



Jerusalem 6:23
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ISRAEL NEWS
A collection of the week's news from Israel
From the Bet El Twinning / Israel Action Committee of
Beth Avraham Yoseph of Toronto Congregation

the thing: That crisis hasn't happened yet and might not happen at all, given increased Saudi oil exports through the Red Sea and the stabilization of natural gas prices in much of the world.

Commentary...

Behold, the 'Experts' in Media and Academia Who Insist Iran Is Winning By Armin Rosen

For those wondering whether America is winning in Iran, most current assessments pale in relevance to William Shakespeare's Henry V. Toward the end of the play, the English king tallies the mind-boggling French losses at the 1415 Battle of Agincourt. In the end, they number more than 10,000, a "royal fellowship of death"—with the English losing a mere 29. While these numbers are a literary exaggeration, the historical record confirms that the English won big at Agincourt. And they won because very few of their soldiers were killed, in sharp contrast to the enemy. "Was ever known so great and little loss?" asks Henry.

Today, if you were to consult much of the media, you would get the impression that Iran is handing America a humiliating defeat. "America Lost. Iran Won. Trump Shat the Bed," moaned Jonathan V. Last in The Bulwark on April 2. "Advantage Iran," blared the cover of The Economist on March 26. Iran is "winning the war," said Rep. Seth Moulton of Massachusetts on Friday, shortly after Iranian forces shot down two U.S. planes.

The mandarins of American media and academia have concocted a narrative that is entirely out of sync with reality. The U.S. and Israel have been killing leading regime figures almost every single day for the past month. The Iranian death toll now includes most of the country's senior military officers, its head of state, and many of its top strategic minds. That Economist headline came a day after the Israelis struck a facility for advanced munitions production at Parchin, and the same day the regime announced it would accept volunteers as young as 12 for certain military roles with the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps. On Thursday, the U.S. destroyed the B1 bridge outside Tehran, which Iran was intending to use, according to U.S. officials, as a supply route for its missile and drone forces. Israeli bombs have rubble Iran's once-significant steel and petrochemical facilities. And by this Sunday morning, the U.S. has rescued all three airmen recently downed by Iranian forces.

Tehran has been powerless to slow a tempo of daily events that would be considered catastrophic embarrassments for nearly any other government. Nor has it managed to meaningfully fight back. Since April 2024, the Islamic Republic has fired just over 1,200 ballistic missiles at Israel. They have killed 47 Israelis, only one of whom was an enlisted soldier. The estimated 5,400-plus drones and missiles Iran has fired at the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and Oman since this war began on February 28 have killed about 30 people and convinced the UAE to start revoking the residency visas of Iranian citizens living in the Emirates—a huge potential setback for sanctions-strapped Tehran, which depended on Dubai as a key access point to the global economy. Meanwhile, the U.S. has lost a reported 13 service members as of this writing, with no confirmed deaths from Iranian attacks since the opening days of the war. These losses are tragic but have had no effect on the U.S.'s ability to wage war on Iran. The current number of American dead is 10 fewer than were killed during the 1989 U.S. invasion of Panama, and six fewer than were killed in the 1983 invasion of Grenada.

Yet, war as the accounting of "great and little loss" is out of vogue these days. For the many admirers in media and academia of the Islamic Republic's wartime posture, what Iran has lost in tangible assets is counterbalanced by its notional ability to halt traffic in the Strait of Hormuz and trigger an international economic crisis. Here's

Still, many experts and commentators seemed dazzled by Iran's potential for maritime blackmail. "To the Iranians, the Strait of Hormuz now matters more than the nuclear program," the Johns Hopkins University professor and former Obama administration official Vali Nasr mused to The Wall Street Journal. "The nuclear program was symbolic, but didn't provide them with any deterrence." "Iran's power is increasing," writes University of Chicago professor Robert Pape, because of the Islamic Republic's supposed ability to make oil flows "vulnerable and unreliable."

Thus the regime that has so cunningly baited the United States into defeat was also dumb enough to have spent half a trillion dollars on an apparently "symbolic" nuclear program—and far more as a result of sanctions and international isolation—when it could've just harassed its neighbors' oil tankers instead. Piracy-as-statecraft surely would have been far less of a hassle than a hardened, underground bomb fuel operation, nearly all of which is in ruins now.

