

## 1. Venezuela's Triumph and the Iranian Bait

Could the successful American operation in Venezuela have given Donald Trump a taste for a much more ambitious gamble—one that would ultimately draw him into a confrontation with Iran?

Trump appeared to emerge from the Venezuelan operation with a heightened sense of American power and the ability of the United States to impose its will. Venezuela's enormous oil wealth may have reinforced his belief that military and political pressure could deliver strategic rewards quickly.

But what if that experience was not merely a victory in its own right? What if it also became the bait for a far more dangerous undertaking?

This is a hypothesis, not a claim that a secret plan has been proven. Yet it raises an important question: might Benjamin Netanyahu and Israeli intelligence have persuaded Trump that Iran was another seemingly vulnerable target—one that could be brought to its knees through an American strike followed by an internal uprising?

The promise, in such a scenario, would have been irresistible: a swift military operation, the collapse of the Iranian government within two or three weeks, and a transformed regional balance of power. Trump could have imagined himself not merely as the president who had demonstrated American strength in Venezuela, but as the leader who had reshaped the Middle East.

There is an old saying that captures the danger: "The liar outsmarts the greedy." The person who promises an easy victory may exploit the ambitions of someone who is eager to believe that victory is within reach.

If Trump was persuaded that Iran could be defeated quickly, he may have underestimated the difference between a limited operation against a weakened adversary and a war against a country whose leadership sees the conflict as an existential struggle.

## 2. Netanyahu, Kushner, and the Road to War

The question is not simply whether Trump wanted to confront Iran. It is also whether the people around him shaped his understanding of the risks and rewards.

Among the figures worth examining is Jared Kushner, Trump's son-in-law and a prominent figure in his diplomatic circle. Kushner, alongside Steve Witkoff, has been involved in negotiations concerning the region. Their roles raise a broader question about the relationship between diplomacy, political influence, and the strategic calculations of Israel's government.

One particularly troubling account concerns the reported sequence of events surrounding negotiations and military action. According to the account cited in this debate, Oman's foreign minister indicated that Iran had accepted ceasefire terms, while the American negotiators allegedly communicated with Netanyahu before the subsequent Israeli attack. The claim that the attack followed Iran's announcement of acceptance by approximately an hour, if accurately established, would demand serious scrutiny.

Such a sequence would raise questions about whether negotiations were genuinely intended to prevent war—or whether some participants were pursuing a different objective.

It is essential, however, to distinguish a reported sequence of events from proof of a coordinated plan. Establishing what happened, who knew what, and when they knew it would require reliable evidence.

Nevertheless, the larger political question remains: could Trump have allowed pressure from pro-Israel figures in his inner circle to narrow his options until military confrontation appeared to be the most attractive course?

A leader can make a strategic mistake without being deceived. But when ambition, personal confidence, and the advice of influential allies converge, the danger of miscalculation becomes much greater.

### 3. Iran, the Strait of Hormuz, and the Global Economic Threat

Iran is not necessarily the kind of adversary that can be forced into submission by a rapid display of military superiority. If its leadership regards the conflict as a fight for survival, it may be prepared to endure enormous costs and extend the confrontation beyond the battlefield.

One of the most consequential risks concerns the Strait of Hormuz, through which roughly 20 million barrels of oil per day have passed in recent years, alongside a significant share of global liquefied natural gas shipments.

Any serious disruption to this vital maritime corridor could send shock waves through the world economy. Oil and gas prices could rise sharply, transportation and production costs could increase, and countries dependent on imported energy could face mounting pressure.

Strategic inventories might cushion an initial shock, but they could not necessarily compensate indefinitely for a prolonged disruption of such a major energy artery. The scale and duration of the crisis would matter enormously.

The consequences would extend well beyond the energy market. Modern economies depend on interconnected supply chains, financial systems, and digital infrastructure. Undersea cables such as AAE-1, FALCON, and GBI are part of the wider communications infrastructure linking regions and economies. Any threat to critical infrastructure would add another layer of uncertainty, although the existence of these cables does not, by itself, establish that they would be targeted or disrupted.

A war intended to produce a quick political victory could therefore evolve into a global economic crisis. Washington might discover that military superiority does not automatically translate into control over the economic consequences of war.

This is the central danger of underestimating Iran: the United States might possess the capacity to inflict enormous damage, yet still find itself unable to dictate how the conflict ends.

## 4. Russia: A New Saudi Arabia?

A prolonged disruption of oil supplies could also create unexpected winners. Russia, as a major energy exporter, might benefit from higher prices and from the increased strategic importance of its oil and gas supplies.

