mistake. We apologize, you know. Why'd they do that? Well, apparently Trump told him, you know, we're not going to expand this war. You may want to, but we're not going to. And you better get this taken care of. So Ukraine did an immediate backdown on that. But then we're still faced with the shortages and the economic consequences. Notice that once Trump started threatening this war again, the stock market, which had gone up about 1,000 points on the Dow Jones, has dropped over 1,100 points today, in one day alone. And the price of oil, which had dropped, is now back up. You know, it's gone back up over 90 for Brent. So the yo-yo effect, the effect on the economy continues, and that's not positive for Trump or his agenda.

#Danny

Now, I pulled up there that immediate reply by Ukraine's foreign minister to Araghchi, and there were reports in Reuters and elsewhere saying that Iran was ready to actually retaliate, but received that call and assurance that this was indeed a one-off and a mistake. But I wanted to pull this up for you, Colonel Wilkerson. This is what you were referring to earlier. There are reports now that Ansar Allah is considering a fee for ships transiting the Bab al-Mandeb Strait. So this is getting contagious. And I'm wondering, you know, with this LNG tanker in Egypt—and with Jordan being a target—some have said that Jordan also being a target for Iran is really important because it's like the last layer of defense for Israel. So Iran is really paving the way here to demonstrate that no part of the region is safe for the United States to launch its war. How do you see these developments happening?

#Lawrence Wilkerson

Well, let me make a comment on what Larry was saying earlier, what you asked. I think Zelensky may have been told that Iranian ballistic missiles can reach Kyiv. So I'd be a little circumspect about how I tried to expand this thing too, which I think makes his foray into Iraq, if it's true that he has made a foray into Iraq, even dumber. And maybe even some messages will flow over that. As far as the Red Sea and the strait that protects it, or the strait that opens it, I think, as I've said many times before, that's far more critical and more widely commodity-oriented, other than just oil and gas and those things we associate with the Persian Gulf, though it too has other commodities.

And if you do something to the Red Sea that is significantly injurious to that commodity traffic, that is to say you force it to go around the Horn, which increases costs. I forget the tabletop we did at the U.S. Institute of Peace. We talked about the additional costs. I think it was one and a half or two percent, one and a half or two times as much. Expensive for most ships to go around the Horn. Or if you take the Saudis and you plunge ahead and go through the Suez from the north, go up and out the Strait of Gibraltar, it's, what, 40 hours or something like that more steaming time. If you go that way and you're headed for Pacific ports, maybe it's even more than that.

All to say, the Red Sea is more important than the Persian Gulf. The conclusion of the tabletop we did with almost everybody at the USIP—I'm talking about MARAD, I'm talking about AIG, I'm talking about Lloyd's of London, I'm talking about the EU, I'm talking about the separate European countries, I'm talking about Mercy Corps—almost everyone in the world with any interest in that region of the world. PACOM was there, AFRICOM was there, INDOPACOM was there. All represented, we all agreed that the strategic competition cockpit, if you will, was shifting from the Strait of Hormuz to the Red Sea and the Bab el-Mandeb.

It also explains why we have, and many other militaries too, so many forces in Djibouti. And one Marine said to me, "If another Marine lands in Djibouti, it'll sink." And the Turks are even trying to get there too. I understand they couldn't, so they are looking for land up around Somaliland, may have found it north of Djibouti. All to say that it is an incredibly important point of commerce, lane of commerce, and is also—this is an aside, but it's an important aside—it's one of the reasons, as is the Strait of Hormuz, as is Gibraltar itself, as is other things like that, a reason, a big reason, the Chinese Belt and Road Initiative includes railroads that, through their economies and their speed, essentially change the whole nature of world commerce. They change it from being fundamentally maritime to being fundamentally land-based.

This has happened before in the history of empire. It happened 2,000 years or so ago when people got tired of paying the almost piratical rates of the Portuguese and others who maintained surveillance, as we do today, of the maritime routes. They got tired of it, built these internal routes, and put these people out of business. That's what the Chinese are going to do. That's why we're fighting some of this conflict. When you really search the strategic purpose that we're doing this, I don't think Trump has a clue, but there are people behind him who have lots of clues, and they're trying to stop this. And this is a perfect example of it, and an example that is more or less happenstance, serendipitous, that is occurring in one of the most heavily trafficked ocean routes in the world.