The Iranian "upper hand" is a rhetorical invention, unless one thinks it's worth a country losing its largest natural gas field and generations of senior military leadership.

By the experts' logic, American and Israeli strikes provided Iran with the final push toward its strategic destiny, which isn't the export of the Islamic revolution, the neo-imperial domination of various Arab countries, or the liberation of Jerusalem, but something far more mundane: the charging of tolls on a body of water that was previously free.

Courting total collapse in order to run a local protection racket using land you already controlled seems a very poor trade-off. But what do I know? I am not an associate professor of Middle East studies at the Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies. Narges Bajoghli is, though. Iran "is now executing a strategy that has managed to neutralize key U.S. and Israeli air defense batteries, severely damage U.S. military bases in the Persian Gulf, inflict substantial economic pain, and drive a wedge between the United States and its Gulf allies," she wrote in Foreign Affairs on March 26. "The serious economic and political problems it is creating for its adversaries are, on a strategic level, giving Iran the upper hand."

The problem is, none of this has actually happened: The Israeli, Arab, and American interception rate on Iranian missiles hovers around 90 percent. The U.S.'s Gulf allies have not capitulated to Iranian pressure and are reportedly as dedicated as Washington is to keeping the war going. The U.S. economy added 178,000 jobs in March, exceeding expectations. The Iranian "upper hand" is a rhetorical invention, unless one thinks it's worth a country losing its largest natural gas field, generations of senior military leadership, and perhaps as many as 7,000 security personnel in order to inflict such mild losses on its enemies.

The experts are still impressed, though. "From the U.S. sanctions waiver on seaborne Iranian oil and Iran's de facto control of the Strait of Hormuz," wrote Giorgio Cafiero, CEO of Gulf State Analytics and an adjunct professor at Georgetown University, "to the resistance shown by the Iranian regime despite the assassination of key leaders, to the IRGC's purported demonstration of ballistic missile capabilities far beyond previous assessments, the past few weeks of fighting have showcased the Islamic Republic's strength and resilience.

That is one way of putting it. Another way is that the regime's warped perception of its own relative strength has convinced it to keep firing missiles at nothing instead of taking generous off-ramps, most notably a March 24 U.S. offer that reportedly included a

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ceasefire and relief from nuclear-related sanctions. Resilience isn't a positive trait for a government if it simply creates the opportunity for additional, increasingly harmful error.

Meanwhile, per *The Economist*, China is looking to be the big winner of the Iran war. Yet aside from hosting an abortive Pakistani-led attempt at resolving the war that did not feature any reported American or Israeli participation, America's supposed near-peer rival has been absent throughout this entire crisis and has done little to assist its allies in Tehran.

As Iran fails to manifest any meaningful wins on the battlefield, it has turned to the arena of public opinion. On X, Iranian propagandists have fascinated many credulous Westerners by posting propaganda videos in which animated Lego men lob missiles at Tel Aviv or capture downed American pilots. According to one Lego propagandist quoted in the *New Yorker*, their work transcends mere meme-making. "Every scene, every frame, every hidden detail, and every idea in our work feel like our own children," one anonymous creator told the magazine, quoting a Persian proverb: "What comes from the heart will surely sit upon the heart."

The video-maker revealed one of the many asymmetries at the heart of this war. The Islamic Republic and the people who have hailed its supposedly brilliant performance these past five weeks do not believe that war is a contest of "great and little losses"—it can't win that contest—but of intention, perception, and self-image. What's left of the regime clearly still believes in its sacred mission of defying America, Israel, and the rest of its growing list of enemies. If its victories are now coming in the form of shitposting, the cost of that belief must be very steep indeed. (*The Free Press* Apr 5)

Finish the Job, Mr. President! By Melanie Phillips

As the clock ticks away toward U.S. President Donald Trump's latest "negotiate or I unleash hell" deadline, the Iranian regime thinks that it's winning.

In the West, the serried ranks of "experts" also think that America and Israel are heading either for a deepening quagmire or a humiliating retreat. It's not possible to predict how the war against Iran will end—or even what the next day will bring.

But on the face of it, Tehran's claim that it has the upper hand—echoed by Western commentators who said before the war even started that it would be a disaster, have kept saying that it is a disaster and predict that it will undoubtedly end in disaster—is demonstrably absurd.

On every available metric of war, the regime is clearly losing. Its air defenses are all but obliterated, its navy is largely sunk, its stocks of missiles and launchers have been decimated, its senior ranks are being progressively eliminated, and its nuclear program has been further damaged.

