

Iran SMASHES US Arsenal, Trump's 'Last Chance' OVER | Larry Johnson & Lawrence Wilkerson

Larry Johnson and Col. Lawrence Wilkerson discuss Iran's brutal response to Trump's ultimatum as devastating reports on the state of the US military's military arsenal, and it's bad news for CENTCOM & Israel. <https://sonar21.com/> <https://www.youtube.com/@UCewRbK22LRnNi6N3EcGjbow> PATREON.COM/DANNYHAIPHONG Support the channel in other ways: <https://www.buymeacoffee.com/dannyhai...> Substack: chroniclesofhaiphong.substack.com Cashapp: \$Dhaiphong Venmo: @dannyH2020 Paypal: <https://paypal.me/spiritofho> Follow me on Telegram: <https://t.me/dannyhaiphong> #iran #iranwar #trump

#Danny

Welcome back to the show, everyone. It's Danny Haiphong. As you can see, I'm joined by Larry Johnson and Colonel Lawrence Wilkerson to break down the latest news. So, gentlemen, first, we have to talk about all of the last chances that Donald Trump has given Iran, only to now there being reports that the U.S. says that there is a deal around the Strait of Hormuz that is imminent, and it was supposed to be announced today. But then Donald Trump had this to say, where he essentially says we'll know in 48 hours whether a deal will occur.

#Donald Trump

It's going to be a little bit of a horse trade. We're moving along very nicely. We'll find out. We'll know in 48 hours.

#Danny

So, 48 hours, two days from today. Well, Iran has essentially said that none of this is the case. They directly reject Axios' claim that there was going to be a deal on the Strait of Hormuz today. Iran is negotiating with Oman around a mechanism that will work for both of them without the U.S.'s assistance. Iran has said that the Strait of Hormuz will remain closed as long as the U.S. military interferes in the affairs of the waterway. Now, there's also this matter of Iran and the war on Iran having virtually wiped out all of the U.S.'s high-precision, long-range missiles, like the ATACMS and the PSMs, the PrSMs. Virtually, they're all gone.

And here are further reports from CNN that 80% of air defenses for the United States are also gone. This happens to be, if we look at this, 50% of all U.S. air defense interceptors, the Patriots, gone.

And now only 90 of the THAAD interceptors remain. So, gentlemen, that's the situation right now. Maybe we can start with you, Larry. What is going on with this so-called last chance for Iran that Trump has been blathering about? Where are we actually with the Strait of Hormuz and the war as a whole?

#Larry Johnson

Actually, I think there's something serious going on, you know, to quote the song from Buffalo Springfield back in the '60s: "There's something happening here. What it is ain't exactly clear." We got a really important signal today that Scott Bessent, Department of Treasury, out of nowhere said, lift sanctions on two airlines and two companies and three airlines that are connected to the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps. Why would he do that? Well, the only reason I can come up with he would do that is the Iranians and the United States, they're not talking directly.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

They're going through intermediaries.

#Larry Johnson

They're going through Pakistan primarily, and Qatar, in terms of conversations between Washington and Tehran. So this, I'm sure, the Iranians said, you know, we're not doing a damn thing until we see some concrete moves by Washington that they're serious. They've got to start lifting sanctions, and they've got to maybe lift the blockade. So they may have already lifted the blockade, but what we saw was clearly they lifted specific sanctions on the IRGC. Now, this comes about 24 hours ago. Iran attacked a ship in the Strait of Hormuz off the coast of Oman and forced three other ships to turn back. Well, three or four weeks ago, what did Donald Trump say? Every time Iran hits a ship, man, we're going to punch them back, and we're going to take out a bridge or take out this or that. What did Trump do? Nothing.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

Nothing.

#Larry Johnson

In addition, Iran reportedly hit Camp Buehring in Kuwait last night, or last night Iranian time, yesterday afternoon our time. Again, the United States, no retaliation. So I think Trump is responding to one, if not all, three different things. Number one, he got warnings from MBS, from the Saudis, from the Qataris that, hey, if you hit Iran, they're going to wipe us out, and we'll be, you

know, we're dumping your dollars. We're going to have to abandon our country. Something to that effect. Second was what you mentioned about the weapons shortages. They are critical. Look, I wrote about this, I'll toot my own horn on this, back on March 3rd.

People can go look it up, March 3rd, sonar21.com. I explained the shortage that was coming for the Patriot missiles, PAC-3s. What most Americans right now don't understand is 80% of our weapons—and beyond, I'm talking JASSMs, PrSMs, Tomahawks, HARMs, AGMs—80% of our weapons are dependent upon five rare earth minerals that China controls. In other words, we can say, oh, we're going to build them, but we don't have control over it. So that's the second thing that I think is weighing on Trump. He's finally come to the realization that we're stuck. The third is, there's got to be some bad economic news that they're working desperately to keep quiet.