And it's occurring with these various aspects of this war that's going on, and some of the belligerents in that war. Nonetheless, it's not changing the value of the route or the nature of what I'm talking about in terms of this change. So we're actually looking at those who are working to make this route more difficult and more expensive in whatever way, adding to and accelerating what the Chinese, and now the Russians and Iranians, I think, are doing and what they want to achieve, which is to shift commerce from the maritime environment, where who dominates? Us. To the land

environment, where all of them, including China, Central Asia, Russia, Iran, will dominate. And that's what we're up against.

#Danny

And I think we're losing. Well, Larry, doesn't what the United States is saying it's going to do in response to Iran overnight, all of this—doesn't all this activity from what Saudi Arabia and the United States are doing with Yemen and Iraq, doesn't all this just accelerate this process? Because there is so much attention now. It's the Strait of Hormuz, and it's now the Bab al-Mandab Strait, given Saudi's interesting and maybe dire miscalculations. So, your thoughts on this and reactions? Yeah, it's like hitting the strategy—it's, hey, let's get rid of this glob of mercury. Let's hit it with a hammer. Well, you hit a glob of mercury with a hammer, what does it do?

#Larry Johnson

It splits into four or five different pieces. And then if you keep hitting each piece, it keeps spreading into other pieces. So you never destroy it. All you do is you make it a bigger problem for you trying to clean up that mercury. You turn it into a mission impossible. And, you know, it would be one thing if the United States was sitting on a well-stocked inventory of weapons, particularly precision-strike munitions. But we're not. It's the exact opposite. In fact, you know, go back and look at the—during those 13 days of attacks—you know, a large number of the strikes were not high-precision munitions, and they tended to take place on the coast. Well, what was that about? That means we were dropping... One thing we do have a pretty good supply of are called JDAMs. Now, JDAM is actually a kit that is attached to a regular dumb bomb. That is like putting wings on it so it can fly.

It can glide. And those JDAMs, they can be glided just like what the Russians are using. They're called FABs. Except the big difference is the Russian FABs, they've got one that goes up to a 6,000-pound bomb, and they can travel 100 miles or more. The U.S. JDAMs have a much more limited range, up to 40—I think it's 40 miles, maybe it's 40 kilometers—but it's not beyond that. So that's why you're seeing those bombs, those strikes along the coast and not deep into the interior. So it gets down that the United States has less ability to project force and to sustain that force projection. Those are two critical elements. And, you know, we keep lying to ourselves about, "Oh, we're much better than we actually appear to be." No, we're actually as bad as we appear to be.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

And just to add to that, Danny, Larry may know more about this than I do, but I heard yesterday about this brouhaha that's going on between General Caine, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff—glad to hear that he's finally weighing in on some of this—and Brad Cooper, the Navy four-star who's in charge now after the absolute utter ass we had before of Central Command. And the

brouhaha is over Brad Cooper essentially saying that we can go on doing this for as long as we want to, and Caine, who has to look over all the other unified command commanders, who no doubt are doing exactly what I'd be doing if I were one of them.

What the hell do you mean, exhausting all these munitions so that I can't even fulfill my war plans should they have to be executed? Because I guarantee you that's going on. And so there's this battle going on between Cooper and the chairman right now. And I can tell you who's probably going to win that in the long run, unless Trump weighs in for Cooper. And that is Caine, because he's right. You can't keep doing this. You run out of the kinds of things you need in all the other areas for not just implementation of war plans, should it be necessary, but also for presence missions and such.

So I can see that there, and I heard some other things about Brad Cooper that I didn't know, that he's a real JINSA fan, that he's almost as plugged into the Israelis as Kurilla was. This is not good, that we've got Israel even at that level instructing people on what to do and how to do it. So if this is a problem in the chain of command, then Hegseth, God bless his soul, needs to do something about it, because Caine's right. And by the way, the JDAMs Larry was talking about is what we've worked on so hard to get the Saudis out of getting from us when they were waging their war against the Houthis with our help.

And I think it's fair to say that the Saudis were not too good with their extended-range F-15s delivering them. What they would do is pickle them, and they would go to the end of their guided range and fall as just nothing more than dumb bombs. I think that's like one that hit a bus that killed the 48 schoolchildren or whatever that had Raytheon on the side of it. These are not, as Larry was insinuating or saying, these are not long-range munitions. So that tells you something if we're using principally JDAMs. Not only do we not want to overfly Iran, we're not going to hit anything. I think it's 29 miles is the extended range of one of them, about 40 kilometers. So, you know, this is not good. Not good for the empire.