In these respects, the United States and Israel have had so far a spectacularly successful war.

Yet despite all this, not only is the regime not yet defeated, but it still presents fearsome challenges. It has turned the Strait of Hormuz into a lethal weapon by choking off most of its normal shipping channels. And Israel and the United Arab Emirates are still being bombarded by missiles every day, causing damage, injury and death.

Washington is reportedly chewing over the likely costs to its own forces if it tries to seize Kharg Island to gain control over Iran's oil production or free the Straits of Hormuz. Trump is likely weighing up the damage to his own political future from a domestically unpopular war that may start drawing American blood.

The stakes are enormous. If the Iranian regime isn't totally defanged but survives to recover and rearm, it will not only continue to menace the region. Such an outcome will also advertise that the leader of the free world is a paper tiger.

That will hugely embolden China, Russia and North Korea. Israeli defense expert professor Dan Schueftan says that if America doesn't prevail in this war, it will be the beginning of the end for the West.

"These processes don't happen overnight," he told the Israeli

commentator Haviv Rettig Gur. "But if the United States is incapable of dealing with the Iranian challenge, the ability of the Chinese to change the world order will be much stronger than before."

So why can't the West see this? Why do so many Americans and Brits view Trump and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu as their greatest threat rather than Iran, the world's No. 1 terrorist state, exporter of violence and cultural destabilization to the West, and crucial hinge of the world's axis of evil powers?

Partly, this is because the Trump administration has never properly made the case for war to the American public, while governments in Britain and Europe are actively hostile.

Partly it's because of the belief that whenever the West ventures into the Middle East cauldron, the outcome is disastrous.

While the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan ended in a debacle, the obdurate refusal by the West to take commensurate action against Iran has resulted in a conflict that is now infinitely more difficult and damaging than it would otherwise have been had the threat from Tehran been countered earlier.

Richard Williams, a former commander of Britain's SAS commando force in Iraq and Afghanistan, wrote in *Britain's Mail* that he witnessed Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps up close as they and Iranian proxies killed hundreds of British and American soldiers.

Saying that this gave him an understanding of the "utter evil that is the Iranian regime," he wrote: "We have let the regime fester and grow since the revolution in 1979 as a result of the cowardice and indecision of our political leaders."

By doing everything it could to avoid war with Iran, the West made this terrifying and now desperate war inevitable. The catastrophic 2015 nuclear deal brokered by former President Barack Obama allowed Iran to cheat and make steady progress over the years towards building nuclear weapons.

Some 440 kilograms of enriched uranium—enough to make 11 nuclear bombs in two weeks—is reportedly still in Tehran's hands.

Sanctions were also nearly useless because the regime simply bypassed them and sold its oil to China.

It did not use this revenue to look after the basic needs of the Iranian people. It used it instead to construct missile cities below ground—some buried deep inside mountains, apparently out of reach even of America's most powerful bombs, and from where the regime continues to fire missiles at Israel and its neighbors in the Gulf.

The death and destruction being inflicted as a result—not least upon the oppressed Iranian people—is the real disaster. This should be laid at the door of a West that has sung the siren song of appeasement for decades.

It's done so largely because it subscribes to the dogma that war is pointless, and all conflicts can and should be settled by negotiation and compromise. No longer valuing its own historic identity, which it has dismembered through multiculturalism and victim culture, it has become suicidally defeatist, believing there is nothing to fight or die for.

The reason Israel survives and thrives as it does is because it is never defeatist and believes there is everything to fight or die for.

Saudi Arabia and the UAE also understand the mortal threat posed to them by the Tehran regime. That's why they are urgently pressing Trump to finish it off rather than declare a totally false victory and walk away.

Trump is incredulous that the regime won't accept that it has lost the war. This may be merely Trumpian rhetoric designed to humiliate Tehran. More ominously, it may be that he's trying to reshape reality to what he wants it to be, but isn't.

But on another level, he's applying the wrong metric. It may well be that in terms of conventional warfare, the regime can't possibly win. But fanatical Islamists like this think in completely different terms. To them, mere survival is victory.

Iran's foreign minister, Abbas Aragchi, gloated this week: "No nation in history has stood for nearly a month against the greatest nuclear-armed power on earth and stopped them from achieving a

single goal. This is a point of pride for all of humanity.”