Most people don't understand that Japan, of all the countries in the world, Japan has been the most affected by the shutdown of the Persian Gulf, the Strait of Hormuz, because it gets 90% of its oil. Now, the oil that comes out of there is the sour crude. And the Japanese refineries are set up to deal with sour crude. The best metaphor I can come up to explain why this is, is imagine if you got Harry Callahan's .44 Magnum revolver, and then you have a .22-caliber semi-automatic pistol. Well, they load different. They shoot different sizes of ammunition. Just because they're both guns doesn't mean they're the same thing. They work differently. That's the same thing with refineries in terms of sweet and sour crude refineries.

Japan has this sour crude refinery. So even though it could get all the sweet oil it wants out of the United States, it doesn't have the sour crude. It's cut off from the oil for three months. And if you think that this debt crisis Japan's been going through, where the Treasury Department had to go in and rescue them yesterday by pumping in a bunch of euros, then, you know, you're living on a different planet. So you've got all this behind the scenes, and I think that those pressures are coming to bear. I don't know what it is, but there's something bad out there, because that's the only explanation I can come up with why he's held off from being his typical jerky self.

#Danny

Yeah, yeah. Well, Colonel Wilkerson, there have been reports that the United States may be formally requesting a return back to the Islamabad MOU, sending messages to Iran through mediators, indicating a readiness to resume its commitments. And this was from the deputy foreign minister, Qasem Jarrababadi, telling IRNA. But Colonel Wilkerson, what's your thoughts on the situation at hand here?

#Lawrence Wilkerson

Well, let me just say, first of all, that I agree with everything Larry said. And then second, let me add something to what Larry said, and then let me address your specific question. What I would add to what Larry said—and there's a multitude of things to add—but significantly, I would add this. Alexis

Grynkewich, the SACEUR EUCOM commander who wears two hats in Europe, not long ago let General Caine know—and he's an Air Force officer, Caine's an Air Force officer—he let General Caine know that he owned the naval assets that traditionally ply the Mediterranean, teaching him a lesson in joint business, if you will. And that goes from the Standing Naval Force NATO to the Sixth Fleet to those ships that normally ply the Mediterranean.

Not Central Command Commander Admiral Bradley Cooper, who is a surface warfare naval officer. Thank you very much. That was a shock, I think, to the system a little bit because, one, the commander actually spoke up forcefully. And two, he told the truth that apparently Pete Hegseth and Donald Trump, because of Pete Hegseth, really didn't understand. All to say that he's not the only one. All the commanders in the unified command structure, plus others below that structure, have been weighing in with their counterparts and the commanders themselves, with the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, as to what Larry just said: that we have taken our munitions totals down dramatically low in terms of their war plans.

And they are not happy campers about that, nor would I be if I'm suddenly sitting on a bunch of war plans, any one of which might have to be executed completely or partially at any moment, and I don't have any ammunition to speak of. Not only that, I might not even have any ships because we are concentrating so many in this one theater. We don't have a big Navy anymore. We don't have a big Navy at all anymore, not in terms of, you know, the six or seven thousand ships we ended World War II with. We got less than 300, and some of those are in maintenance or even dry dock. So that's another thing I would add to it.

And then the second major item I would add to it is that I think someone, maybe J.D. Vance, maybe some of the people behind Trump, maybe some people who have some sense, have begun to talk to Trump in a way that says, "You had a way to get out of this. It's not perfect. It's not pretty. And you're going to have to accept, in the world's eyes and probably in Americans' eyes, ultimately, somewhat of a setback here in terms of your overall goals and so forth. But you know how we work. We can gussy all that up and lie and cheat and steal around the edges, and we can make it look all right. But you've got to get out of this thing now." And so they went back and resurrected the Memorandum of Understanding, which was a surrender to a certain extent, if you know what you're talking about and what you're doing.

But I think it has the potential to be sort of used, and as Larry was saying, backed up by other things that will convince the Iranians that you're serious. After all, the IRGC is the money-making element in Iran. The last report I saw on their income from the oil sales alone, they took a trillion dollars in a single year—the IRGC. Now, that money doesn't go just to keep their arms and their fitness up. It goes to build their palaces and their homes and buy their perks and all that kind of stuff. So they got right at the heart of how to influence Iran with that. And I suspect there will be more of that.

But to your question in particular, I think with the right massaging and the right work, with Oman involved in particular, I think they can make this look like it's a win, and no one's better at that than Donald Trump. People just lie about it. But it's not going to be a win. It's going to be a loss with respect to most of the key parameters of what it is Trump said he wanted. But he's forgotten all those. The only two he's really harping on now are the Strait, and this will take care of the Strait, maybe in a loss-type of way. But nonetheless, it'll take care of the Strait, and that's what's going to haunt the Republicans in the midterms if it goes on and turns into a colossal recession or depression.