#Danny

Yeah. Yeah. And there's predictions, Larry, that—or at least there are mumblings, rumblings—that the United States is going to, contrary to Colonel Wilkerson's suggestions, try to strike deeper into Iran tonight. And I'm wondering your thoughts about the role of Israel in this too, because now more details are coming out of this meeting that they had, including a declaration by Israel to Trump that they will not attack Iran first again, and they will only follow the United States and would only respond if directly attacked. I mean, risks, the dangers of trying to deepen strikes against Iran at this time?

#Larry Johnson

Well, Defense Minister Katz got himself in hot water by claiming that the U.S. had launched strikes on Iran using Israeli territory.

#Danny

And boy, he got—

#Larry Johnson

He got blasted for that by the United States. So they're trying to actually keep Israel's role in this quiet. They want to keep it, play it down as much as possible. Why? One, because the Israeli air defense system is depleted. Two, they've suffered some damage to the sole two refineries they have that make diesel and aviation fuel. If Iran decides again to renew its attack on Israel, there's not a damn thing Israel can do to stop it. It's going to absorb a lot of punishment. And some of that punishment is going to be long-lasting. In other words, they're not just going to be able to slough it off and say, "Oh, we'll fix that."

No, some of it may not be fixable, which is the problem they face. So the United States is basically trying to keep Israel from getting in the middle of this, as Israel itself prefers to stay out of it. But I think this go-around, that's not going to happen. And as they really face a pounding from Iran, it's going to expose, as we saw in the 12-day war, that Israel cannot take the punishment. And then it starts pleading with the United States to find a negotiated settlement. The difference this time, though, I don't think there's a negotiated settlement to be had. I think the Iranians are at the end of the rope, and they're not willing to make any further concessions.

#Danny

And I wanted to bring up this graphic, Carl Wilkerson, because it seems like it is going to be a very busy evening, rest of the week, and into the weekend, because all of these fronts are now open. Iraq has been added to the mix. You have the U.S. needing to respond to the Iranian strike. We're saying it needs to respond to the Iranian strike on the Jordanian base. And, of course, Yemen is still very much in this and has been struck recently. So, I mean, where does this all lead? Yeah, please.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

Put that back up for just a second, would you? Sure. And look at that. Look at that. I think it was the third bullet, if I remember right.

#Larry Johnson

Sure. Yeah.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

Yeah. Unless a peace deal comes out of nowhere, the situation will worsen dangerously. Yeah, a peace deal will come out of nowhere. Donald Trump will say, "Oh, we've got negotiations going on, and we're just about there. The Iraqis—the Iranians—are really sweating, and they want to talk. We're going to talk about it." That would be my most likely prediction. Otherwise, we're going to just resume the idiocy, and we're going to find out, as Larry said, and as I agree 100% with, just how much idiocy it is that we're involved in, and how different it's going to be at the end of the day when we really are out and we don't have anything left.

#Danny

Yeah. And then to both of you—Larry, sorry—the longer this goes on, and the more that the United States either says it's responding to Iran or aggressively attacking Iran, and now with all these other fronts open, this leaves less and less room for any kind of exit or off-ramp for the United States. Just thinking in the eyes of a—in the mind of a hegemon—the more conflict there is, the more war and chaos that is being sowed, the less likely the United States is going to pull out. And even if it does go back, go back to what? It just seems like now the inevitability here, the only one is war.

#Larry Johnson

Well, yeah, war, yes, but with what power projection? In other words, the United States doesn't have unlimited resources. And so its ability to start a fight, sustain the fight, and end the fight have radically diminished. And we've seen it over the last two years. We got the first hint of it a year ago, in May, when, after seven weeks of attacks on the Houthis, the United States declared victory and left. Said, "Oh, the Houthis capitulate. We're out of here." Now, the Houthis did no such thing. It was the United States that effectively capitulated, admitting that our carrier strike group could not defeat the Houthis. In fact, I think there were two carrier strike groups at the time.

