

Epstein, Iran, and the Timing of the Strike: How is the Convergence between the Domestic Crisis and the Strategic Decision to be Read?

(Translated)

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A diligent reading of this moment does not tolerate simplification of the type, “America is completely led by ‘Israel,’ nor does it, on the other hand, tolerate denying the effect of pressure, and tools of influence, supportive of the occupying Jewish entity inside Washington. The more precise description is to say: there is a hierarchy of interests led by the United States, and within this hierarchy operate pressure networks, alliances, agencies, and intelligence and political intersections that push certain options to the forefront, when they also serve the American interest. Within this specific framework, the connection between the Epstein scandal crisis, and the timing of the escalation against Iran can be understood - not as the only explanation, but as a political factor that exerts pressure, and accelerates events at a highly sensitive moment of decision.

Firstly, from the American domestic perspective, the Epstein files have not remained merely archival material or an “old scandal.” Reuters reports showed that the successive releases of millions of documents have made the case an ongoing political problem for Trump. It has turned into a matter of public confidence related to the relationship of authority with elites, and the idea of impunity. A Reuters-Ipsos poll also showed that a large proportion of Americans saw in these files evidence that the powerful are often not held accountable, and that the case affected trust in political and economic leadership. This means that we are facing an issue that does not only threaten reputation, but also puts pressure on the very environment of political legitimacy.

In the same context, political tension increased when a prominent Democratic congressman accused the Department of Justice of withholding FBI interviews, related to an accusation directed at Trump within the Epstein file. Reuters confirmed that law enforcement agencies did not criminally charge Trump in this case, and that the department itself said it is reviewing whether some materials may have been withheld by mistake.

This point is very important because it makes the issue highly politically sensitive, even in the absence of a judicial conviction. It opens the door to accusations of “cover-up” and double standards, which is the ideal environment for the intensification of media and partisan conflict.

However, does that strictly mean that the strike on Iran was “merely” a diversion from Epstein? Here the analysis must be disciplined. The strategic literature on what is called the Diversionary Theory and the “rally ‘round the flag” effect says that leaders may find within foreign crises an opportunity to rearrange the domestic political arena, or raise the cost for their opponents. However, this same literature also confirms that this is not an inevitable rule, and that the empirical evidence is mixed. Some studies have even questioned how common this pattern actually is in the way public discourse imagines it. In other words, the hypothesis

exists, and is recognized in political science, but it should not automatically be turned into a “proof,” in every war or strike.

What we can say with a higher degree of intellectual rigor is the following:

The Epstein files generated real domestic pressure, and this kind of pressure makes any administration more sensitive to managing the media and political agenda. However, the decision to strike Iran according to Reuters reports — was also governed by its own strategic and intelligence logic: briefings to Trump described the operation as “high-risk and high-reward,” with talk of a rare opportunity to produce a geopolitical shift that serves American interests, along with assessments related to the risks to American bases, the potential Iranian response, and options for “changing” the regional balance.

This places us before an overlap between a domestic motive and a strategic motive, not before a single explanation. In fact, some of what Reuters published weakens the narrative of “pure diversion” in the first place. The coverage showed that Trump had publicly begun preparing public opinion for the possibility of striking Iran several days before the strike, during the State of the Union address, while the American military buildup in the Middle East was already dominating the political scene.

That is, the option of escalation did not suddenly emerge from the womb of a media crisis. Instead, it had already been on the table and was preceded by military buildup and political rhetoric, and then the execution came at an operationally suitable moment. This does not deny the effect of Epstein on the political timing, and domestic marketing, but it denies — or at least weakens — the claim that it was the sole cause, or the complete explanation.

Here we arrive at an important point: America does not deal with ‘Israel’ as the supreme decision-maker in every issue. The relationship is closer to an unequal strategic partnership: the United States is the major power that sets the ceiling of the game, according to its overall interests, while occupying entity, ‘Israel,’ exercises considerable influence — politically, intelligence-wise, and institutionally — in the issues that intersect with those interests.

Strategic reports and studies, such as those from Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) and Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), already speak about a “strategic partnership” that serves the interests of both sides, and about the existence of moments of divergence and tension in visions between Washington and ‘Tel Aviv,’ rather than a relationship of mechanical subordination of America to the Jewish entity.

The practical examples of this are clear: Reuters documented that the Biden administration halted certain ammunition shipments to the occupying Jewish entity due to concerns about the Rafah operation. It also later documented that American entities restricted, or temporarily halted, the sharing of some intelligence information with the Jewish entity before resuming it after obtaining guarantees.

This confirms that Washington — when it sees that its interests or its legal-strategic calculations require it — applies pressure, imposes restrictions, and sets conditions, even on its closest allies. Therefore, the more accurate formulation is not, “‘Israel’ directs America.” Instead, it is that the occupying entity, ‘Israel,’ possesses effective tools to influence decision-making within the United States, but it succeeds more when it pushes toward an option that already aligns with the perceived American interest.

From here the example of Iran can be understood:

Striking Iran — especially if it is presented within Washington as an opportunity to weaken the structure of the ruling system, or to engineer a transitional environment more susceptible to American containment, so that the alternative Iranian regime becomes a subordinate, agent regime, instead of a state that revolves in its the orbit of the US — is not only an occupation state (the Jewish entity) interest. Instead, it can be marketed within the American establishment as an American option to reshape the regional balance. Reuters indeed reported that Trump’s briefings included a vision of a geopolitical return that would serve American interests. It also reported that the timing of the strike was linked to intelligence information about a sensitive leadership meeting inside Iran, which makes the execution at that moment the result of a convergence between the “intelligence window” and the “political decision.”

As for the effect of the Epstein files here, the stronger reasoned argument is not that they generated the decision from scratch, but that they may have contributed to making the White House more willing to push forward an already existing confrontational option, or more eager to rearrange the overall mood towards a security-foreign issue, at a time when the Epstein file was putting pressure on the administration’s image and on public confidence.

This description also aligns with Reuters reports showing that the strike itself caused division within Trump’s base, of MAGA, and that it is not a “guaranteed card” electorally. In other words, the decision also carried domestic risks, which reminds us that the logic of diversion — even when present — may backfire on its initiator, if the conflict drags on or its cost escalates.

Conclusion: If we want to build a strong and coherent argument, we must avoid exaggerating in claiming a definitive causal relationship between the Epstein scandals and the strike on Iran, without direct documentary evidence. However, it is valid — and indeed important — to say that the Epstein crisis generated real political and media pressure, and that this kind of pressure affects calculations of timing, and the management of the agenda. This is especially when it coincides with an intelligence opportunity, and a strategic option that Washington sees as beneficial to its major interests. Within this framework, the occupying entity, ‘Israel’ is a highly influential actor within the scene, not as the “supreme leader” of Washington, but as a partner capable of directing momentum, and accelerating decision-making. when the ‘Israeli’ push aligns with American interests, as perceived by the ruling establishment.