And at the same time, I think they're going to be able to deal with the nuclear program, which is the other issue, because I think the Iranians already have a nuclear weapon. And I think they're going to have to present that, and they're going to have to deal with that, and they're going to have to say that they accept that. And, you know, how are they going to massage that one? Well, it won't be right off the bat, and it won't be in Netanyahu's face. And that brings me to my last point. Bibi is making a mess all over the place in Israel right now. He's resumed operations in Lebanon. Despite the talks going on, he's resumed operations. He's killing people again in Lebanon, Lebanese citizens, as a matter of fact.

And the IDF commander said this morning they're getting ready to move again, move again against all of the agreements thus far achieved. And he's killing people rapidly in Gaza and on the West Bank. And he's talked the humanitarian organizations into changing their dictates. And they're changing them not because Hamas said it is not going to disarm in accordance with the dictates, and it isn't, but because Israel wants to keep killing people. And they said, okay, so he's going to keep doing that. And this is going to perturb things majorly, because we have to remember why Iran, at least ostensibly why Iran, got into this in the first place in terms of Israel's treatment of the Palestinians.

So stand by. And I didn't even add that Israel, domestically, right now is falling apart. There are more people dying on the streets of Israel right now than have died on the streets of Israel since 1948. And that's saying something. And they're of all stripes. And Ben Gvir has lost control of the domestic security situation. Netanyahu has no idea how this election is going to go. And I wouldn't be surprised to see him shut it down because he doesn't. So you've got real turmoil in Israel right now, in addition to all the other things that are happening. So it ain't over till the fat lady sings.

#Danny

Larry, how much does the inconsistency of Donald Trump and the administration right now in the United States, and even Israel, toward Iran have to do with this? Reuters says this is an exclusive just minutes ago, that Iran has warned Gulf states that any new U.S. attack on its territory would trigger retaliation against critical energy infrastructure across the region, five sources tell Reuters. Well, how much does the munitions shortage in all of this play into what appears to be the U.S. stalling for time? Is it that the United States is serious about going back to an MOU process, or is it

kind of buying time so they can replenish even just to a minimal degree so they can keep up this tit for tat? What's your thoughts?

#Larry Johnson

Well, hey, they can't replenish. China controls the rare earth minerals. You can't build something out of nothing. So without gallium—I mean, gallium is a byproduct of the production and manufacturing of aluminum. When the United States stopped producing aluminum, like, 40 years ago, we offshored it. We don't need that anymore. Man, we're now completely screwed. Even if we wanted to make gallium, we'd first have to reestablish an aluminum industry and then have to establish the processing to get that. That's number one. That story you read, that was Reuters today, within the last hour.

#Danny

Yeah, exactly.

#Larry Johnson

Where have they been? That was news last Friday. They're just catching up to it five days later?

#Danny

It's those damn Germans. Jesus. It took them five anonymous sources, but continue.

#Larry Johnson

Yeah, I mean, that's ridiculous. Yeah, that's what Iran said last week. And that's what led, as I said in my opening remarks, the Saudis and Qataris to go to Trump and say, "Hey, don't do this." Because if Iran, you know, acted on those threats, which I don't think they were just jawing to be jawing, I think they were dead-ass serious, it would force Saudi Arabia and Qatar and Kuwait and Bahrain and the UAE—they'd have to start abandoning the countries. They could not maintain the population levels they have in those countries with no air conditioning and with no potable water because of destroyed desalination plants. So, yeah, that would be a problem, and that, again, was one factor in this.

And it's, you know, look, something happened Saturday night. The current and recently retired U.S. military personnel I know, either the ones who retired had direct lines into CENTCOM. It was on. I mean, everybody who were ops officers, it was on. It was going to happen. And then, boom, it got turned off in the flick of an eye. So something got Donald Trump's attention. Somebody said something. I don't know who or what. It's still not clear. But the other—what Colonel Wilkerson mentioned about—so you had the commander of EUCOM. So within the whole joint force, back

when I was doing exercises, Don Rumsfeld came up with this great idea that he was going to make U.S. SOCOM the supported commander.

That would mean it would be in charge of, let's say you had a terrorist incident in Madagascar, which was like on the cusp of AFRICOM, CENTCOM, and PACOM. And so SOCOM would be in charge. That means the supporting commanders, AFRICOM, CENTCOM, PACOM, would be responsive to them. Well, I mean, that turned out to be a goat rope because, as Colonel Wilkerson correctly noted, these theater CINCs, they tend to have a mind of their own, and they got some power too. And so here's this European commander, and the 6th Fleet falls under him, and he's being tasked by CENTCOM, "Hey, we need your air defense systems over here," and he's going, "Whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa."

#Lawrence Wilkerson

We do that, you leave us defenseless.