Okay, so now we're back with they're off the coast of Iran. Once again, the entire foundation of U.S. military force projection in the last quarter of the 20th century was built upon carrier strike groups that no government on the face of the earth could withstand because they were so powerful. They could bring an aircraft carrier to your shores, and the airstrikes would be decimating. Our military, our ground force was, again, unmatched in the world. And then on top of it, our air power. Boy, nobody wanted to confront the United States with its massive air power. And now what has Iran shown in the course of five months?

One, the U.S. is terrified to put its carrier strike group anywhere close to the Strait of Hormuz. You know, roughly 40 years ago, in 1987—or let's call it 39 years ago—the USS Carl Vinson sailed through the Strait of Hormuz into Bahrain, docked. I got that from one of the sailors who was on that ship at the time. Docked, sailors got liberty. And Bahrain's not—Manama's not some great liberty port, I'll concede that. But nonetheless, the United States had no problem putting its carriers in there. We don't do that today. And our ground forces—hell, our army is down to 472,000 globally.

You know, that represents about 40—you know, we used 40% of that force back in 2003 to invade Iraq.

So we're not even equipped in terms of manpower to be able to, if you will, recreate what we did in Iraq in 2003, much less invade Iran. And then that leaves air power. And as we've seen with the air power, apart from the F-35 being a hangar queen that needs—you know, that plane needs more attention than an opera diva—the weapons that it's supposed to launch are becoming unavailable. So now, all of a sudden, the United States has got a complete—it's got budgeted and designed for a military operation it cannot carry out. And the rest of the world is suddenly discovering that, going, "Hey, you know, we thought that they could do this, and now we know that they can't."

#Danny

Yeah, but it keeps going anyway, Colonel Wilkerson.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

Well, it keeps going on there, and Trump's promises.

#Larry Johnson

This is true.

#Danny

This is true. This is true. Yeah, Colonel Wilkerson, your thoughts? I mean, we have reports. I don't know if you saw them. Hard to know if these are accurate. Reuters is saying that China is reportedly preparing to transfer hundreds of shoulder-fired air defense missiles, the MANPADS, to Iran. It's reported that it will be 300 to 400, including QW-12, FN-16, modern portable surface-to-air missiles designed to engage drones, helicopters, cruise missiles, and low-flying aircraft. China is denying the reports as of right now, but there has been a lot of talk about China and Iran's relationship, Russia and Iran's relationship, especially in light of what Ukraine did to the Iranian vessel in the Caspian Sea. Your thoughts on these reports and what it says about Iran and the state of the war in particular.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

I don't think China would be so non-circumspect to do that in a way that would be as visible as you just indicated it is. Not that they wouldn't ultimately and eventually do something like that. And I would think it would be more than just MANPADS. But I don't think they believe that the situation is untenable right now for Iran. I think they believe the exact opposite of that. I think they believe, and rightfully so in my view, that Iran is more or less winning. Going back to that headline in Haaretz,

which I think was very descriptive on the 28th—29th, not 29th, but probably 1 March—somewhere right after 28 February, where they said all Iran has to do is not lose to win. And all Israel and the United States have to do is achieve a spectacular victory to win.

Well, there's going to be no spectacular victory for either Israel or the United States, or the two in combination. So Iran's already won because they haven't lost. And China knows that. And if there is a prudent, circumspect leadership in the world to match Putin and Lavrov, it's Wang Yi and Xi Jinping. So they're not going to take any overt action that would injure their possibilities, you might say, with regard to their support for this conflict. They're going to do things like apply their overhead intelligence mechanisms and maybe ship things on the railroad and ship things otherwise that are necessary, as Russia's probably doing across the Caspian, and perhaps China too. It's not that far to Xinjiang Province, and there's a railroad that runs right up there too. So out of China, I just don't think—I think that's rumor.

I don't think it's a good rumor. I don't think the Chinese are in any position to be worried, really. The most they're worried about is probably this bigger struggle that I'm talking about, and how much even this inept attempt by the empire and its deep state to check them in terms of their Belt and Road Initiative is slowing them down. It was slowing them down majorly in Pakistan, you may have noted, and all of a sudden it accelerated. All of a sudden they're getting everything they want, pretty much. And the Pakistanis have pretty much made it obvious that now they've thrown their weight in with China principally, as opposed to being with the empire. No one's talking about that, but that is where things are going now in Pakistan. So China's got the game going for itself. Why screw it up when it's going well?

