EXHIBIT 1

(Declaration of Kenneth Roth)

A generational shift is transforming the US-Israel relationship

Kenneth Roth

A generational shift is under way in the relationship between the United States and Israel. Tensions were already palpable because of Israel's genocide in Gaza. Benjamin Netanyahu's role in pushing Donald Trump to join a counterproductive war against Iran was the last straw.

Stopping unconditional US support for Israel would certainly be important for curbing US complicity in Israeli war crimes. It may also be the best thing for Israel if it is to have any hope of avoiding the dangerous dead end of relentless military escalation. And it is a prerequisite for Palestinians to have any prospect of escaping Israel's endless occupation.

The relationship between the two countries was not always as close as in recent decades. At Israel's founding in 1948, Washington was supportive but with a certain reserve. President Harry Truman refused to send weapons to the new state. In 1957, President Dwight Eisenhower forced Israel to withdraw from the Sinai.

But things changed when Israel fought against neighboring states in 1967 and 1973. Israel also benefited from portraying itself during the cold war as a bulwark against Soviet influence in the Middle East.

For many years, it became impossible to question Israel in discussions with most US officials. When in 2021 Human Rights Watch issued a report on Israel's apartheid in the occupied Palestinian territory, it was widely welcomed around the world but landed in Washington like a lead balloon.

That extreme deference was visible even as Israel committed genocide. President Joe Biden stopped delivering the 2,000lb bombs that Israel used to indiscriminately decimate Palestinian neighborhoods but kept billions flowing in other military aid and arms sales. Rather than condition military assistance on an end to Israel's starvation strategy in Gaza, he organized an expensive and ineffective effort to deliver food on a makeshift floating pier. The starvation worsened.

Biden was behind the times. Israeli atrocities in Gaza were alienating a growing percentage of the Democratic party and even younger Christian evangelicals. Christian evangelicals, far more than Jews, comprise Israel's base within the Republican party.

A Pew poll in April showed that 60% of American adults have a negative view of Israel, up 7% since last year and 20% since 2022. Among Democrats and Democratically inclined independents (which include most American Jews), a striking 80% have an unfavorable opinion of Israel. Among Republicans, a majority still supports Israel, but 57% of those aged 18 to 49 have negative views.

Perhaps reflecting these trends, Trump showed more backbone than Biden when it came to standing up to Netanyahu. Mired in a 1967-era view of Israel as David surrounded by the Goliath of the combined Arab states, and fearful of attacks from the political right, Biden never used Washington's enormous leverage to force Netanyahu to stop the slaughter.

Trump did. To his credit, Trump saw Netanyahu as the regional bully, and after initially endorsing the ethnic cleansing of Gaza, came around to recognize that the starvation and killing had to stop. Trump insisted on a ceasefire, and Netanyahu had to agree, although since then, after announcing with great fanfare his Board of Peace for Gaza, Trump seems to have lost interest while Israel squeezes Palestinians into ever-narrower parts of Gaza.

The disastrous war with Iran has accelerated Israel's plummeting esteem in the United States. Netanyahu

bamboozled the naive Trump into starting the war with enticing yet unrealistic visions of regime change – and no plan B. Instead, Netanyahu saddled Trump with an albatross – an Iranian regime emboldened by having survived an all-out assault with much of its missile and drone capacity intact, no further damage to its nuclear program, and a newly discovered weapon in the strait of Hormuz that made Trump desperate for a deal to avoid a midterm electoral drubbing. To make matters worse, Netanyahu kept trying to sabotage Trump's negotiations with Tehran by periodically launching new assaults in Lebanon.

US and Israeli interests no longer align. Trump wants a ceasefire; Netanyahu wants endless war. Trump wants to focus on business deals in the Gulf; Netanyahu is fixated on Iran. In utter frustration, Trump called Netanyahu "fucking crazy" for jeopardizing an accord with Iran by continuing attacks in Lebanon, while Vice-President JD Vance chastised Israeli officials for criticizing Trump's agreement with Iran when Washington is pretty much the only ally that Israel still has.

Within the Republican party, Trump is stuck between the competing demands of his isolationist "America First" Maga base, which thought from the outset that the war of choice with Iran was a mistake, and the traditional Republican hawks, who want a tougher deal with Iran, even though that is beyond the weakened Trump's capacity to deliver.

Meanwhile, Israel is becoming toxic for Democrats. In last week's primary election in New York City, home to the world's largest Jewish population outside of Israel, a place where candidates' embrace of Israel used to be axiomatic, support for Israel has become the kiss of death. Mayor Zohran Mamdani called the pro-Israel lobby group Aipac "monsters", and candidates spotlighted to devastating effect their opponents' support from the group. Victorious candidates openly recognized Israel's genocide and apartheid.

Some Democratic dinosaurs such as the Senate minority leader, Chuck Schumer, still cling to the past, but their time has come. The future of the party lies in those who want to end the blank check to Israel and the resulting aiding and abetting of Israel's genocide, apartheid, war crimes and endless occupation.

Netanyahu sees the writing on the wall. Making a virtue of necessity, he speaks of the need to wean Israel from US military aid. But he talks optimistically of doing so over a decade. Israel will be lucky if the aid survives the next Democratic administration.

Netanyahu may still lose the coming election, which must be held by late October. He is unpopular not only because of the paltry showing for his endless wars but also because of the long-pending corruption charges against him and the sense that he was so preoccupied by his far-right side projects that he ignored clear warning signs of Hamas's deadly 7 October 2023 attack.

