



## **Trump's plan for Ukraine leaked & Israel's agenda behind ceasefire | Col. Wilkerson**

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**Zain Raza (ZR):** Thank you for joining us today at another episode of The Source, I'm your host Zain Raza. If you're watching our videos regularly, make sure to join our alternative channels on Rumble, Telegram and our podcast called Podbean. YouTube, which is owned by Google, a US corporation, can shadowban and censor us at any time, especially given its history of suppressing independent and critical media such as ours. And if that day ever comes, we won't be able to reach you even with an announcement. Hence we are asking all of our viewers to join our alternative channels. You will find the link to all of them in the description of this video below. Today I'll be talking to a retired Army Colonel who served in the US Army for 31 years, Lawrence Wilkerson. Lawrence's last position in the government was as Chief of Staff for then Secretary of State Colin Powell from 2002 to 2005. He is now a Senior Fellow at the Institute for Responsible Statecraft. Lawrence Wilkerson, happy birthday and welcome back to our show.

**Lawrence Wilkerson (LW):** Thank you for both.

**ZR:** I appreciate you taking time out to be interviewed today, especially as it is your 80th birthday. It would be therefore a good start on this occasion to talk about your career, which spans three decades of service that encompasses the US military as well as your time in Washington. In the military, you served as an observation helicopter pilot during the Vietnam War. I read that you had many disagreements with your superiors and in one case even prevented an atrocity by deliberately placing your helicopter between a location full of civilians and another US helicopter that was about to launch an attack on the site. You also spent several years in the United States Navy's Pacific Command in South Korea, Japan and Hawaii. Later in your career, you became an assistant to Colin Powell when he was named Chairman of the Joint Chief of Staff in the first Gulf War. And in the early 2000s when Colin Powell was appointed Secretary of State in the George W. Bush administration, infamously known for the illegal invasion and occupation of Iraq, you served as his Chief of Staff. Can

you tell us about your most noteworthy experiences from Vietnam to the Gulf Wars and then talk about your successes, failures, regrets and the lessons you learned that will be essential for future generations?

**LW:** Well, that's a huge demand. Have you got several days? My most vivid recollection of Vietnam is how decrepit the situation had become by the time I arrived in 1969, March of 1969. That is to say, the US military was spread all over the III Corps area where I was actually a standardization instructor pilot, which simply means I go around giving all the helicopter pilots in every division rides to see if they're still competent and so forth and check them off. So I got all around the III Corps area. Spent a lot of time in Vung Tau, Saigon, Koo Chi, Dao Tieng, Tay Ninh, other places like that doing check rides, as well as flying about 1100 hours in combat. So what I saw was that we were just there. We were just there and I suspected we had just been there every year before doing the same thing or trying out new things. And it seemed like what we were doing was just holding place. There wasn't anything going on significant that was going to change the dynamics of the war. So that started me along with some of the other things, like you just cited; free fire zones where you could shoot anything that moved from tigers to elephants to water buffalo to people. That started me thinking about why I was in the military and why we were doing what we were doing in that particular war zone. But I quickly put those thoughts behind me as I started to rise in rank and to do other things. I didn't go back to Vietnam. I fully expected to go back to Vietnam in 1970 when I had finished a year back in the States. That was the routine. I didn't. They selected me for a very prestigious school and I went to that school and by the time I finished that school and my baccalaureate, which I needed about nine months to complete because I'd walked out of college to join the military, after I'd done that, the war was winding down big time. And so I didn't get orders back. At that particular juncture in my career I moved up through other ranks and a lot of those ranks exposed me to the other services, particularly the Navy and the Marine Corps, Air Force, too, to a certain extent, the Navy and Marine Corps in particular. So I began to get what we would later call a joint education very early. It was death. It was a death blow if you got a joint education. You weren't beloved of your service. And so you weren't promoted until Goldwater Nichols, the DOD Reorganization Act of 1985, 86 was passed. That turned the whole tables. So all of a sudden, people with joint experience were in high demand or were getting promoted very rapidly. And that's when Powell picked me up at the Naval War College. So I really began to get a feeling for the entire United States military, all the services, all the missions, all the problems, all the complexities. And then, of course, when I served the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, I was over them all, as he was the ultimate military man. And I got to see everything, including the build down, which was very important for me to understand what a president could do if he wanted to with, for example, the defense budget. H .W. Bush told Chairman Powell: "Cut the armed forces by 25%, one quarter. Cut the industrial base, cut the contractor force all by roughly a quarter". Then along came Les Aspin with the first term of Bill Clinton in 1993, 94. And he said: "Cut three percent more". So I got to see a meat cleaver taken to the armed forces, but by a very carefully orchestrated plan that Secretary of Defense Cheney, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, Colin Powell, and ultimately H .W. Bush worked out between them. I also got to see the end of the Cold War. And I got to see those euphoric moments when Mikhail Gorbachev, really