#Danny

Yeah, well, here, Larry, is, you know, when you see responses like this, that kind of confirms Colonel Wilkerson's, you know, assessment there. This is how Donald Trump responded immediately to Iranian strikes on the U.S. base in Jordan.

#Speaker 1

President Trump reacting to that Iranian attack on U.S. forces overnight in Jordan. President Trump tells Fox News about Iran, "We are going to beat the effing S out of them." He went on to say, "We'll be hitting them hard. They're going to get a beating."

#Danny

So expletive-laden, Larry. And the fact that a reporter—I mean, Trey Yingst, you know, I wouldn't call him a very respectable figure nonetheless—but the fact that anyone would read something like

that out loud and take it seriously is something to behold. But Larry, your thoughts on this? It doesn't really bode well in terms of how the U.S. is coming off right now as this war, you know, drones on.

#Larry Johnson

Well, if Trump's words translated into victory, then yeah, he'd be winning one war after another. But these kinds of threats, when they're not followed up by any kind of action that validates it, simply, again, it increases Trump's weakness that he's seen as feckless and people stop taking him seriously. That could be dangerous in that one of these times he actually may be serious about threatening some mass use of violence. But for now it's just, you know, we're—let's see, it is currently almost five o'clock. We're 10 minutes till five here. So add eight and a half hours or seven and a half hours, and so that puts it at one thirty in the morning.

And usually by now we're launching those airstrikes. They haven't started yet, so maybe they'll wait until a little bit later. But, you know, once those airstrikes begin, then Iran retaliates and starts hitting its share of targets. So we're going to see if those targets expand tonight. And then on top of that, we're going to see what the Houthis are going to do, and what the militia in Iraq, as I mentioned earlier, are going to do. They're probably going to hold their fire for a couple of days. But, you know, this whole area is going to basically be on fire, and that's not going to help the oil market situation at all, and it's not going to help the U.S. stock market at all.

#Danny

And the oil markets are very curious. They're going up now, but even despite the activity, they have not been matching, as we have seen ever since the April MOU, Colonel Walker. They have not been matching the reality on the ground at all. But one reality that has been acknowledged to a degree is the United States CENTCOM told—or at least U.S. officials told—NBC that since February 28th, Iran has fired at least 9,000 missiles and drones at U.S. assets. Now, Colonel Wilkerson, before this war started, we were told that Iran didn't have that much left.

They were, you know, that the 12-day war depleted them, that the strikes that the United States had carried out during Operation Epic Fury depleted the missile stockpiles, and yet 9,000 and counting, and Iran doesn't even seem like it is phased. Actually, President Mohammad Roudi comes on this show often and says they're still using old models. And I think Wall Street Journal confirmed that, saying that they have been refurbishing old models of missiles and are still going through those. So this could go on for quite a long time. Carl, what are your thoughts?

#Lawrence Wilkerson

Yeah, Larry can probably speak to this better than I, but I'm hearing from the few contacts I have left in the intelligence community, most of whom admittedly are retired now, that the estimate at

the agency is 60% of their inventory is still viable. So, I mean, they've shot 40%, so just do the numbers that they've shot, and then you know what the 60% is, if that's valid. And I suspect it's close. I do. And I also hear that that's what, unfortunately, in many cases, Netanyahu is being told by his own intelligentsia: that they have quite a bit left, at least a half plus of what was estimated to be before. And further, I'm being told by people who seem to know a lot more than I do, they're building more underground. Yeah, that's the key.

#Danny

That's the key, right? Well, Larry, your thoughts on that?

#Larry Johnson

No, and that was exactly the point I was going to make. The problem the United States and Western intelligence has had in assessing what Iran's actual missile capability is, it's all underground. So unless you've got a human source—and CIA has been terrible at human sources, and even Israel has, well, whatever success they have—I don't think they've been able to get anybody effectively underground to see what's going on in these, they call them missile cities. But it's not just confined to ballistic missiles. They've got drones. They've got boats. They've got mines. I mean, this project started 23 years ago at the start of the U.S. invasion of Iraq. The Iranians said, okay, we could be next on that list, so we better get cracking, and they have been.