But switching leaders will not end Israel's pariah status if its policies remain unchanged. Repudiating Netanyahu's callous indifference to Palestinian civilian life would require a new government to take a bold step such as surrendering him to face pending war crime charges in The Hague, much as the Serbian government did in 2001 to former president Slobodan Milosevic to secure the lifting of sanctions for Belgrade's atrocities in Bosnia and Kosovo.

That would be good for Israel, even if the Israeli public at the moment disagrees, and Netanyahu's main opponents, even to his left, seem more hawkish than he is.

There are limits to Netanyahu's vision of forever war. Unconditional US support has enabled Israel to operate with a sense of impunity, knowing that the world's superpower would stand behind it militarily, as well as at the UN security council if mandatory sanctions are ever threatened.

That has left Israel with inveterate opponents – Hamas in Gaza, Hezbollah in Lebanon, and the Islamic Republic in Iran. Tehran has a nuclear program that was contained by the deal struck by President Barack Obama but unleashed when Trump, egged on by Netanyahu, ripped it up. How much longer will it be before the Iranian government learns the North Korean lesson and wards off further attacks by building, or buying, its own nuclear weapon?

There have been times when Israeli governments have seen the virtue of a less bellicose approach. Peace deals

made with Egypt and Jordan removed them as threats. The Abraham accords neutralized other Arab governments. The Oslo accords even generated the unthreatening, if corrupt and ineffectual, Palestinian Authority.

Why can Israel trust the large Palestinian population of Jordan to live in peace but not the Palestinian population of the West Bank, East Jerusalem and Gaza? The distinction suggests that the problem is not the inherently violent character of the Palestinian people, as the Israeli government's self-serving mythology would suggest, but Israel's endless occupation – Israel's refusal to recognize Palestinians' right of self-determination, their right to a state. South Africa's negotiated end to its apartheid regime despite the fears of its white population has positive lessons for Israel.

Unconditional US support for Israel has allowed the combative approach of Netanyahu and his ilk to prevail. It has left them with the view that anything goes in the name of "self-defense", that there is no such thing as a legitimate Palestinian quest for a nation state, only a Palestinian security threat. An end to that support would force a reckoning with reality, a recognition that the unrelenting subjugation of a people is a recipe for recurrent rebellion, while acceptance of their humanity is a prerequisite for peace.

- Kenneth Roth is a Guardian US columnist, visiting professor at Princeton's School of Public and International Affairs, and former executive director of Human Rights Watch. He is the author of Righting Wrongs: Three Decades on the Front Lines Battling Abusive Governments

EXHIBIT 2

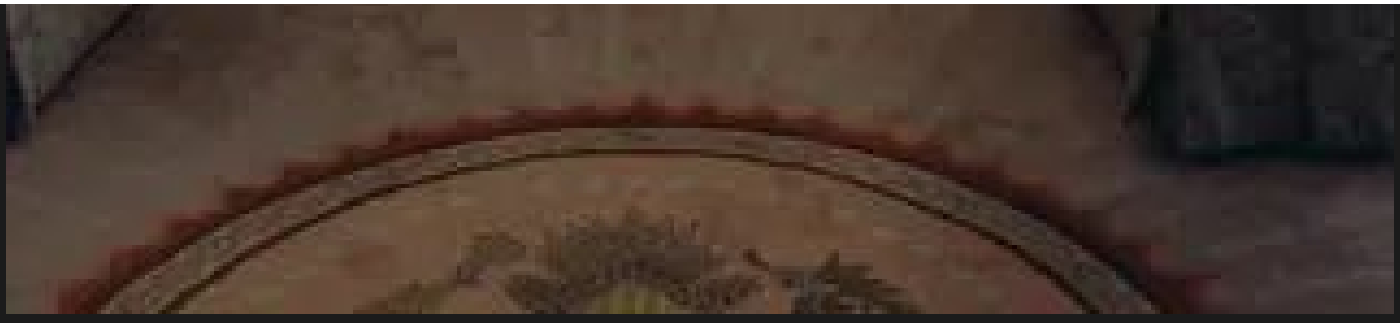
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POLITICS + DONALD TRUMP +

How the Gaza Deal Got Done

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President Donald Trump sits in the Oval Office at the White House, in Washington, DC, on Oct. 21, 2025. *Photograph by Stephen Voss for TIME*

Story

by Eric Cortellessa

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The Brief

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On the evening of Saturday, Oct. 4, Donald Trump called Benjamin Netanyahu to deliver a message: the war in Gaza was over.

Trump's envoys had brokered a deal with mediators from Qatar, Egypt, and Turkey to end two years of bombardment and bloodshed. The following Monday, the President told Netanyahu, they were going to announce the agreement—and the Israeli Premier had to accept it. "Bibi, you can't fight the world," Trump told him, recounting their conversation in an interview with TIME. "You can fight individual battles, but the world's against you."

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Netanyahu pushed back, but Trump wasn't having it. He launched into a profanity-laced monologue cataloguing all he'd done for Israel as President: moving the U.S. embassy to Jerusalem, recognizing its sovereignty over the Golan Heights, brokering the Abraham Accords that normalized relations between Israel and several Arab states, even joining Israel's strikes on Iran in June. Trump could no longer stand with Netanyahu, he suggested, if the Prime Minister didn't sign onto the pact. "It was a very blunt and straightforward statement to Bibi," says Steve Witkoff, Trump's special envoy to the Middle East, "that he had no tolerance for anything other than this." (Netanyahu's office declined to comment.)

By the end of the call, Netanyahu had agreed to a two-phase deal that included a cease-fire between Israel and Hamas, secured the return of Israeli hostages in exchange for Palestinian prisoners and detainees, allowed aid shipments into the ravaged enclave, withdrew Israeli forces from parts of the Gaza Strip, and opened negotiations for a final settlement. If it holds, the accord would end the longest war in Israel's history, one that killed some 2,000 Israelis and nearly 70,000 Palestinians.