the man who brought an end to the Soviet Union, not Star Wars, not Ronald Reagan, not the United States, the man who brought an end to the Soviet Union as it existed for all those years was Mikhail Gorbachev. Because he saw what a failure it was and began the actions to do it. But I got to see what his foreign minister, Eduard Shevardnadze, Gorbachev himself, Ronald Reagan, to an extent, and then Colin Powell had been, he was final national security adviser and before that, deputy national security adviser, so he just moved right into Bush, who had been Vice President's administration, knowing all these people. And we worked with Helmut Kohl, with Francois Mitterrand in France. I remember Kohl was stunned when Gorbachev suggested, and we all looked around the room virtually and said: Are you kidding? And Kohl was one of the biggest ones: Germany to be reunified and to stay in NATO? His biggest concern was the \$80 billion US price tag for the reunification. That really scared him. Turned out costing about twice that much, I think, but that frightened him. And he was not really all that much in favor of remaining in NATO as a unified country because he knew the threat it would present to Russia. But Russia convinced him they would not be alarmed. And so he went along with it. And then we began destroying nuclear warheads, 30,000 roughly on both sides. USSR, America, 30,000. 60,000 total nuclear warheads. And we began destroying them as fast as we possibly could. And we actually got down to around I think 6,000 on the Russian side, 5,800 or so on our side. And we were going to go further, much further. We were going to go down to 2,000, maybe even 1,200, a range of 1,200 to 2,000. Then it all ended. It all ended with Bill Clinton's second, third, and fourth year in his second term when he decided to expand NATO and drive Russia mad and really threaten them. And we've been doing it ever since. And so my most vivid moment is that moment of euphoria about the end of the Cold War turned into tragedy by presidents who did not understand what they were doing; or did understand – I believe Bill Clinton did understand and did it anyway because it brought money into his political coffers from military contractors and others. So that's a really fast summary.

**ZR:** Thank you for providing that detailed overview of your career. I'd like to now draw attention to President Donald Trump's actions since taking office. He has signed over 40 executive actions, including orders, proclamations, and memorandums. These executive actions affect both domestic and foreign policy issues. Domestically, for example, he has taken actions on censorship, diversity and gender, federal spending, military and defense, immigration, energy and technology. On the foreign policy front, Trump has frozen all foreign aid to many countries, withdrawn from the World Health Organization and the Paris Climate Accord, and even renamed the Gulf of Mexico, the Gulf of America and has threatened tariffs on countries that don't meet his demands. Which of these executive actions have stood out to you the most? And what impact do you think these orders have on the state of democracy?

**LW:** The first one that really hit me almost immediately, and I don't know if Trump is actually aware of what these people around him have done in this regard, is the one that seems to say to women serving in the armed forces of the United States, you no longer can serve in combat and all of those in combat potential positions will be removed. And all of the things accruing there too. Which they know means promotion rate, it means acceptance by