The West simply doesn't understand religious fanaticism. It doesn't understand that for the Islamists of Tehran, who believe that causing an apocalypse will bring the Shia messiah to earth, “martyrdom”—their mass deaths—is accordingly to be embraced with ecstasy.

The West also fails to grasp something Israel has been forced to accept for decades. The Iranian regime may be outgunned by America's superior military might, but it can outfox it through its use of “asymmetric warfare,” which refuses to recognize the conventions of war laid down by the international community.

This means that while the West takes care not to target civilians or hit the essential civilian infrastructure of electricity or water supplies, the Iranians will not only target all such enemy lifelines but will unhesitatingly sacrifice all their own people, too.

Accordingly, they think that the more missiles they continue to fire, the more they'll demonstrate defiantly that they hold all the cards, and so America must “negotiate” on the terms they have laid down.

The only acceptable response to that is to redouble the effort to defeat them utterly and completely.

Let's hope Trump has come to the same conclusion. (JNS Mar 26)

Will the U.S. Make Israel Its Middle East Headquarters?

By Amit Segal

With war raging in the Middle East, we want to bring you as many trusted voices on the news as we can. One such voice is the Israeli journalist Amit Segal. He writes a daily newsletter, It's Noon in Israel, which we're pleased to publish in The Free Press.

Israel has invited the United States to relocate some of its regional bases from countries such as Qatar to Israel. But that raises a question: Why are the U.S. regional headquarters in a country that actively sponsors terrorism?

It's a relatively recent development. For decades, Saudi Arabia served as the U.S.'s regional headquarters. It was from there—not Qatar—that the U.S. assembled forces and ultimately launched the Gulf War to liberate Kuwait. After 9/11 and the Iraq War, the U.S. sought a country with fewer political constraints and a location that would recruit fewer jihadists by being farther from Islam's two holiest sites. Qatar fit the bill: no political complications, billions of dollars in subsidies, and the ready-to-use Al Udeid Air Base.

Now, more than 20 years later, Israel is positioning itself as the U.S.'s new home away from home in the region. The Israeli security establishment sees an opportunity to “reshape the map” of U.S. military positioning in the Middle East, reports Israel's Channel 12.

There are several advantages to this move. For one, Israel has the strongest air defense systems in the region. The New York Times reported Wednesday that missile attacks on Qatar have forced “many American troops to relocate to hotels and office spaces throughout the region,” with much of the land-based military “fighting the war while working remotely, with the exception of fighter pilots and crews operating and maintaining warplanes and conducting strikes.” Meanwhile, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) haven't missed a day of work.

Another advantage is the close alliance between the U.S. and Israel. They've been conducting joint operations, gone on foreign trips together, and built a relationship where coordination is seamless. Isn't it time to move in together? After all, the U.S. and Israel share strategic goals in the region, and operating from Israel means the U.S. doesn't risk hitting targets that would be rebuilt by the same country they launched from.

Add to the fact that Qatar has not always been a cooperative host. In April 2025, Qatar [along with Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE)] said that they would not allow American warplanes to use Persian Gulf bases or airspace to strike Iran. Earlier this year, a prominent Qatari royal called the U.S. “merely a tenant of a military base in Qatar” and warned, “Do not act as if you are doing us a favor.” While this may have been largely rhetorical, Qatari sentiments have

grown more skeptical since missile strikes began, and it is not a sentiment the U.S. is likely to encounter in Israel.

Israel is positioning itself as the U.S.'s new home away from home in the region.

But there are a few disadvantages as well, the most prominent being geographical. Israel is roughly 1,000 miles west of Qatar. Sure, that means fewer missiles can reach it, but it is more useful for the U.S. if they want to fly over Beirut—less so for strikes on Tehran.

Qatar also subsidizes the upkeep of its base to the tune of billions of dollars. Israel's defense budget hit record highs this year, but an extra few billion is still significant for a country without endless oil wealth that has been paying for a highly active war for the past two years.

Regional allies are unlikely to be thrilled either. Some, like Turkey, would be opposed out of that early-2000s distaste for Israel, while others—Kuwait, the UAE, and Saudi Arabia—may object simply because it means American help is now farther away.