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The deal marks a milestone in Trump's ongoing bid to reshape the modern Middle East. During the past nine months, the President has attacked Iran's nuclear infrastructure and helped degrade its standing in the region. Isolating Tehran hastened the fall of the Assad regime in Syria, and new governments in Damascus and Beirut have signaled a desire to restore ties with Washington. He has bombed Houthi targets in Yemen, leading to an agreement that the rebel group would no longer target U.S. vessels in the Red Sea. Now he has used a real estate dealmaker's sensibility—an instinct for leverage, for cajoling counterparts through flattery and the threat of force—to push a peace deal on Hamas and Netanyahu, two seemingly intractable enemies. The U.S. President is "breaking all the long-held assumptions of Middle East diplomacy," says Michael Oren, the historian and former Israeli ambassador to the U.S. "Trump is coming back and saying: We're going to re-establish America's hegemony here. And he's done it—so far."

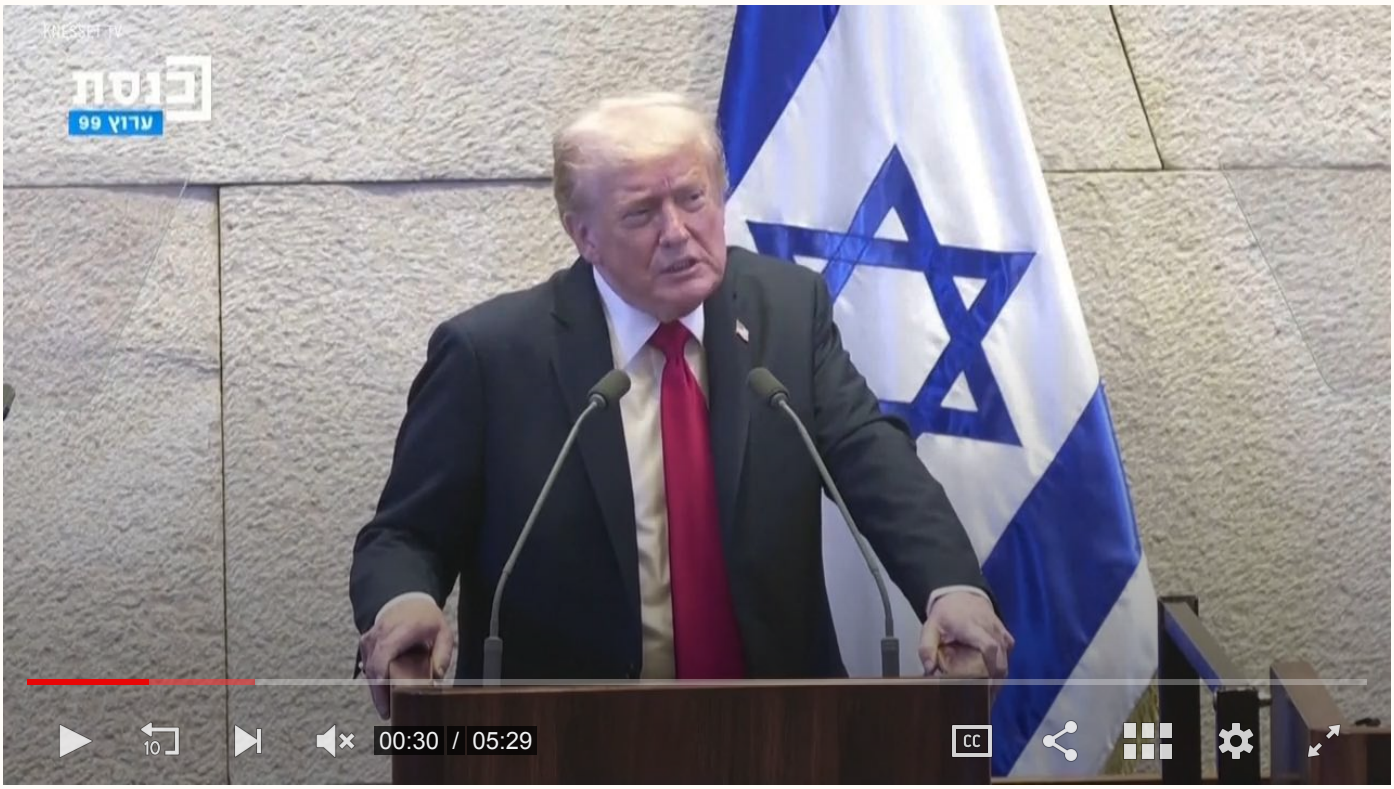


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Trump traces his achievements so far to his willingness to use America's military might. Through the assassination of the Iranian general Qasem Soleimani in his first term and his decision to strike three Iranian nuclear facilities last spring, Trump earned enough goodwill among the Israeli public and stirred enough fear among the nation's adversaries to bring both parties to the bargaining table. "It would have been impossible to make a deal like this before," Trump says of his attacks on Iran. "No President was willing to do it, and I was willing to do it. And by doing it, we had a different Middle East."

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Of course, the cease-fire remains fragile, and the deal could still unravel. Hamas has yet to return the remains of all the deceased Israeli hostages, prompting Israel to close the Rafah crossing and restrict aid. Videos on social media show Hamas gunmen executing rivals in the streets. On Oct. 19, Israel accused the militant group of violating the cease-fire after attacks on Israeli soldiers. In the span of a week, the situation grew precarious enough that Trump dispatched Vice President J.D. Vance to the region in a bid to hold the agreement together.