So right now, whatever they have expended, they're still able to continue the construction underground and fabrication of these missiles because their supply market is intact. The supply chain, particularly with China, is not at all in jeopardy. And they have the technical skill to do it. They have the raw materials. So that's why I think they can continue this for quite some time. And we don't even have a good—you know, we hear about the missile launch. We were told it's ballistic missiles, but we see no proof of it. We have seen one impact. We saw some Patriots being fired, but no evidence of actual interception. So we don't know. Were these old missiles that Iran was firing to continue to drain U.S. air defense systems and so then hit them with something stronger? Don't know. But, you know, the kinds of questions that ought to be asked.

#Danny

Yeah, yeah, yeah. I mean, it appears that whatever the answer to those questions, Larry, these strikes are very calculated. They're strategic. They're not reactive. And I think last night showed that very clearly. And that's why many are calling it a surprise attack, Colonel Wilkerson, because no one expected Iran to, during this lull, take such a measure, despite the fact that Iran said that the war has not ended. It considers the blockade a war. And hell, you had that meeting that Trump and Netanyahu had on the sidelines of Lindsey Graham's funeral being called an intel-sharing meeting, where Netanyahu was bringing intel that would support the war effort, which to Iran signals, well, the war is still very much on. So, Colonel Wilkerson, your thoughts on this?

#Lawrence Wilkerson

Would you believe Bibi Netanyahu if he gave you any intelligence on Iran?

#Danny

Well, wasn't he collecting intelligence in the Oval Office? Yeah. Wasn't there a story about him?

#Lawrence Wilkerson

They do a better job with that than elsewhere. You know, I think Larry's right. I think we're almost at our wits' end. I think the Iranians know that. I was just thinking, as Larry was talking about earlier, the Iranians and how their disposition logistically is. That one railroad comes right in from that mountain town to the east of Tehran, into Tehran. And of course, it's only, what, 100, maybe 110 kilometers at the most—or maybe it's nautical miles—from the Caspian down to Tehran. Not that Tehran's a logistics center or anything, but just to show you how much capability there is, logistics-wise, to keep Iran in the fight. And, you know, anybody will tell you that wars aren't won by generals; they're won by logisticians. And in this case, Iran has an inexhaustible supply of things that it might need, to include some of the things it might need to continue building underground ballistic missiles.

I'm told that they're pretty much self-contained, but I'm sure they need some things, and those things are coming into them. So if you're up against something like that, you're not going to beat it—not with what we've got left. And what we've got left, I say very, very sincerely, because what we've got left is not a lot. And what Israel's got left, I don't think, is a lot, particularly if Iran decides and makes some real effort to strike them hard and fast and everywhere they can with everything they've got. Israel will virtually cease to exist. We're not talking about that much. Bibi doesn't talk about that much, but I think it must be at the back of his mind all the time, which brings me back to my chief concern about Israel and about the region in general: somebody's going to use a nuclear weapon here.

#Danny

To what end, Larry, though? Your reaction to that?

#Lawrence Wilkerson

Why did they jump off the mountain? Why did they jump off the mountain when the 10th Roman Legion was down there?

#Danny

Right.

#Larry Johnson

Look, I think the ultimate determinant in this war going forward is going to be the economy. And the ramifications of the—it's a global shortage of diesel and jet fuel now. And that's—until the Persian Gulf is reopened, you're not going to fix that shortage. And the shortage is particularly acute throughout Asia. Why? Why? Because there are really four geographic centers in the world that are designed—the refineries are built and designed to handle the sour crude or the heavy crude. It's not an interchangeable name, but basically the refineries can handle both the sour and heavy crude.

And those are along the Gulf Coast in the United States, in India, in China, and then in South Korea slash Japan. That's it. And so it's not like they could take an alternative source of oil, like the sweet crude—that doesn't fix it. So they need that sour crude, which comes out of the Persian Gulf. And with none of that, this diesel aviation fuel shortage will continue to grow, and it's going to jack up costs around the world, and it's going to create further supply problems. So at some point, the war will be unsustainable economically, I believe. That's where it's ultimately going to head.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

I don't disagree with that. I think we're headed for that much more swiftly than Bessent or any of those people supposed to be monitoring these things think, too.