In that sense, Russia could find itself in a position resembling that of Saudi Arabia in one particular respect: the ability of a major energy producer to gain influence when global markets become anxious about supply.

But this potential advantage would come with complications. The consequences for Russia would depend on the duration of the conflict, the sanctions environment, market conditions, and the broader political response. Higher prices do not automatically translate into an uncomplicated strategic victory.

Nor would the United States be insulated from the damage. American consumers could face higher fuel prices, businesses could confront rising costs, and financial markets could react to the prospect of prolonged instability.

The same conflict might therefore impose heavy costs on Washington while creating opportunities for Moscow. That possibility alone should give any American administration reason to examine the assumptions underlying a decision to go to war.

## 5. Has Trump Moved to Plan B?

This brings us to a more unsettling possibility: could the disruption of the global energy market itself serve a larger strategic purpose?

China is one of the world's largest energy consumers and depends heavily on imported oil. A prolonged crisis affecting energy flows through the Strait of Hormuz could place considerable pressure on the Chinese economy, raising costs and complicating its economic planning.

Could a strategy aimed at Iran also be intended, at least in part, to slow China's economic momentum?

This remains a hypothesis. A disruption of energy supplies would harm many countries, including American allies, and could damage the global economy in ways that Washington would struggle to control. It would be a dangerous instrument even if such a strategic objective existed.

Yet the question deserves to be asked because the consequences of a war are not limited to the country being attacked. They extend to every major power whose prosperity depends on stable energy supplies and functioning trade routes.

So has Trump moved on to Plan B, or has he swallowed Plan B as the bait?

Could the real objective be to slow the Chinese economy by disrupting its access to energy, even at the risk of inflicting serious damage on the American and global economies? Or has Trump simply entered a conflict whose consequences were never properly calculated?

Perhaps he believes that he and Netanyahu understand something the rest of the world does not. Perhaps they believe that the risks can be contained, that Iran will eventually yield, and that the strategic rewards will justify the cost.

But history is full of leaders who entered wars convinced that they possessed a decisive insight—only to discover that their adversaries, their allies, and the circumstances themselves did not behave as expected.

The question is not whether Trump has a plan. The question is whether his plan rests on a realistic understanding of the forces he is setting in motion.

## 6. What Is Going Through Trump's Mind?

What, then, is going through Donald Trump's mind?

Does he believe that he can defeat Iran quickly, reshape the Middle East, secure strategic advantages, and emerge stronger at home and abroad? Does he see the conflict as a calculated move in a larger contest with China? Or has the confidence generated by earlier successes encouraged him to accept risks that he would otherwise have rejected?

It is also possible that several calculations are operating simultaneously: domestic political pressures, the desire to demonstrate strength, the influence of allies, and the pursuit of strategic advantage. Political decisions rarely emerge from a single motive.

The danger is that each of these considerations may reinforce the others. A leader who wants to appear strong may find it difficult to retreat. An ally who promises a quick victory may underestimate the enemy. Negotiations may become entangled with military objectives. And a war that begins with limited ambitions may develop a logic of its own.

That is why the distinction between a calculated strategy and a dangerous illusion matters so much. A strategy anticipates the adversary's response and prepares for failure as well as success. An illusion assumes that events will unfold according to the expectations of those who initiated the conflict.

## Conclusion: The Bait and Trump's Ambitions

The possibility that Trump was drawn toward confrontation with Iran by the promise of an easy victory deserves examination, not because it has been proven, but because the consequences of such a miscalculation could be enormous.

Venezuela may have reinforced his confidence in American power. Netanyahu and influential figures in Washington may have shaped the political environment in which decisions about Iran were made. The prospect of weakening Tehran may have appeared attractive, while the risks to energy markets, global trade, China, Russia, and the United States itself may have seemed manageable.

But a war is not a poker game in which the player who appears most confident necessarily wins. Nor can the world economy be treated as a collection of pieces that can be moved without consequences.

If Iran resists, if the Strait of Hormuz is disrupted, and if energy prices surge, the outcome could be very different from the swift victory that Trump may have imagined. The attempt to demonstrate power could instead expose the limits of power—and the cost of confusing

military capability with strategic control.

Perhaps Trump believes he has seen an opportunity that others have failed to recognize. Perhaps Netanyahu believes the risks are worth taking. Or perhaps both are underestimating the consequences of the course they have chosen.

The world can only wait to see whether this confrontation reveals a sophisticated strategic calculation or a profound misreading of reality.

Because the most dangerous wars are not necessarily those entered by politicians who do not know what they want, but those entered by politicians who know exactly what they want—only to discover that the war itself wants something else.