The next phase is even thornier. It includes defining the scope of Israel's military withdrawal and the structure of a peacekeeping force; disarming Hamas; and determining who will govern postwar Gaza. "Those are very difficult things to do," says Dan Shapiro, the former U.S. ambassador to Israel under Barack Obama. Among the risks, Shapiro says, is that Trump could "end up with kind of a frozen conflict in the current situation, with Israel controlling half of Gaza, Hamas controlling the other half, suppressing its own people, and no real reconstruction."

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Vice President J.D. Vance meets with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in ongoing efforts to maintain the ceasefire between Israel and Hamas. *Nathan Howard—Pool/Getty Images*

For those reasons, experts fear the peace may prove fleeting. But Trump's foreign policy has also defied the predictions of his critics. His "America First" creed—once synonymous with isolationism and retreat—has evolved into an unconventional form of personalized diplomacy unburdened by doctrine. While he has shown himself content to let Russia have greater dominance over Europe and China exert its will in the Indo-Pacific region, he has asserted U.S. power in the Middle East in surprising ways. Trump has deepened

Washington's ties with Riyadh, Abu Dhabi, and Doha. He expects Saudi Arabia to normalize ties with Israel and join the Abraham Accords by year's end. He tells TIME he intends to visit Gaza soon, as U.S. partners hammer out a plan to reconstruct the Strip. Soon he envisions greater economic integration between Israel and its Arab neighbors. The bullish vision of what all this could mean would be transformative: rail lines from the Mediterranean to the Persian Gulf; free-trade agreements between Israel and its neighbors; the establishment of a new regional energy grid; Saudis vacationing in Tel Aviv.

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In Trump's telling, this regional reset would be impossible without one essential ingredient: himself. "The most important thing," he tells TIME, "is they have to respect the President of the United States. The Middle East has to understand that. It's almost the President more than the country."

Trump was en route to Charlie Kirk's funeral on Sept. 21 when he summoned his top aides and allies to his private cabin aboard Air Force One. Gathered around the table were his chief of staff Susie Wiles, House Speaker Mike Johnson, and his son-in-law Jared Kushner. Witkoff was patched into the conversation by phone.

The group had a problem to deal with. Israeli warplanes had recently struck Hamas operatives in Doha, who were visiting a compound to discuss cease-fire negotiations. The attack violated the sovereignty of Qatar, a U.S. ally and the chief mediator with Hamas. The assault enraged Trump. "That was terrible," Trump says now, calling the decision "a tactical mistake" on Netanyahu's part. Yet for U.S. negotiators, it also represented an opportunity. The assault was a warning to Arab leaders that the war in Gaza would not stay confined there.

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Trump, meanwhile, saw a chance to use outrage over the attack to coax regional leaders to the table. "This was one of the things that brought us all together," Trump says. "It was so out of joint that it sort of got everybody to do what they have to do. If you took that away, we might not be talking about this subject right now."

The President's approach to the region took shape in his first term. He entered office without foreign policy experience. He handed the Middle East portfolio to Kushner, his son-in-law and a fellow real estate developer, who approached the matter less as a traditional diplomat than as a dealmaker. When Trump followed through on his campaign vow to recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital and move the U.S. embassy there, the Palestinians broke off contact with Washington. That rupture gave rise to a new approach to the long-standing Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Rather than accept the conventional wisdom that Israel could not integrate with the Arab world without first making peace with the Palestinians, Trump's team sought to flip the formula. They called it the "outside-in" strategy: build peace from the periphery inward.

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People hold up portraits of Israeli hostages along with a poster depicting President Trump in Tel Aviv early on Oct.13, 2025. *Ahmad Gharablia—AFP/Getty Images*

During the 2024 campaign, Trump was in touch with Netanyahu. The Israeli Prime Minister visited him at Mar-a-Lago that July. It was an open secret that Netanyahu was rooting for Trump's return to the White House as President Joe Biden pressured him to halt the onslaught on Gaza. But Netanyahu's relationship with Trump was fraught as well. Trump left office furious at the Israeli leader—first for withdrawing from a planned 2020 joint strike on Soleimani (a claim Israel has denied), and later for becoming one of the first world leaders to congratulate Biden on his election victory in 2020. Netanyahu was eager for a rapprochement.

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When TIME brought up Israel's attacks on Hezbollah and regime change in Syria, the President interrupted. "All of those attacks were done under my auspices, you know, with Israel doing the attacks—with the pagers and all that stuff." He was referring to Israel's covert operation in September 2024 that targeted Hezbollah officials by detonating thousands of pagers, killing dozens and inflicting a psychological scar on the terrorist group for succumbing to such a sophisticated security breach. Biden was still in the White House, and Trump was a candidate. "They let me know everything," he says. "And sometimes I'd say no—and they'd be respectful of that." (A Biden representative declined to comment. A Trump spokesperson later said the President misspoke and was referring to Israel's recent strike on Doha.)

After Trump won in November 2024, Witkoff traveled to Washington to meet with key members of Biden's foreign policy team: National Security Council coordinator for the Middle East Brett McGurk, National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan, and Secretary of State Antony Blinken. Constrained by the Logan Act's restrictions on private citizens negotiating foreign policy, Witkoff secured approval from the Biden team to hold talks with Israeli and Arab interlocutors. Even as the Biden Administration continued its own diplomacy, a new sense of possibility had begun to take hold. "Hamas was signaling that they wanted to gain some political capital with the Trump Administration," Witkoff told me. "Beyond political capital, they were afraid of him."