#Larry Johnson

No, we're not doing that. And so that's when, at that point, the SecDef has to step in to maybe try to sort that out. And apparently, Hegseth, on this one occasion, was smart enough to stay the hell out of the middle of that elephant stampede. So I said, there's stuff going on behind the scenes that we're not seeing, but it's not all ice cream cones and candy canes. There's a lot of turmoil, and I think there are some serious, serious concerns about both the military readiness of the United States and the economic dynamics at play.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

And just to add to that, Danny, I think that third and fourth, which I've been talking about all along, tier of targets that Iran has in its pistol, so to speak, cocked and ready to go, but doesn't want to hit because it knows how much damage it will do to the global economy, is in fact still there. And that's their ultimate trump card, I think. Because if they hit that, then they're sending the world into some bad situations, probably global depression ultimately. They're not going to hit them. They don't want to hit them. But they could if they were pressured and they felt their back was against the wall, they could. Not only that, as I said, I really do think they already have a nuclear weapon or two or three.

#Danny

Well, to that Reuters piece, it's behind a heavy paywall. So thankfully, we have X taking excerpts from it. Here is Tehran's perspective, according to the sources they use, that Trump now faces two unpalatable choices, the senior Iranian official told Reuters: escalated conflict that could engulf the

Gulf and disrupt global energy supplies, or accept a negotiated outcome falling short of the decisive victory Washington seeks. Uh, maybe that's putting it in nice terms, uh, Colonel Wilkerson, in the sense that, you know, Trump has no way out of that.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

And there's no question in my mind that the man is a genius, if that's associated with lying in a way that is effective at lying. And, um, unfortunately, we still have about 40 or so million Americans who vote who are, you know, adherents to those lies. They will not for a moment think that Donald Trump utters a fabrication or a lie. So, I mean, it's just his character to do that. So whatever he succeeds in, whether it's this deal or some other one, he's going to lie his way out of it in terms of it being positive and not negative. Look at the press conferences now that he's having. I mean, you got reporters out there now who will directly challenge him. He basically tells one of them he's not worth a warm piss.

Get out of his face and go away. I think he's capable of lying his way through this, and I'm all for it if it stops this war and gets the Strait back in normal operation again, and stops these potential deaths that are going to occur should we do something as stupid as putting ground troops in there, or even something as stupid as bringing the carriers up to where they're in proximity to the action so they can launch their planes without miles and miles and efforts of tanking, and lose one of them. You know, one part of me, the old part that used to teach at Newport at the Naval War College, it's about time we get our comeuppance in that way. But I don't want those 5,000 sailors, men and women, to be in the water.

#Danny

Yeah, Larry, your reaction to Tehran's perspective, according to Reuters?

#Larry Johnson

Well, I mean, Tehran, they know what their position is. They know they have clear strategic objectives. One, get the United States out of the Persian Gulf. And they had—how do you achieve that objective? Well, they had two methods: one, through negotiation; two, through force. So far, they're using force, and it's working pretty damn good. The United States has basically had to abandon military bases in Kuwait, in Bahrain. Fifth Fleet headquarters, essentially a ghost town. They pulled out of Al Udeid, all the key units from Al Udeid. Air units have been redeployed to the rear, to Israel in particular.

Initially, they tried to put them into Jordan, and they even found out that in Jordan they were pretty vulnerable. And truth be told, they're still vulnerable in Israel. So, get the United States out of the Gulf. That's going pretty good. Exert control over the Strait of Hormuz in order to extract concessions from the West to return Iran to the community of nations where it's no longer subject to

these sanctions. So that's underway. They're getting that. So, you know, and then at the same time, they're saying, "And we want to use our leverage to bring an end to this war, the genocide against the Palestinian people."

#Lawrence Wilkerson

Yes.

#Larry Johnson

Now, they haven't backed off of any of that so far. And it's not— and there is no pressure, militarily, economically, politically, that the United States can apply on Iran to compel it, force it to accept what the U.S. wants. Now, what Trump's sort of his parachute out of this crash is if he can get Iran to talk and agree to, quote, limit—go back to a JCPOA—limitations on nuclear weapons. Iran, I think Iran might be willing to do that.

But again, I don't disagree with Colonel Wilkerson that Iran may already have the nuke, but they might be willing to go that step, provided that all of the agreements, portions of the MOU, are fulfilled first, which means Israel out of southern Lebanon, blockade lifted, sanctions lifted, assets unfrozen, and the acceptance of acknowledgment that Iran is in control of the Strait of Hormuz. Man, that's a tough thing for Donald Trump and the United States to swallow, right? But by God, if they want this to stop and they want to stop bleeding out of U.S. resources, that's their only choice.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

Danny, let me just add that, again, I agree with just about everything Larry said, if not everything. But I think the flaw in the ointment there is Israel. I'm watching what Netanyahu is doing with the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation. He just more or less reversed everything they said that he had to do, especially that pertained to Hamas and disarming. Hamas has said in response to that—and they weren't even comfortable before this—but they've said in response to that move by Bibi, "Not on your life." At the same time, he's closing the cordon in Gaza and killing people still inside that cordon. He's hiked up things on the West Bank, and he's positioned himself, as I said before, in Lebanon with clear motivation.