their male colleagues, it means, in many respects, the strength, for example, of the Army and certainly the other services to an extent. But why do I say the Army in particular? Last year, for the third year in a row, the Army missed its recruitment goals, and it's already tiny. It's as small as it's been since the interwar years in the 20th century. Why do I say that's a problem now? Because last year they finally met their goals, barely, their recruitment goals. But guess who met it for them? Women. Women came in in droves. So if we are going to threaten these women, I'll tell you what they will do. At the end of their term of enlistment or their term of officership, they will get out. They will not stay in, not if there's no prospects for them. And two, they will not enlist in the first place. So we will reduce the size of the armed forces by a good 20% overnight virtually, and we will threaten the integrity of the armed forces. This is not a good move. There are other things that have happened that are similar to that. The commandant of the Coast Guard, a woman, was summarily relieved of her command. I'm getting notes and emails from people all across the services, young women, as well as more mature women who are wearing General's stars or Admiral's stars, that they're scared, they're frightened that they're going to be relieved, especially those in a command that might be called lusted after by a man because they took that position. And the other thing I'm hearing that's really disquieting is how many men are going along with this and liking it, which tells me that male chauvinism and diversity with regard to females in the military was not very deep, if what I'm hearing is true, that it is widespread that males are happy that this is happening. I hope it's not widespread. I hope it's just a rumor that it's widespread. In terms of the emails I'm getting, it looks more proliferating than I thought it would, that males are happy about this. That says something about the males in the military, if it's true, I hope it's not true. But other executive orders that are going out, apparently anyway, that the silly ones about, you know, we're going to take over the Panama Canal eventually, we're going to rename the Gulf of Mexico, the Gulf of America, we're going to put tariffs on Canada, tariffs on Mexico, tariffs on everybody in the world, targeted tariffs and general tariffs, and so on, these all have to be done if they are to be done in a very selective and careful way, or they will rebound drastically against the US economy. There's no question about that. There's hardly an economist out there that won't tell you that. But if they're done carefully and selectively and in coordination with, even in some cases, countries like Canada and Mexico, they could be effective if they're very selective and they're not blanket tariffs, and they're not the kind that really damage both sides or ultimately damage America. Because that's what tariffs do when they're just blithely applied. Other things that he's doing that worry me is I'm hearing things about the civil service and about people to be released from the civil service. I'm hearing things about lists having gone out with names on those lists prepared to leave. And there's no counsel. There's no civil service rules met, no hiring rules, no firing rules or anything. This means we're going to have lawsuits for the next decade or two, as these people, rightfully so, sue and take action in the courts. The courts will be jammed with these kinds of things. Now, the Republicans have been busy packing the courts for a long time, but there are enough Democratic-packed judges on the courts to allow some of them to probably function in favor of these rules and regulations. So we're tying up the courts for months to come with these lawsuits that will happen. And this is generally what I think is going on. And I'm wondering, the biggest question I have in my mind is, does Donald Trump know some of the vipers, the snakes, the beasts that he's put in these selected positions where they are

implementing policies that are going to read down ultimately to Donald Trump's discredit? Now, I know he, unless he is going to establish a dictatorship, and many people are saying that now, that he doesn't have to worry about being reelected again, not because he can't be reelected again, but because he isn't going to run again. He's just going to stay there and turn it over to J.D. Vance as Mussolini in waiting. And if you look at Elon Musk with his Hitler salutes and his photographs making him look like Mussolini staring at the sun, you get the image that maybe that is some of the future for us with this administration. But if it is just a one-term administration and Trump exits and exits the way he should, and most of these people will be exiting too, I predict, very strongly if these policies are carried out because the American people will find out they got a pig in the poke, which essentially says 77, 78 million Americans voted for a criminal who actually got in office and hired criminals to work for him, and the results and repercussions are so traumatic that not only do they lose the midterms badly in both houses of Congress, but they lose the White House, too. I don't know. That doesn't strike me as a very smart man. So I have to ask the fundamental question, what the hell is Trump doing and why is he doing it? And that goes for the agreement that's being touted right now or the possible agreement with regard to Ukraine. And don't even get me started on Gaza because what I'm hearing about that is just bloodthirsty.

**ZR:** Since you mentioned Ukraine, let us now move to that topic. Trump has repeatedly stated in the past, particularly during the 2023 election, that he would end the war in Ukraine, sometimes even saying that he would do so within the 24 hours of taking office. Since taking office, with the exception of Egypt and Israel, Trump has frozen all foreign aid, including that to Ukraine. Western media have widely reported that his aid freeze has negatively impacted the work of Ukrainian civil society NGOs and derailed many humanitarian projects. Recently in Davos, Trump also emphasized the need for peace and stated that efforts are currently underway that will ensure a settlement between Ukraine and Russia. Newsweek reported today that last Sunday, a Ukrainian media outlet called Strana published details of an alleged plan by Trump to end the war. Ukraine dismissed the report as false, while Newsweek themselves have stated that it is unable to currently independently verify whether details of this plan were accurate. Here are some of the details from the Newsweek article: The alleged 100-day Trump plan to end the war in Ukraine includes a phone call with Putin in late January or early February, meetings with Putin and Zelensky in February or March, and a declaration of ceasefire by Easter. The ceasefire will include the withdrawal of Ukraine from Russia's region of Kursk and will initiate an international peace conference mediated by major world powers to broker a settlement between Russia and Ukraine. The parameters of this agreement also ruled out Ukraine joining NATO and instead envisions Ukraine becoming part of the European Union by 2030, with the EU playing a major role in post-war reconstruction. It also suggested the lifting of some sanctions on Russia within three years, depending on Russia's adherence to the peace agreement. What do you think of this alleged plan of Trump's to end the war on Ukraine? Does it sound reasonable or even morally justifiable?