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The day before Trump's second Inauguration, Israel and Hamas agreed to a cease-fire, and Hamas released 33 hostages. But the fighting resumed in short order. Trying to keep talks on track, Trump had invited Netanyahu to the White House in February, when he proposed relocating Gaza's population and remaking the Strip into "the Riviera of the Middle East." Experts say the outlandish idea galvanized Arab negotiators and regional mediators to expedite a peace process. "The President scared the hell out of them when he came up with the Riviera idea," says Nimrod Novick, a former senior adviser to Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres and now a fellow with the Israel Policy Forum. "Never mind the Riviera, but for them to host 2 million Gazans for the duration of reconstruction or beyond was unthinkable on several grounds."



Palestinians travel by horse cart amid the destruction caused by the Israeli air and ground offensives in Gaza City, Oct. 22, 2025. *Abdel Kareem Hana—AP*

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The theater of conflict soon expanded. Israeli forces struck Iran's nuclear facilities in June, unnerving a White House that feared the bombing campaign would derail its efforts at diplomacy. Yet Netanyahu, through careful planning, was able to enlist Trump to join the campaign, according to a senior Israeli official who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to discuss the conversations.

At their meeting in February, Netanyahu had agreed to give Trump a 60-day window to engage in talks with the Iranians on a nuclear agreement, expecting that they would prove fruitless, according to an Israeli official familiar with the matter. When they produced no resolution, Netanyahu launched the attack. At first, a White House official says, Trump was frustrated—the offensive jeopardized the Administration's hopes of a nuclear deal with Tehran. But Trump warmed to the idea of joining the strikes, seeing their impact and concurring with Netanyahu's assessment that the Iranians were trying to manipulate him. On June 22, Trump unleashed U.S. bunker-buster bombs that crippled Iran's nuclear infrastructure, according to U.S. and Israeli officials.

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Then Netanyahu targeted Hamas leaders in Doha. The assault provoked a crisis that Kushner and Witkoff were determined not to waste. "We had an opening," Kushner says. "It's just an element of how the President thinks." The pair worked the U.N. General Assembly circuit, hashing out a 20-point plan with Qatari mediators, Egyptian and Turkish interlocutors, and Israeli officials. The proposal called for an immediate cease-fire and hostage exchange, Israeli security guarantees, the demilitarization of Gaza, and a new civilian governing authority.

When the document reached the President, he scheduled a meeting with leaders of Arab states in a large room at the U.N. on Rosh Hashanah. Joined by Witkoff, Wiles, and Secretary of State Marco Rubio, Trump began the session, U.S. officials say, with a long soliloquy about ending the killing and achieving a lasting peace, the goal that has eluded statesmen since the founding of Israel. Then he went around the table, soliciting each leader's counsel. Prince Faisal, representing the Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, and King Abdullah of Jordan voiced support for the framework.

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The negotiations picked up steam from there. Regional leaders, including the Turks and Qataris, helped lean on Hamas. Turkey, a member of NATO, provided a boost by offering Hamas' political leaders protection from Israeli strikes if they came to the table, says Soner Cagaptay, a Turkish scholar at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy. "Turkey has quite a bit of sway over Hamas' political wing," he says, "and I think Ankara used that influence."

Trump applied pressure too, warning that if the militant group refused to disarm or attempted to subvert the deal, it would face "complete obliteration." The demand was clear: the return of every Israeli captive, no longer in stages. "I said, 'No more of that. You're giving us the f-cking hostages, all of them,'" Trump says.

The threat drew credibility from the recent strikes on Iran. "The real clincher was Trump's willingness to use military force," says Oren. "The previous Democratic administrations were very averse to using military force. They preferred soft power. Soft power is not widely respected in the Middle East."

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Trump's popularity in Israel—where his approval ratings dwarfed the Israeli Premier's—gave him leverage over Netanyahu. He knew to embrace Netanyahu in public while pressuring him in private to halt the fighting, aides say. "He would have just kept going," Trump tells TIME. "It could have gone on for years. It would have gone on for years. But I stopped him, and everybody came together when I stopped him."



President Donald Trump talks with Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at the Knesset, Israel's parliament, Monday, Oct. 13, 2025, in Jerusalem. *Chip Somodevilla—Pool/AP*

That much may be true, but Israelis and Palestinians alike understand that the success of Phase Two will depend on Trump's willingness to stay engaged—on his leverage with Netanyahu and his influence over the region's key players. "If the guarantors of this process want it to succeed, it will succeed, particularly the Trump Administration," says Khaled Elgindy, a former Palestinian Authority negotiator.

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But there are also ways, he adds, that the pact could crumble. One question is the extent to which an international peacekeeping force will allow the Palestinians to choose their own future governance. Israelis and other Arab powers insist Hamas cannot play a role. But the Islamist group, which the U.S. classifies as a terrorist organization, is "not going to negate itself as a political movement," Elgindy says. "I don't think folks in Israel are open to any kind

of Hamas participation in anything going forward, and that even if Hamas consents to a technocratic government, they will see that as illegitimate."

Trump himself may care little about the specifics of Gaza's postwar order so long as he can claim credit as a peacemaker. But it is difficult to negotiate when there is no unified Palestinian leadership, a dynamic Netanyahu spent decades cultivating by keeping Hamas in Gaza and the Fatah-led Palestinian Authority in the West Bank divided. "They don't have a leader right now," Trump tells me. "At least a visible leader. And they don't really want to, because every one of those leaders has been shot. It's not a hot job."

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Trump says he likes Mahmoud Abbas, the aging head of the Palestinian Authority, but suggests it's unlikely he would be the right person to lead postwar Gaza. One option is calling on Israel to release Marwan Barghouti, the imprisoned Fatah leader who has spent more than two decades behind bars for allegedly directing the murder of four Israelis and one Greek Orthodox monk during the Second Intifada. "I was literally being confronted with that question about 15 minutes before you called," Trump says. "So I'll be making a decision." Many regional observers believe Barghouti is the only figure capable of uniting the Palestinians; polls show him as a leading candidate in a hypothetical election for President of the Palestinian Authority.