And I think orders, if the IDF commander there is telling the truth in Haaretz, he actually revealed it: to move on and take out some more Hezbollah, and to do it regardless of the talks and regardless of what might happen. If that's what is going to happen, and he's not unelected quickly enough in the process and is able to pursue that, I don't see how Iran gets out of—and I would love to have been in some of their strategic consultations, if you will, about their ultimate problem, about the region's ultimate problem—do they have the opportunity here, given the ability to play that opportunity properly, to destroy Israel, or at least to set it back so considerably that they don't have to worry about it.

And even more importantly, the Palestinians get some relief and perhaps don't have to worry about it either, because that will shift the powers in the region dramatically to the side of the Palestinians, which they've only been ostensibly on up to this point, because it'll be in their interest to do that and to take advantage of this near destruction, if you will, of the state of Israel. Because I go back to what the Omani foreign minister has said twice now: the real problem in the region is Israel. Well, as long as we stay behind them as solidly as Trump has—the last president not to do that, in fact, was H.W. Bush; all the others have—as long as we do, it's us too.

So how do you separate those two things together in order to get this accomplished and to maybe have a chance with your most pressing objective, I think, and that is to give the Palestinians some kind of hope for the future? I don't know how you do that. And I don't know if the Iranians would take that step and say, we've got an opportunity, we've got a chance to destroy the most important ingredient in the region to its instability and possibly a real threat in the future that it isn't right now, significantly beyond the capacity it has right now. If it increases its territory and nobody acts—not Erdogan, nobody—would you leave that strategic moment alone if you were they? And especially if he gives you the excuse for doing it by continuing operations despite the talks in Lebanon.

#Danny

Larry, I'm curious on your thoughts about this.

#Larry Johnson

Well, I agree with Colonel Wilkerson. I'm not sure that there's any more commentary needed on that. I mean, I think he covered it.

#Danny

Well, in that case then, I wanted to ask you about Yemen. Because as we have discussed on this program for many days, many weeks now, this has become, of course, a regional war. And it has been since day one. But it has exploded again. And we know that the Yemenis, Ansar Allah, are blockading Saudi oil from the Bab al-Mandeb Strait. They have four attacks on cargo ships in the last 24 hours, with the latest one targeting an oil tanker just southeast of Aden. And after these attacks, one of which led to the sinking of a cargo ship to the bottom of the sea, oil prices rose about \$1.07. This comes after, just not long ago, but in the last 24 to 48 hours, Yemen knocked a Saudi airport out of operation, hitting a key radar. So that is escalating. I know Saudi Arabia is engaged in strikes in Yemen within the last 24 hours as well, or at least attempted to. So, Larry, what's your thoughts? What's the role of all of this to the broader regional situation?

#Larry Johnson

You ask yourself, what the hell are the Saudis thinking? Or they're not even thinking. So let's lay out sort of the order of battle. The Houthis dominate. They inhabit one-third of Yemen, but they've got 80% of the population. So Yemen's total population: 35 million. So here's Yemen sitting there with about 25, 26 million people.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

They have an armed, let's call it an armed force, of about 300,000.

#Larry Johnson

There's Saudi Arabia. Now, their total population is comparable to Yemen's, 35 million. However, of that 35 million, about 15 million are foreigners, so they're not Saudis. So that takes them down to around 20. And then they've got an army that's 50,000 smaller than the Yemenis. So, like, what, the Saudis are going to attack with a ground force against Yemen? That's not going to happen. I mean, the Yemenis will—the Ansar Allah folks would chew them up. As far as having the wherewithal to inflict damage on the Houthis and to compel them to stop attacking Saudi Arabia, that ain't going to happen. In fact, the Houthis—the bad thing for the Saudis is they got so many damn targets. I mean, big, fat, ripe targets that the Houthis can blow the hell out of if they decide to.

That it not only hurts the Saudis—or let me put it, it hurts the Saudis on so many levels, both in terms of reputation, in terms of the economy, in terms of the actual functioning of their society. Financially devastating stuff. The Saudis, by contrast, you know, you can bomb the Houthis all day long. You may kill a few, but you're not going to be able to destroy critical infrastructure because they don't have any above ground. Their missile bases are underground. And then on top of it, I'm expecting the Shia Iraqis to launch their attack today or tomorrow because Arbaeen is over, and they're going to go get revenge for what the Saudis did on Sunday or Saturday. So this is—I come back to—what the hell are the Saudis thinking? Because they can't win this militarily at all.

#Danny

Hmm.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

They couldn't even win it if the United States came back in and gave them all the support they did before.