**LW:** This is very different from what I envisioned during the campaign Trump was talking about. Now I know what he said about North Korea, what he did with North Korea, and other

such instances, but I think that one is instructive most of all. Nothing came of that except a very angry ally whom he left, South Korea, whom he left hanging out on a limb, and now because of that posture is actually having trouble with its own government because the bulk of South Koreans wanted that agreement that Trump allegedly was going to forge, ultimately leading to a peace treaty, to be a success, and it wasn't. And he just abandoned the whole process. That's my stereotype, if you will, to look at for Trump in Ukraine. But what I thought was going to happen was a cut off of funds, a cut off of arms, and immediate negotiations. When I say immediate, I mean a phone call to Putin on the 20th of January or maybe the 21st or 22nd, not this Newsweek article that says: Well, in January and February and then in March and then in April... I suspect that what this is that Newsweek has gotten a hold of, not that it's anything firm in Trump's mind or General Kellogg's mind or anyone else in the empire, is a leaked document to kind of see what the reactions are. We used to say you run the flag of the flagpole and see if anybody salutes it. Well, they want to see what Zelensky's reactions are, what Putin's reactions are, and ultimately probably what our Congress's reactions are. And those will be muted, but they'll be behind the scenes probably. So if you look at it from the perspective of what he promised and even what this Newsweek article insinuates, he might try to deliver, there's quite a wide gulf, quite a wide gulf. But that said, if he's going to phone call Putin or even sit down with Putin and then ultimately phone call and maybe a sit down with Putin and Zelensky together, then that means he's going to crack some heads. And when I say heads, that's not right. One head, Zelensky's. He's not going to crack Putin's head. And if he's going to do that, then that gets it started. There's no way I think it'll all be completed by April, by Easter. But that's Trump's braggadocio reflected in a leaked document probably. Could it be at that point by the end of the summer or by the beginning of the fall? Yes, it could. And the parameters are there. The parameters of an agreement are there. Now, the EU will do everything it can as decrepit and insidious as the EU has become to foul it. No question. I think they will be the first people trying to foul it, even the ahead of Zelensky. And Zelensky will be second trying to foul it. But if Trump has him by the wrist as they go into these phone calls, meetings, whatever it turns out to be, then he isn't going to have much choice. I suspect the reason there is some angst over the funds cut off is not NGOs. It's the oligarchs who suddenly had their bank accounts attenuated somewhat. That's the problem. Because what we've been doing is paying these people off, paying them off to continue to support Zelensky, paying them off to continue to support the war. And by the way, with them and their children who weren't exposed to the draft initially, they still have fun in Kiev and other places. So if he's bringing that to a close, if he's serious about forcing Zelensky to talks, and if he's serious about some of the things that were included in that article that he would concede to Putin almost from the get-go, then we could have an end to this conflict. And that's what we need. So I'd be for it.

**ZR:** Let us now switch to Israel and Palestine, examine the situation there. I would first like to recap all the developments that took place in January, so please bear with me. Shortly before President Trump took office, former President Biden presented a six-week ceasefire between Hamas and Israel. The ceasefire was brokered by Egypt, Qatar, and the United States, with both sides, Biden and Trump, claiming credit for it. The ceasefire is divided into three phases. It begins with a ceasefire, which is currently ongoing and will last six weeks,

and involves the release of all Israeli hostages held by Hamas and Gaza in exchange for Palestinians held by Israel, including women and children, most of which are being held without due process. If all goes according to plan, a permanent ceasefire will follow, involving Israel's withdrawal from Gaza. And the last aspect provides for a reconstruction process that will take three to five years. Nevertheless, in view of recent developments that took place at the end of January, there is a great deal of skepticism about the future of Palestinians. Immediately after the announcement of the ceasefire in Gaza, Israel launched a large-scale military offensive called Iron Wall in the West Bank, in Jenin, and has now expanded it to the city of Tulkarem. So far, at least 16 civilians have been killed. A day later, Trump issued an executive order, lifting sanctions on violent Israeli settlers in the occupied West Bank. The Biden administration imposed these limited sanctions as at least 860 Palestinians, including 175 children, were killed by the Israeli army and settlers across the West Bank since the start of the Israeli war in Gaza in October 2023. A few days later, President Trump authorized the sale of 2,000 pound US-made bombs to Israel, which the Biden administration was reluctant to send. Finally, last Saturday, in a conversation with reporters on board Air Force One, Trump made the following remarks about the future of the civilian population in Gaza, and I would like to quote him here, quote: "I would like Egypt to take people. You're talking about probably a million and a half people, and we just clean out that whole thing and say: You know, it's over", unquote. This comes at a time when hundreds of thousands of civilians in Gaza who fled to the South are now returning to their destroyed homes in the North. What is your assessment of the ceasefire? Do you think it will hold, or are there other agendas at play here that Trump and Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu will move forward after all the Israeli hostages have been released?