Netanyahu, meanwhile, faces rebellion from right-wing ministers who want to block a path to Palestinian statehood and annex the West Bank. Trump warns such a move would meet fierce U.S. resistance. "It won't happen because I gave my word to the Arab countries," he told me. "Israel would lose all of its support from the United States if that happened." Already, he has had to enforce the deal's terms, sending Vance to Israel to ensure that neither Netanyahu nor Hamas allow the agreement to unravel. Netanyahu briefly halted humanitarian aid to Gaza, citing Hamas' failure to return the bodies it had promised and its attacks on Israeli targets, while Vance, Kushner, and Witkoff pressed ahead with reconstruction talks to sustain momentum.

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In the meantime, Trump's gaze has shifted beyond Gaza. He wants to expand the Abraham Accords, most dramatically through normalization between Israel and Saudi Arabia. The Saudis have placed two conditions on the table: an end to the fighting and a credible path toward Palestinian sovereignty, even if not necessarily full statehood. Trump believes both are within reach. "I think Saudi Arabia is going to lead the way," he says. "We don't have the Iran threat anymore. We don't have any threats anymore. We have peace in the Middle East."



President Donald Trump exits the Oval Office at the White House, in Washington, DC, on Oct. 21, 2025. *Stephen Voss for TIME*

Peace in the Middle East is, of course, a florid exaggeration. Yet Trump has achieved a cease-fire that returned the last living hostages to Israel and, for a moment at least, opened the door to a new chapter in the region. "Israel was so intent on the hostages, I was actually surprised," Trump says. "You would have thought they would have sacrificed the hostages in order to keep going, right? The people of Israel wanted the hostages more than they wanted anything else. And we got the hostages."

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The question now is not only whether the fragile architecture of the deal will hold. It's whether Trump can sustain the kind of focus required to turn a momentary reprieve in the fighting into something lasting. It would require the kind of obsessive focus that Jimmy Carter brought to Camp David—long nights, endless details, a diplomacy of sheer endurance. When I ask whether the new regional dynamics can outlast him, Trump doesn't hesitate. "While I'm there, it's going to only get better and stronger, and it's going to be perfect," he says. "What happens after me? I can't tell you that."—*With reporting by Simmone Shah*

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EXHIBIT 3

(Declaration of Kenneth Roth)

Why would Trump agree to the Saudi nuclear deal?

Kenneth Roth

The stark contrast between Donald Trump's nuclear deal with Saudi Arabia and his nuclear demands for Iran would be comical if not so tragic. Trump has handed the Saudis the same nuclear options he swore Iran would never have.

To make matters worse, Trump seems to have offered the Saudis this sweetheart deal to make amends for his disastrous war of choice with Iran. Meanwhile, he continues to bomb Iran in a push to open the strait of Hormuz, which was not closed until Trump launched his counterproductive war.

As recently as this past April, Trump reiterated in discussing Iran: "There will be no enrichment of uranium." That goal had become more urgent because, once Trump ripped up the nuclear accord negotiated by Barack Obama, Iran stepped up its enrichment to near the level needed for an atomic bomb. When Israel and the United States started bombing Iran in June 2025, Iran also barred independent UN inspectors.

So what does Trump offer the Saudis? The possibility, after a joint study, to enrich uranium (and reprocess spent atomic fuel) and to bar inspectors from certain sites that they might deem suspicious. The lack of inspectors would mean there is little to prevent the Saudi government from transforming a civilian nuclear program into a clandestine weapons operation, despite Saudi Arabia (like Iran) being a signatory of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

The Saudi crown prince has said that his country would develop a nuclear weapon if Iran did. Notably, Trump's deal is much less stringent than the 2009 deal negotiated by George W Bush and Barack Obama with the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia's neighboring ally-turned-competitor.

Trump describes himself as having mastered the "art of the deal", but his agreement with the Saudis is likely to torpedo any more restrictive deal with Iran. Iran is already being asked to forsake a nuclear weapon while Israel has them. Any claim that Israel can be trusted to handle its weaponry responsibly is belied by its genocide in Gaza and its decimation of much of that occupied territory as well as southern Lebanon. Now Iran must consider that its Saudi adversary could also develop a bomb.

Why would Trump agree to such a deal? Money seems to have played a big part. The deal could provide tens of billions of dollars to the US nuclear industry if it were to sell reactors to the Saudis. Suddenly the principle that Trump said was worth fighting for can be jettisoned for the right price.

I suspect part of the reason is Trump's effort to revive an alliance that his war has jeopardized. Trump has long had a soft spot for the Saudi crown prince, who possesses the kind of monarchial power that Trump covets. Like other Gulf Arab states, Saudi Arabia had looked to the United States as a security partner, even wanting to formalize the arrangement with a treaty.

But Trump's war has made the partnership risky. Rather than the United States protecting its regional allies, the war provided an excuse for Iran to attack them, targeting the US military bases on their soil and sometimes their petroleum and other infrastructure.

About the only good thing that can be said about Trump's giveaway to the Saudis is that it reflects a continued lessening of the genocidal Israel's influence in Washington DC. An earlier version of a Saudi nuclear deal was premised on the Saudi government opening diplomatic relations with Israel. That requirement has now been abandoned. Riyadh has said that recognition is off the table without "a credible and irreversible path to a Palestinian state". Netanyahu is doing all he can to prevent that.