The U.S. and Israel are currently negotiating this proposal. U.S. Central Command is unlikely to fully relocate from Qatar, but there could very well be a new U.S. base established. As U.S. Secretary of State Alexander Haig famously said, Israel is “the largest American aircraft carrier in the world that cannot be sunk”—and the U.S. may finally be looking to put that to use. (The Free Press Mar 31)

How America Broke the Iranian Regime By Zineb Riboua

This weekend, somewhere in the mountains of southwestern Iran, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) was hunting an American. They were chasing the most intoxicating image: a soldier of the “Great Satan,” bloodied and captured, paraded before the cameras on the very soil his country had come to destroy, the living fulfillment of every chant of vengeance that had echoed through Iranian streets since 1979. The IRGC held all the advantages a force could ask for: home terrain, local informant networks, and within its grasp the single most valuable propaganda asset of the entire war—a prisoner whose image alone could have rewritten the narrative of a campaign that has been catastrophic for the Islamic Republic from the first strike.

But American special operations forces got there first. And when Donald Trump announced the rescue on Truth Social in three words—“WE GOT HIM!”—the IRGC walked away with nothing but the abandoned underwear of a man they never caught.

The episode revealed three things: complete American military superiority over the Islamic Republic on its own soil; the catastrophic failure of a surveillance architecture that Beijing had spent years and billions of dollars constructing; and the increasingly inescapable conclusion that the IRGC's viability as a military institution is approaching its terminal phase.

And something else, too: the degree to which Iranian aggression had been functioning as the principal obstacle to the Middle East's regional order. A senior Emirati military official has confirmed that the United Arab Emirates has not ruled out joining the U.S. directly in the war against Iran. Bahrain, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia are more committed to the campaign than at any point since it began. Qatar has broken entirely from any residual sympathy toward the IRGC.

Operation Epic Fury has made visible what Iranian pressure had long suppressed: that the Abraham Accords were not a diplomatic anomaly. Rather, they were the architectural expression of a regional consensus that Iran's model of power projection, energy coercion, and ideological subversion had been systematically depriving the Middle East of the economic integration and security cooperation that its geography and resources would otherwise permit. The war has not created that consensus. It has confirmed it.

The IRGC entered this campaign with a strategic playbook refined across four decades of asymmetric confrontation, and it is losing on every front simultaneously. Seven strategic mistakes, each rooted in a fundamental misreading of American behavior, regional politics, and its own capabilities, have compounded into a situation

with no coherent exit.

The first strategic mistake was the Strait of Hormuz. Iran's logic was that sustained pressure on global energy flows would ignite the markets and force Trump to recalculate, withdraw, or watch the Gulf States turn against American operations out of economic self-preservation. But Trump has publicly declared that opening the strait is "not for us," instead calling on European allies who rely on the strait to "go get your own oil." His threat on Sunday to bomb Iranian power plants and bridges made it even more clear that the Strait's closure will not cause an American retreat.

These declarations carry a meaning beyond the immediate military context. Trump is running two operations simultaneously: one against the IRGC, and one against the assumption that the United States will indefinitely underwrite regional security at its own expense. His threats to leave NATO, vow to send the IRGC "back to the Stone Ages," and triumphalist mid-operation address thanking Gulf partners for their support are not the improvisations of an undisciplined communicator. They are the deliberate signaling of a strategic repositioning, designed to press allies into assuming greater responsibility abroad. The operation itself is a demonstration of what American military power can accomplish when it decides to act without hesitation.

Trump is also using the Strait of Hormuz crisis to accelerate something the administration has sought from the beginning: a Middle East in which American allies assume primary responsibility for their own neighborhood, freeing Washington to concentrate its strategic attention on the Western Hemisphere. Burden-sharing was long treated as a European conversation about defense spending. The Strait of Hormuz has just expanded the terms of that project to the entire Eastern Hemisphere by including Gulf countries as well.

The Hormuz gambit has also alienated Beijing, which is losing patience with Iran's active disruptions to Chinese energy supply lines. The purpose of any military operation is to improve your own posture or degrade the enemy's calculus in your favor. The IRGC achieved neither, and in the attempt accelerated its own isolation on every front simultaneously.

The second strategic mistake was time. The IRGC likely assumed that Trump's stated desire for speed signaled an appetite for a fast exit, and that the organization could survive by dragging out negotiations, delaying any serious accommodation, and outlasting American political resolve through attrition. But time cannot be purchased in a war where American strikes are hitting command and control infrastructure at its foundations and front line units are receiving no meaningful replenishment. The IRGC has made a career of mistaking American restraint for American weakness, and the cost of that error is now being denominated in destroyed batteries, dead commanders, and a command architecture that grows less coherent with each successive wave of strikes.