**LW:** My first comment is neither in Lebanon, nor in Gaza, nor on the West Bank for sure, is there a ceasefire, period. Israel has violated its, quote, "ceasefire", unquote, with Lebanon every single day since they signed it. On the West Bank, they are bringing a new vengeance, a vengeance that looks like it might just be the same thing they did in Gaza for some 13, 14, 15 months. In Gaza, they opened the Nazarene corridor so the Gazans could move back to the North, I think, so they can bomb them again and kill them again. That's not the way to Egypt. That's not the way to Jordan. They are going to bomb them again, and they're going to kill them again, and they're going to continue to do that, ceasefire be damned, until Trump's wishes are met. That is to say all the Palestinians are either dead or gone. That's the plan. That's Bibi's plan. That's Trump's plan. Now, let me hasten to add, I think Trump detests Bibi. I'm confident that Trump detests Bibi. I'm confident he's detested him for a long time. If you look at some of his previous statements, you can only conclude that. But, he's the one that's there. He's the one that's doing the deed. The difficulty here, if there is one, and I'm not sure this is a major difficulty, but it could be, is the Arabs personified by Mohammed bin Salman in Riyadh. They want, I think, some sort of hat-tip to a Palestinian state. And I say hat-tip because if you could camouflage it, if you could send them all to Indonesia, then the Saudis would probably say: Oh, you shouldn't have done that, and go right ahead with what they had planned anyway. And what they planned anyway is this incredible economic corridor of which Israel was going to be a major part that would extend all the way up through Lebanon, and they would spend lots and lots of money on, and they have lots of money, in order to

make a success. And that's what the Abraham Accords was an initial step into, and that's what the Israeli actions in Gaza, not the October 7th attacks by Hamas, the Israelis genocide, put a stop to. Put a stop to, that looked like it was categorical, but nothing's ever categorical with the Saudis. They're as bad as Washington in terms of being deceitful, and having the money to back up that deceit. So that's the one fly in this ointment, though, that might cause these massive deportations, because that's what they are, and the continued massive killing and violations of ceasefires, to come to a halt in a way that's dramatic and not good for anyone. All Israel would do is resume the previous pace of its war in Gaza and continue what it's doing in the West Bank. And, incidentally, what they're doing in Syria. Because they are inching around in Syria in a way that Damascus has taken note of, they are extending even the Syrian side, what was the Syrian side, of the Golan Heights, not the occupied side, or the not occupied in Bibi Netanyahu's terms, he declared it part of Israel. So we've got a real mess there, no question about it, and the mess is not about to get itself straightened out. Now, there's one happy thing happening. There's some hostages coming back, and Hamas will continue that until it is absolutely – maybe the 42-day moment, the end of the first phase of the ceasefire – it's absolutely convinced that Netanyahu – maybe he shuts the Nazarene corridor and starts dropping those 2,000-pound bombs on the Gazans who've come back to their homes in the north, back to the ruins in the north, or something like that, more draconian even, and also occupies the Philadelphia corridor and Rafa crossing and everything, and says: Okay, now go at it again, because he's got a rebuilt the IDF in terms of leadership. I'm not sure that he's got to rebuild the IDF in terms of the ranks. I think he's sitting on top of a military that could fall apart at any moment if it's not already falling apart. All of these dynamics are going to play out in the next four or five months, and Trump's going to be sitting there trying to figure out what to do and how to do it, I think. But it isn't going to be conducive to the Palestinians. You can bet your bottom dollar on that.

**ZR:** Lawrence Wilkerson, former Chief of Staff to Secretary of State Colin Powell, thank you so much for your time today.

**LW:** Thanks for having me, Zain.

**ZR:** And thank you for tuning in today. If you watched the video until the very end, please just take a few moments and visit the description of this video to find out how you can join our alternative channels on Rumble, Telegram, and our podcast called Podbean. YouTube can shadowban and censor us at any time, and if that day ever comes, we won't be able to reach you with an announcement, let alone providing you with information that you just won't hear in the corporate media. I thank you for tuning in, I'm your host Zain Raza. See you next time.

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