As the nuclear rationale for war wears thin, Trump's secretary of state, Marco Rubio, has begun to stress the

importance of Iran allowing the strait of Hormuz to reopen. Trump has gone so far as to threaten war crimes – bombing Iran's bridges and power plants – for every Iranian attack in the strait, even though war crimes by one side never justify war crimes by the other.

But the strait *was* open until Trump's war encouraged the Iranians to retaliate asymmetrically by closing it. Now, Trump's memorandum of understanding with Iran – another brilliant stroke by the master negotiator – implicitly allows Iran to charge fees after 60 days.

In other words, the main remaining justification for war has become a matter that was never an issue before Trump's war, while Trump has effectively given away with his Saudi deal a main rationale for starting the war.

There of course is another factor behind the continued bombing. Trump seems to be seeking a face-saving concession from Iran before his Republicans face a midterm debacle. But that is hardly a reason for more bloodshed and destruction.

Revelation of the Saudi deal comes as the Trump administration is trying to persuade Congress to fund a deeply unpopular war that it had no say in launching. The defense secretary, Pete Hegseth, says it has cost $37.5bn so far. That is about what it would cost for, say, a year's rental assistance for 2.3 million low-income people, or to enable about 7 million people to maintain their health insurance.

And to make matters worse, Hegseth wants a total of $67.1bn to keep the war going. Because Trump cannot articulate a persuasive rationale for his pointless war, Congress should say no. This war never should have started and now clearly should not continue.

- Kenneth Roth is a Guardian US columnist, a senior fellow at Yale University, and former executive director of Human Rights Watch. He is the author of Righting Wrongs: Three Decades on the Front Lines Battling Abusive Governments

EXHIBIT 4

(Declaration of Kenneth Roth)

Saudis Reach Deal With U.S. That Could Let Them Enrich Nuclear Fuel

U.S. lawmakers and Israeli officials have expressed opposition to such a plan, to be announced Wednesday, fearing that the kingdom could use a civilian nuclear project to develop nuclear weapons.

Listen · 8:34 min



By David E. Sanger, Edward Wong and William J. Broad

David Sanger reported from Washington, Edward Wong from Manila, where he is covering a diplomatic trip by Secretary of State Marco Rubio, and William J. Broad from New York.

July 21, 2026

The Trump administration plans to announce Wednesday that it has reached a broad nuclear agreement with Saudi Arabia that could lead to the country enriching its own fuel for nuclear reactors, U.S. officials said.

The accord is intended to further bind the United States with the Saudi government as the war with Iran strains the relationship. The Trump administration, according to officials, estimates it will provide billions of dollars for the U.S. nuclear industry — starting with Westinghouse, which designs many of the reactors sold abroad.

The Trump administration plans to formally sign and announce the agreement with the Saudis on Wednesday, said two U.S. officials, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss sensitive diplomacy. It would announce the details to Congress soon afterward.

Although the agreement likely would have support among many Republicans, some U.S. lawmakers from both parties along with Israeli officials have expressed opposition to such a plan, fearing that the kingdom could use a civilian nuclear

project to eventually develop nuclear weapons.

Secretary of State Marco Rubio told reporters traveling with him in Manila on Wednesday that he had nothing to say about any nuclear agreement with Saudi Arabia. “Maybe later today, once Washington wakes up, there is an announcement,” he said. “I promise you’ll know about it.”

Asked about concerns that the agreement could lead to Saudi Arabia developing nuclear weapons, Mr. Rubio said, “Suffice it to say, the U.S. is not going to reach any agreement with any country in the world that leads to the risk of proliferation.”

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The accord has been under discussion for years, and during the Biden administration it was envisioned as part of a broader deal that would include Saudi diplomatic recognition of Israel. But after the Oct. 7, 2023, attacks on Israel by Hamas, that prospect receded. President Trump separated the proposal for U.S.-Saudi civilian nuclear cooperation from any demand that Saudi Arabia recognize Israel.

The agreement will require review by Congress, which under the Atomic Energy Act has the power to vote a resolution of disapproval. But as a practical matter, the agreement would likely pass, because Congress would have to assemble a veto-proof majority to override Mr. Trump’s initiative.

Nonetheless, debate over the accord is likely to be fierce. To get the deal done with Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, the country’s 40-year-old de facto leader, Mr. Trump had to agree to terms that may limit international inspectors from going to any sites in the country that they think could be a pathway to diverting fuel to weapons projects.

And he agreed that, after a joint study with Saudi Arabia on the economics of producing nuclear fuel, the Saudis may be allowed to enrich uranium or reprocess plutonium on their soil.

The Wall Street Journal reported Tuesday night that Mr. Trump had approved the agreement.

Prince Mohammed has vowed he would build nuclear weapons if Iran does so, even insisting in one interview he would do so "without a doubt."

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Iran has had a nuclear program that it says is intended for civilian use, though it has enriched uranium to near weapons grade following Mr. Trump's withdrawal in 2018 from an Obama-era nuclear deal. Mr. Trump then ordered U.S. forces to join with Israel to attack Iran's nuclear sites in June 2025, and to start a war against Iran this February.

Mr. Trump and Prince Mohammed agreed to proceed with U.S.-Saudi civilian nuclear cooperation during a visit to the White House by the prince last November. U.S. and Saudi officials have been in talks on a plan since then. They were finalizing the details this spring and summer, and aimed to share the plan with Congress soon, The New York Times reported earlier this month.

The agreement includes two secret side letters reached with the Saudis. The administration is expected to argue they contain proprietary business information and deal with sensitive national security issues. But some members of Congress may not be willing to vote for the accord until the letters are all made public.