#Danny

What are your thoughts on the Yemeni factor?

#Lawrence Wilkerson

I was just thinking, as you were talking and as Larry was talking, again, I agree with what he was saying. They're tough people, and the Saudis aren't. I mean, I've trained Saudis. I've trained Saudis for five, six years. The Saudis are not tough people, not in their National Guard, which is really kind of like a Praetorian Guard, nor in their regular forces, and they're not very big. And ground warfare is anathema to them, anathema, which is why they made the previous war almost all aerial. I was just thinking, you know, the last time the Red Sea loomed large enough in a lot of people's eyes, which sort of produced that massive co-location, in terms of the size of the territory, of military forces from five or six different countries in Djibouti.

And the Turkish desire to get down there too, but there wasn't space in Djibouti, so up the river a little bit, so to speak. They put together a combined task force and a joint task force, a U.S. joint task force and a combined task force, CJTF-46, I think it was called, or something like that, and CTF-65, something like that. The CTF, the Combined Task Force, was a lot of people: the British, the French, the Chinese. I think the Japanese even provided some logistics support. If not a ship, they may have even, for the first time, gone abroad with their Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Force and sent a destroyer. I can't remember. You can look it up. The Houthis are playing with that kind of global reaction if they go much further in terms of damage in the Red Sea. So I'd be very careful if I were the leadership. I'd be thinking about that.

And they're smart. I know from reports, at least, that they're pretty smart. And they think strategically. I wouldn't go too much further in terms of destroying commerce, or you might rile the globe into putting together another combined task force, and it might include the Chinese and it might include others. And then you're in trouble because you've got the whole damn globe mounted up against you. I don't think that's going to happen because I don't think the globe's got that kind of ability to show solidarity in an effort like that. But the Red Sea is that important. And if it really got serious and commerce was truly stopped there, except for that which was absolutely not in support of Israel, I might be in favor of that, but I don't think the world would be. So I just throw that out as a caution to the Houthis.

#Larry Johnson

Yeah.

#Danny

Yeah. Well, um,

#Lawrence Wilkerson

That previous incident was, of course, because of the Somali pirates. But it did get really serious with the pirates in terms of commerce in the seas, and that's the reason they formed the task forces.

#Danny

Yeah, great points, Colonel Wilkerson. Well, Larry, how about we talk about this story that has popped up, which implicates, I think, the regional situation as well. And I know, Colonel Wilkerson, you'll have thoughts on this. So the Pentagon is supposedly, according to NBC News, drafting a nuclear strategy that would place greater emphasis on a potential use of shorter-range tactical nuclear weapons in a regional conflict with China or Russia. So despite the United States still being very much embroiled and now beleaguered in a quagmire with Iran, this appears to be, at least what NBC is reporting, what the Pentagon is spending its time doing. What do you think of this, Larry? And then to Colonel Wilkerson.

#Larry Johnson

Yeah, it makes so much sense. I mean, hell, we can't produce PAC-3 missiles. We can't produce PRISM missiles. We can't produce Tomahawks. So, yeah, let's use nukes. That's a terrific solution. Yeah, this is madness. And, you know, it's one of the problems having an incompetent like Pete Hegseth in the job where he's at. No experience, no gravitas, no judgment. And, you know, this—you're going to reexamine our nuclear doctrine? You know, one of the ironies over the last 36 years is that when the Soviet Union collapsed, the Soviets, the Russians, had to make a decision. They only had limited resources militarily. So the issue was, do we build these, you know, big, bulky aircraft carriers, or do we focus on building submarines?

They decided to build submarines, and the United States, by contrast, we weren't short of cash because we had a global credit card, so we could charge everything to other countries. We decided, let's build some more of these aircraft carriers, which are now, as a result of the development of hypersonic missiles, anti-ship cruise missiles, are big white elephants, big fat targets that can be easily destroyed. Well, we can't use them anymore as they were intended to be used. We can't use them anymore. And as a result, here's Russia sitting now with, you know, I think they're now the number one fleet with the most advanced ballistic missile submarines on the globe. And the United States is rapidly falling behind. So, yeah, they want to revisit their nuclear doctrine. How about don't do it? That would be, I think, an ample revision as far as I'm concerned.

#Danny

Yeah, you've been on this show for a long time.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

Let me lay some of the blame at the feet of Barack Obama. I always will. When we were working on the Nuclear Posture Review and really put some effort into trying to dramatically shift the momentum we saw come out of the Bush administration—and boy, did I know about that—we got him. I think we had him. And that comes from personal reflections and actually being in the room a couple of times. We had him. He understood. He understood the danger. He understood the immense cost. And he understood the departure from the Cold War, where people in the country understood viscerally that nuclear weapons were dangerous. Movies, building shelters in their backyard, and so forth. They understood that. We lost all that.

