

Bobbing and weaving with Trump on Iran

written by David M. Weinberg | 05.06.2026

It is maddening to be handcuffed by the President of the United States when fighting Hezbollah, especially when Israeli soldiers and civilians are falling like flies to the terrorist army's drones and rockets.

It is exasperating to hear US President Donald Trump talk one day about bombing Iran's nuclear and energy sites to kingdom come and crushing the regime of the "evil" ayatollahs, and the next to hear him talk about "very nice and responsible" leaders in Iran that he would like to meet and to learn that Trump may shower these leaders with tens of billions of dollars in freed cash and sanctions relief.

It is frustrating to recognize that after all the effort and expense of the past year to strip Iran of its hegemonic ambitions and threatening abilities, Trump may set a ceiling on this war not by the cusp of Iran's remaining offensive capabilities but by his own imperfect endurance.

It is vexing to accept Trump's truancy; the peril of his non-ideological approach to foreign and defense affairs, his too-transactional thinking, his non-dogmatic methodology for "solving" conflicts - refreshing in some contexts but dangerously delusional in others.

It is irritating that Trump ridiculously believes the force of his personality can fix everything and lead to swift and "huge" peace deals everywhere. This is true regarding his pie-in-the-sky plans for "grand civilizational peace" in Gaza as well as his blathering about reaching a "tenth" accord of peace globally, with Tehran.

It is infuriating when Trump praises the Israeli prime minister one day as a "great wartime leader and friend" then publicly calls him "[expletive deleted] crazy" and asserts that Netanyahu is in his back pocket ("he will do whatever I want him to do"). Worse still, Trump gallingly asserts that "if there wasn't me, there would be no Israel" and that Netanyahu "would be in prison if it weren't for me."

These avowals about Israel's destiny and Netanyahu's durability are not remotely true. They are unacceptable. It is right and righteous to push back against Trump

when he crosses the line from outlandish swagger and inflated vainglory - which is his style, like it or lump it - to insulting and damaging aspersions that have life-and-death consequences for Israel.

AFTER HAVING SAID all that, we have to get past Trump's annoying approach to people and politics and consider his rock-solid policymaking record and commitments on the issues most important to Israel.

In particular, the US president must be lauded for the nobility of his resistance to Iran, and I believe, his intention to see the job through to completion.

President Trump understands that stopping the war now amid some short-term economic discomfort would be a victory for the mullahs. Iran cannot be allowed to conclude that shutting down oil flows is its passport to survival, now or in the future. After all, the spike in oil prices due to traffic stoppage in the Strait of Hormuz was not unexpected. As Trump himself has said, the disruption is a "small price to pay" for major security advances.

It also makes no sense to leave so many loose ends in Iran, from missiles and production facilities to nuclear sites at Pickaxe Mountain and the Isfahan tunnels where Iran's gigantic stockpile of highly enriched uranium for nuclear bombmaking is said to be stored. This is why massive US air, naval, and amphibious forces are still in the region.

And Trump recognizes that the current conflict is essentially a world war against America's greatest strategic adversaries including China and Russia - who are allied with Iran.

Therefore, Trump is exceedingly unlikely to desert the battlefield without more significantly quelling Iran. He will not just declare a synthetic "victory" and withdraw his troops.

He may wait a while for a range of reasons (from upcoming July 4th celebrations - America's 250th, to mid-term elections in November, to a necessary re-stocking of American armaments), but I am betting that he will further pursue the military effort to extinguish the threat of the ayatollahs to Gulf Arab countries, to Israel, and to the Western world.

SO WHY the obfuscation in Trump's many statements? Why the fetters on Israel's

necessary wars with Iran's proxy armies that are camped along this country's borders? Why the dissing of Netanyahu?

Well, the administration's ambiguity confuses the enemy. If we are left guessing at Trump's next moves, so are the ayatollahs.

But Trump himself? I do not think that he is at all confused regarding Iran. From his 2018 dumping of Obama's rotten nuclear deal with Iran, to his 2020 assassination of IRGC chief Qassem Soleimani, to Operation Midnight Hammer last June, to Operation Epic Fury this year - Trump has proven neither fickle nor flighty.

On the contrary, Trump has broadcast unwavering willpower and purpose. He ain't a paragon of virtue in so many other ways, but Trump has shown profound understanding of his responsibility to reshape the regional and global strategic architecture by eviscerating Iran.

He also has evinced domestic political courage in this regard, taking on hard Left Marxist and pro-Islamist critics and hard Right isolationist and Christian nationalist critics. He has taken risks with his own MAGA base by slapping-down the loudest and most influential foul-mouth faultfinders like Tucker Carlson.

Remember: Despite the rise of an enemy potentially as lethal as Nazi Germany, many Western leaders nevertheless have preferred accommodation with Iran. It always is easier to delay and deflect than to fight a fiercely committed and skilled enemy.

And yet, Trump has taken on the Iranian challenge. In defiance of conventional wisdom that the "responsible" approach is to swallow Iran's piecemeal provocations to avoid war, and that Iran's hegemonic ambitions are anyway near-unstoppable, Trump preferred to draw blood and a red line. He defied the ayatollahs instead of dancing with them.

And so, Trump ought to be recognized and appreciated for his moral and strategic clarity. This war is an act of rectitude, of justice and sanity in global security affairs.

So, if you want to worry that Trump could yet cut a bad deal with Tehran, an agreement that does not push Iran far enough away from the nuclear bomb and

from Israel's borders, or that he may stop short of regime change, go ahead and stew. But for the moment, Trump should still be acclaimed for his continued resistance to Iran, including his long blockade of Hormuz.

Yes, Trump's dithering is dangerous, and his specious slamming of Netanyahu is upsetting. Israel's existence is not a favor bestowed by Washington, and Israel's leaders cannot accept every security policy dictate from DC.

But working with Trump over the next 31 months to more decisively complete the campaign against Iran - uncomfortably bobbing and weaving as necessary - remains the right and necessary exigency.

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