



Iran Options

The US, drunk on the hubris of being the sole superpower, attacked and occupied Afghanistan in 2001; and invaded and occupied Iraq in 2003. The Clinton administration, upon leaving office on 20 January 2001, bequeathed its successor a budget surplus and a manageable national debt of 5.6 trillion dollars — and an army that was equipped to fight 1.5 wars, i.e., to decisively win in one theatre while holding the other until the first was concluded. It is important to note that the one-and-a-half wars were understood to be potential conflicts to be fought against the Russian army on the eastern European plains and against China on the Korean peninsula. Also equally important to note, for fair comparison to today, is the fact that Russia at the time was led by the drunkard Boris Yeltsin, and was rudderless and directionless following the collapse of the USSR, and China was still reeling from the repercussions of the Tiananmen Square incident and related sanctions, and was still angling and bargaining its way into the WTO, GATT, and other international forums. US policymakers were envisioning a millennium of American dominance, and its intellectuals were writing “end of history” type narratives built on the triumphalism of capitalism having defeated socialism.

Fast-forward to 2026. The US has lost faith in the very narrative upon which the rules-based order was constructed — namely, globalisation. It now faces a two-trillion-dollar annual deficit, an insurmountable national debt of approximately 38.38 trillion dollars, and an army that runs out of ammunition within a few weeks of even a limited aerial skirmish. Bush had something solid to stand on; Trump has nothing but hot air and a loud trumpet in this new war in the Middle East with Iran.

History offers parallels for Iran when it is faced with a seemingly superior foe. The US won its strategic contest against the then-superpower Britain in the War of 1812 — even after losing its capital, with Capitol Hill burned to the ground and the US army forced to vacate Washington DC before advancing British forces. The British inflicted tactical damage but failed to break the American will to fight, and that failure converted tactical victory into strategic defeat. Simultaneously, across the continent, a similar dynamic was unfolding. Napoleon had invaded Russia with his magnificent, hitherto-undefeated army of 650,000, sweeping aside allied European armies in battle after battle until Moscow itself was abandoned before him. He waited in Moscow for months for the Russians to come and negotiate surrender. They never came. Napoleon had failed to break the will of an invaded nation to resist. He retreated back to France, battling the elements, and lost 600,000 of his finest battle-hardened soldiers in the process.

The Soviets suffered 27 million casualties in the Second World War, compared with roughly 4 million German losses on the Eastern Front — a figure all the more striking given that the Germans were the attacking force, and convention holds that an attacker typically suffers three times the losses of the defender. It was a display of sheer willpower, nowhere more visible than in the defence of Stalingrad.

The same lesson recurred in Korea. In 1953, the US — drunk on nuclear supremacy and the memory of recent victory — went to war against a country that had been a Western colony just years before. It dropped more bombs on the Korean peninsula than it had used across the entire Pacific theatre in the Second World War, left not a single building standing in Pyongyang, and reportedly destroyed 90% of North Korea's urban infrastructure. And yet the will remained unbroken. The US was forced to negotiate a ceasefire which to this day remains the only agreement defining the relationship between North and South Korea.

We have seen this pattern repeated again and again. The people of Vietnam, Afghanistan, Gaza, Iraq, and Somalia, to name only a few, refused to accept defeat.

The US had hoped for a Venezuela-style outcome and calculated that a war with Iran would be over in four days. But Trump's America — however loudly it describes itself — is nowhere near what it was when it went to war against Afghanistan and Iraq, nations with populations of 25 million each and with the full support of neighbouring countries. Whereas Iran spans 1.5 million km² and has a population of 93 million — and not a single significant neighbour is on board.

Iran does not need to defeat the US militarily; It only needs to survive it. But if the nation-state structure, the network of US bases, and the instruments of the international order — the petrodollar, the NPT, FATF, the IMF, SWIFT, the CTBT, the FMCT, the ABM Treaty, and so forth — survive intact, then the sacrifice of the Iranian people will have been for nothing. Ultimately, this is a political battle. The US must be defeated politically, and the first pawn to take on this chessboard must be the nation-state framework.

The region does not need the US for security. It needs security from the US. The colonialist West created the fragile Gulf microstates specifically to loot and plunder the resources of the Ummah. Pakistani armed forces are already present in the region. The time has come to roll back the entire colonial architecture — whether that means the Sykes-Picot carve-up, the Durand Line division, or the Radcliffe butchery of Islamic lands.

Only the Khilafah (Caliphate) is the way forward. Anything else merely allows the US to get back at you through different means.

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