The choice for Iran is either compliance or collapse, and the distance between those two destinations is shorter than Tehran has ever been willing to admit.

The third strategic mistake was tempo. In nearly every crisis in the past two decades, the IRGC's strategy has been to control the pace of escalation with its adversaries, calibrate pressure, and determine when and how confrontations would intensify or recede. But that model depends on a predictable opponent. Trump has demolished that predictability, and the range of American military options—from additional carrier groups and Marine landing forces to airborne troops and an ever-expanding list of targets—have multiplied more quickly than the IRGC can adapt. As Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth said last week: "Our adversary right now thinks there are 15 different ways we could come at them with boots on the ground. And guess what? There are." The IRGC now finds itself reactive, off balance, and unable to dictate the terms of the next exchange.

The fourth strategic mistake was overestimating its capacity to reinvigorate the Arab world against a joint American and Israeli operation. The IRGC's regional theory of legitimacy rested on the proposition that Arab populations in the Middle East could be

mobilized against American and Israeli military action in ways that would constrain Gulf rulers and force them to distance themselves from Washington. But the Abraham Accords architecture has proven more durable than Tehran anticipated, and the Arab street has failed to materialize as a meaningful strategic variable in any theater that mattered.

The fifth strategic mistake was information warfare. We've seen this play out before. After October 7, Hamas and Hezbollah seeded social media with fabricated footage, manufacturing narratives of resistance among Western audiences. But the illusion of battlefield success became an internal liability, feeding a leadership culture in which accurate damage assessments were suppressed in favor of narratives that preserved morale at the expense of strategic clarity. The IRGC is repeating the pattern, trying to win the battle of public opinion even as it loses the one on the ground.

The stakes are considerably higher this time, because the propaganda apparatus is operating against a backdrop of acute domestic crisis: runaway inflation, capital flight, water scarcity, and an economy in structural collapse. An organization that cannot accurately assess its own battlefield losses is even less equipped to reckon with the degree to which the Iranian population it claims to protect has already stopped believing in the institution meant to govern them.

The sixth strategic mistake was the assumption that China would serve as a meaningful backstop when the pressure became acute. Intelligence reporting indicates that Beijing has continued to provide data support to the IRGC, and Chinese technology remains embedded in what survives of Iran's surveillance architecture. But this cannot compensate for the IRGC's structural deterioration, and China appears unwilling to escalate its material support to a level that invites direct American economic retaliation. Thus, the IRGC is accumulating losses faster than any external partner is willing or able to replace them.

The seventh strategic mistake, and the one most structurally irreversible, was Iran's decades-long strategy to build its offensive and defensive architecture almost entirely around a proxy network that the U.S.-Israeli campaign has systematically dismantled. Hezbollah entered the current war already severely diminished from its 2024 confrontation with Israel, its leadership decimated and its southern Lebanon infrastructure severely damaged. The Syrian buffer that Iran spent years and billions of dollars constructing has collapsed entirely, and American and Israeli forces have degraded the Houthi operation in Yemen past the point of meaningful military utility.

The IRGC was designed to project power through others rather than absorb direct confrontation itself. But the U.S.-Israeli campaign has forced upon it precisely the direct confrontation its entire architecture was constructed to avoid, leaving the organization exposed, stripped of the layered proxy depth that previously allowed it to absorb punishment at a distance, and facing an adversary that has correctly identified this exposure as the central vulnerability of the entire Iranian strategic posture.

What stands before Trump today is an IRGC stripped of its mystique, its command structure gutted, its proxies dismantled, and its vulnerabilities laid bare on its own soil in ways that decades of institutional construction were designed to prevent.

Trump and Benjamin Netanyahu have already addressed the Iranian people directly, instructing them to stay home and stay clear of further attacks. The regime responded by shutting down the internet, a measure that speaks less to operational security than to the elemental fear of a government that cannot afford for its own population to watch what is happening.

There is no third option, no face-saving arrangement, no regional patron positioned to alter the terms. The choice for Iran is either compliance or collapse, and the distance between those two destinations is shorter than Tehran has ever been willing to admit. (The Free Press Apr 5)