#Danny

Yeah, and then the question is, how? Because for Iran and now a greater portion, if not the entire Axis of Resistance, there's a deep understanding that this is going to be a very long war and likely an ongoing war. And so how does Iran and the rest, from Yemen to Iraq, deal with pauses in this? Because a pause is, of course, we've seen it with Ukraine, we've seen it with Iran, a pause is often used as an excuse to replenish and then go again. But now the problem on the U.S. side is that replenishing seems to be a years-long endeavor rather than simply a matter of months or weeks. Your thoughts, Colonel Wilkerson.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

And that's what happens when, as Norm Augustine, who was then just Lockheed Martin's CEO, as he said at that time, 1991, '92, I think it was, if you get down to five contractors, they're just going to charge you an arm and a leg for shitty products and punish you and laugh at you when you say you don't like it. That's where we are. And so that's part of our problem. We couldn't make these things in two to three years if we tried hard. Now, they would say they could and gin up to do it and all that crap, but they're not going to 24/7, three shifts a day. They're going to keep on doing what's necessary to pay their shareholders and themselves these millions of dollars.

You know, Eisenhower just did a comparison between the CEOs of major American corporations, steel, automobile, and so forth, and the six biggest defense contractors. They double the take-home, they double the stock options, they triple other aspects of their remunerations. It's incredible what these guys make. Much of the defense budget goes to them. It goes to them and the shareholders and others involved in the company, whether it's RTX, Lockheed Martin, Boeing, Grumman, whatever. So Larry's absolutely right. We couldn't replenish ourselves probably to the point where we could wage a major war for three freaking years.

#Larry Johnson

Yeah.

#Danny

Larry, I know you've got only a minute, so final comments, 30 seconds.

#Larry Johnson

Logistics, always logistics. Everything else is secondary. If the logistics are a problem, then you can't win a war. And that's the bottom line for the United States. So with that, I'll have to exit.

#Danny

All right, Larry. I'll see you again soon. Later. Bye. Colonel Wilkerson, we can close out in just this last comment. I wanted to ask you about, you know, Larry mentioned earlier in the program that there's a pilgrimage going on in Iraq right now, I believe to Karbala for, I don't know how to say this, Arbreen. It's the world's largest annual religious gathering. And Saudi Arabia, Colonel Wilkerson, Saudi Arabia took part in strikes on Iraq during this time. I mean... Maybe you can end it on this, with the United States, and of course, likely with the United States at the head. I am no longer a subscriber to Saudi Arabia having really any sovereignty. Your thoughts, Colonel Wilkerson, on this?

#Lawrence Wilkerson

Would you do that if you knew the volatility of such issues in the region and you had the most massive, harsh pilgrimage, whatever you want to call it, to Mecca in the world? Would you do that? And you've already had huge problems there with terrorist groups and such. It just doesn't make any sense. It really doesn't make any sense. When you get to the religious overtones of this, that's how you really rile some of these people to do the vilest forms of terrorist acts against you and so forth. I wouldn't be doing that. Yeah, not if I were they.

#Danny

Well, Colonel Wilkerson, final comments as we close the show, and how we can understand this moment in time as the developments move quickly.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

I think we're in deep trouble. I really do. Deep trouble as an empire, deep trouble as a democracy and a republic, which it's very questionable we are anymore. And deep trouble in terms of the three bodies of our legislative, if you will, constitutional government, who all seem to be owned by the same group of people and all seem to be acting in ways that are inimical to our interests, security, and domestic... I don't know how we get out of it. I really don't. I hate to say that, but I don't know what the solution is.

#Danny

Yeah, well, keep on telling the truth. That's what we'll be doing. And, you know, keep on pushing people to change this very ugly dynamic that is only getting uglier politically in the United States. And, of course, it's having huge ramifications worldwide. Colonel Wilkerson, thanks so much for joining me. I want to make sure everybody knows that also Larry Johnson's Sonar 21 and Danny Haiphong YouTube channel is in the video description, so you can support his work there.

All the places to support this channel from Patreon, Substack, and more are in the video description too. Tomorrow I'll be back with our mutual friend Alistair Crooke, July 30th, 10 a.m. Eastern Time, a bit of an earlier show, 10 a.m. Eastern Time, 4 p.m. CET, Central European Time. Without further ado, we're going to head out together, Colonel Wilkerson and I. So thanks so much for tuning in. Hit that like button before you go. And I will see you tomorrow for the latest updates, 10 a.m. Eastern Time, July 30th. Until then, take care. Bye-bye. Take care, Danny. See you later.