We lost it all with the disappearance of the Cold War and the metamorphosis that takes place in humans when the danger goes away. I mean, we destroyed—we had about 60,000 nuclear warheads between us, various sundry launch vehicles and other things. We destroyed, of those 60,000 warheads, all but about 6,000 on each side. A marvelous achievement. But then we got Barack Obama, who understood, I think, all of this. And then it came up into a congressional battle as to whether or not he would get his signature healthcare program through the Congress, and all of his desires for changing the nuclear posture statement and thus the thrust and cost of the nuclear program for the future, for years to come, went away.

And he made a bargain with those Republicans in the Congress who didn't want him to change the posture statement, wanted it to be even more dramatically dangerous for the future and costly. And we got that statement. And now we're looking at trillions of dollars being spent on a stockpile we do not need to spend a penny more on. I go along with the surety and the security aspects of the spending, because all you're doing is making sure the ones you have work. And you do that with computers. You don't have to test underground, in the atmosphere, or anywhere. And you, what they call, that's sort of securitized.

That's the surety thing that securitizes, making sure all your stockpiles and everything are safe. Not just from leakage or something like that, but also from a terrorist attack. Had to do that in Hawaii very, very carefully because we had some things stored in some very bad places. We've changed that now. All to say that that started the momentum. All the labs were tickled to death because these 40-year-olds out in the labs had not been a part of the Manhattan Project, had not been part of the Cold War to speak of. And they wanted to do things. They wanted to experiment. And the nuclear niche in the national security complex is very rich if you make it very rich. And that's what this did.

We're going to put probably \$2 to \$3 trillion into it over the next decade or decade and a half or two. Dangerous, extremely dangerous. And with what you just said, this talk—and I've heard it too. I've heard it amongst uniformed people: "Why do we have them if we can't use them?" That's the most common comment. Extremely dangerous, extremely dangerous. And yet it's happening. We're making a colossal mistake. Incidentally, the Russians still are operating basically on what they were doing in the '90s in terms of ideology and thinking. They think it's dangerous too. They don't want to have to enter an arms race. And I dare say Xi Jinping is the same way. But we're going to start one.

#Danny

Larry, what would be the point of using or even planning to use nuclear weapons on countries like Russia and China, both of whom are not only nuclear-armed, but have a whole lot of other things at their disposal as well, and are, in the case of China and Russia too, just so critical to the global economy? What's the reasoning behind planning for such a thing? Why even do it?

#Larry Johnson

The cynical version is to create a new jobs program. You know, give somebody a reason to have to be in command of something to justify this whole program. You know, this ignores the concept of, you know, what is our strategic vision? What is it that we're trying to do? Right now, the entire U.S. military is structured according to, I'll call it a 20th-century model, of the United States having to project force around the world to control, contain, or influence events in some other country. Nothing to do with defending the United States.

Not one thing. It is, we're a hammer looking for a nail. And this kind of, I'll call it academic discussion about use of nuclear weapons, it just reflects a lack of it because they haven't used them. They haven't actually seen them fired off. They don't understand what it means, and they certainly don't appreciate that right now Russia is positioned to obliterate us if we even dare to go down that road. So this is, you know, this is where we have the nuclear weapon as a 20th-century weapon that's no longer relevant for the 21st century.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

Well said. Well said. Unfortunately, we have a lot of people who don't understand that. A lot of people. And you're right about the money. If you had... I met Khosrow Semnani, who's a Persian American, fled right at the Revolution, '78, '79. Very smart man, nuclear physicist, or got a doctorate in nuclear physics. And he has a corner on, really, about 90% of the nuclear waste industry out in three or four states that it exists in, mainly Washington State, Nevada, Utah. And he's a billionaire. His palace just outside Salt Lake City looks like something from Isfahan, or some really gorgeous Persian palace. And that is such a lucrative industry. Not only has it made him a billionaire, he has more or less purchased many of the politicians in Utah and Wyoming and Nevada and elsewhere in that region. Very powerful man. And it just shows you.

What really motivates, as Larry very correctly said, a lot of this action in the nuclear industry: money. It's very—it's a niche, but it's a very rich niche. And because it's a niche, it only requires a couple of senators and eight or ten representatives to protect it 100%, because a lot of that money comes back to them in payola, in contributions, political contributions and so forth, which are now off the charts because of Citizens United. So this is a self-licking ice cream cone, as we used to say in the military. And it's, you know, it's dangerous. It's extremely dangerous. I don't care if they are

obsolete in terms of warfare, and I think that's true. And it's because they are so destructive. That doesn't mean they ain't going to be used. And once you start using them, it's going to be kind of hard, I think, to close the door.

#Danny

Yeah. Well, we were about five weeks.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

These new ones. These new ones are unbelievable. If you take a look at some of the things that some of the labs are doing, they are clearly designed to perfect, as much as possible, a first-strike capability.

#Danny

Yeah, well, maybe in the last few minutes or so that we have, your final thoughts on this. But in the broader scenario, in the broader landscape, we have, earlier when we were talking about Yemen, we have the United States supposedly trying to get Saudi Arabia to de-escalate with Yemen. Both of them are concerned about what escalations will do to the oil markets, as well as to Saudi Arabia itself. But then you have stories like this, where you have the United States pursuing the two, you would call, top pillars of this multipolar world with nuclear planning. So maybe your final thoughts and analysis on this contrast here.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

Isn't it extraordinary that we are now trying to stop the Houthis, whereas before we were funding the Saudis and fighting them? Be careful what you wish for. You might get it.

#Danny

Yep. Yep. Yeah. I got to run, Danny. All right. Take care, Colonel. Good to see you, brother. Larry, we'll close up. Lots on that contrast there, just the larger situation that, I guess we could say, the U. S. empire of chaos, as our friend Pepe says, finds itself in.

#Larry Johnson

Well, I fully agree with Colonel Wilkerson that the skunk at the garden party here is potentially Israel and the Zionists, that Trump still has enormous leverage over them. All he needs to do is decide to use it. But up to this point, he's been afraid to use it. So until he decides to use it, Israel will continue to sabotage and make matters worse. But this, again, I'll be watching tonight to see what happens. There have been, and I'll call them—I don't want to call them provocations—but actions,

Iran's actions to defend itself, protect its interests, could be used by Trump as justification to restart military operations. But for some reason, Trump is now reinvested in the negotiated outcome. And I don't know what pushed him over the edge. Something did. And I'm glad for that something. But the point is, even if they reach an agreement by Friday and the straits are, quote, open, the economic damage that's been done from this is not going to be resolved today, for a minimum of two months and maybe far longer than that.

#Danny

Yeah, well, I know that you've been talking about the U.S.'s strategic reserves running incredibly low. A number of shows, both with you and others, have talked about this. Where are we now with that? Because the Strait of Hormuz, yes, is closed, and the Bab al-Mandib Strait is, how should we say, impaired right now when it comes to Saudi shipping of its oil exports. So where are we now with that?

#Larry Johnson

We really don't have a good assessment yet of which oil terminals in the Gulf—whether Saudi, Qatari, Bahraini, Kuwaiti, and Emirati—which of those terminals are damaged, which of those terminals were closed down and have to be restarted, and which ones are still functioning. I don't know. I've not seen any good assessment on that yet. So, you know, you can then draw the continuum. You can say, well, if they're all damaged, then it's going to be months before you get those fixed and back online. So, yeah, the earliest relief, economic relief, we could see out of this would be six months minimum. But if they are not damaged and they are pumping, then you could see relief within two months. But that means there's still these fundamental economic problems and shortages that are not going to be resolved overnight.

#Donald Trump

Hmm.

#Danny

Well, I think that's a good place we can stop here because, yes, there's a lot to now look out for because of this negotiations process that's happening between Iran and Oman. Of course, with the U.S., it seems like scrambling to communicate with mediators to see how that's going to go. But it seems like what is happening is that there's a major pause that the United States is trying to take. And I don't know if you agree with me, Larry, but it seems like the Iran-Oman Strait of Hormuz process, Trump will try to say that that's their deal once it finally comes through, that they helped push it through. And that's good enough for now, at least for the—I think it's going to be like some

60-day process. That gives both a pause, but also, of course, we can't really ever trust the United States, especially under the Trump administration, to stick by even the thinnest of promises. Larry, do you have any final words for the audience before we head out of here?

#Larry Johnson

No, I'm taking it day by day. Let's see what happens. You know, do we get another day without any military strikes? That's good. They're moving back towards a diplomatic solution because the only out for Trump is a diplomatic solution. There is no path for military victory with Iran. Zero.

#Danny

Zero. Yes, if anybody's been watching this program, has been watching Larry, that is abundantly clear from everything that we've been covering here. All right, everybody, so we have Larry's Sonar 21, as well as Transition Protocol on YouTube, in the video description below, so you can go there and follow and support Larry's work. Do subscribe to Transition Protocol. I am also contributing to that on a more informal basis, but it's a very good program that should be supported. So you'll definitely want to follow that as well if you watch this program. Hit the like button before you go.

That helps boost the show. Tomorrow I'll be on at 2 p.m. Eastern time with Scott Ritter, Thursday, August 6th. And if you are interested, I am doing members-only live streams as well, private chats, and I'll be doing one in a couple hours at 7 p.m. today. So if you want to become a YouTube member and take part in that, you can do that. All right, everybody. And you can also do that on Patreon and Substack if you prefer that. Okay, everybody. That's it for today. Thank Larry for his time and Colonel Lawrence Wilkerson too by hitting that like button. And I'll see you tomorrow at 2 p.m. Eastern. Bye-bye.

#Larry Johnson

Thanks, Danny.