The type of deal that the Trump administration has reached with Saudi Arabia is called a 123 Agreement (pronounced 1-2-3), which establishes a legally binding framework between nations on nuclear cooperation. The obligations of such an

agreement are aimed at ensuring non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. The United States has 26 such agreements with 51 governments and the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Mr. Trump's concessions to the Saudis on the terms of the nuclear deal are significant. When the United States entered into a similar agreement with the United Arab Emirates, which went into force in 2009, there were far more restrictive conditions. The U.A.E. agreed to the stringent inspections, signing what is called an "additional protocol" with the International Atomic Energy Agency. And it agreed to forgo the right to produce its own fuel, cutting off the possibility that it would have the infrastructure to produce a weapon.

That agreement became known as the "gold standard" for nuclear nonproliferation. And while the administration plans to argue that it will have other restrictions in place — including joint partnerships with the Saudis that will allow Washington to keep a close eye on the kingdom's program — the fact remains that Mr. Trump has retreated from the restrictions negotiated by the Bush and Obama administrations.

While the bulk of the negotiations with the U.A.E. took place while President George W. Bush was in office, it was finished by President Barack Obama and went into effect in 2009.

During the first Trump administration, Thomas J. Barrack Jr., a businessman and top fund-raiser for Mr. Trump, proposed to the White House that U.S. companies, including his own private equity firm, help Saudi Arabia build nuclear power plants. That proposal stalled, in part because of Saudi reluctance to agree to American nonproliferation policies.

The Biden administration had talks with the Saudis on a civilian nuclear deal as part of a proposal that would have the kingdom recognize Israel.

In April 2025, soon after Mr. Trump returned to office, Chris Wright, the energy secretary, discussed a proposal with Prince Mohammed on a visit to the kingdom, six months before the prince's visit to Washington, U.S. officials said.

Mr. Trump and Prince Mohammed clashed in May over U.S. aggression in the Iran war. The prince refused to let the U.S. military use Saudi airspace for an operation to escort commercial tankers through the Strait of Hormuz, which Iran's forces essentially control. The civilian nuclear agreement helps put U.S.-Saudi relations on more stable ground again.

During the Biden administration, the United States and Saudi Arabia were also discussing a mutual defense agreement, as part of the broad plan that would include nuclear cooperation in exchange for Saudi recognition of Israel. The Saudis have long pressed U.S. officials for a mutual defense agreement that would be ratified by the Senate, so that future American presidents could not easily back out of one. Saudi officials wanted such an agreement in part to deter against Iranian aggression.

Mr. Trump and Prince Mohammed reached an understanding during the White House meeting last November on a defense arrangement between the two governments, which would include the sale of advanced F-35 fighter jets to the kingdom. But that fell short of a treaty that the administration would present to the Senate for ratification.

During the Iran war this year, Saudi Arabia has relied on the United States to provide interceptor missiles for air defense against Iranian projectiles. However, Saudi officials have concerns about whether American policy in the Middle East, including the U.S. partnership with Israel, is increasing risks to Saudi Arabia and other Gulf Arab nations.

In part because of that, Saudi diplomats have been trying to hold talks with Iran. The two countries normalized diplomatic relations in 2023, in a deal brokered by China.

David E. Sanger covers the Trump administration and a range of national security issues. He has been a Times journalist for more than four decades and has written four books on foreign policy and national security challenges.

Edward Wong reports on global affairs, U.S. foreign policy and the State Department for The Times.

William J. Broad has reported on science at The Times since 1983. He is based in New York.

EXHIBIT 5

(Declaration of Kenneth Roth)

Trump's UN speech was delusional and dangerous

Kenneth Roth

Donald Trump's speech on Tuesday to the United Nations general assembly was an object lesson in his lawless rule and remarkable capacity for self-delusion. Disregarding the UN charter's emphasis on the peaceful resolution of disputes, he doubled down on his violent unilateralism while denigrating the global issues that the UN is designed to address.

For many, the headline remark was his musing about whether to "annihilate the Islamic Republic" of Iran. "Do I drive them into hell with no chance of survival and no hope of future greatness or generations?"

But it was probably less a genuine threat than a clumsy effort to influence negotiations where he has little leverage. Trump is in desperate quest of some face-saving gesture that will allow him to feign "victory" and extract himself from his disastrous war of choice.

He spoke of destroying the "Islamic Republic", which might imply the Iranian military, a legitimate military target. But his reference to precluding future generations suggests he meant to threaten the Iranian people. Attacking them would be a blatant war crime.

In July, he already vowed to destroy Iran's bridges or power plants – itself a threat to commit war crimes. The international criminal court (ICC) has charged four Russian military commanders for doing precisely that in Ukraine.

Trump didn't even bother to offer a coherent rationale for his threat. Once more, he proclaimed: "I will never allow Iran to have a nuclear weapon." But Tehran has long disavowed that goal.

He claimed that other American presidents "just wanted to ignore" the issue. But Barack Obama negotiated a deal to constrain Iran's ability to build a nuclear weapon. Trump ripped it up, preferring his utterly counterproductive military solution, which has brought Iran far closer to a nuclear weapon than ever before.

Preposterously, Trump claimed, "when it comes to Iran," the midterm election "doesn't even enter my mind." No one believes that. If the Republicans face the disastrous showing that the polls now predict, he knows the election will be seen as a repudiation of his arbitrary tariffs and Iran war which have fueled inflation and aggravated the affordability crisis that he belittles.

Trump also spotlighted his other acts of aggression. He celebrated the seizure of Venezuela's dictator, Nicolás Maduro, emphasizing how some political prisoners have now been freed, although hundreds remain. But while Trump lauded his coerced deal with Venezuela's remaining autocratic leaders to take a large chunk of the country's oil, he said nothing about a democratic future. Instead, touting his might-makes-right beliefs, he proclaimed: "To the victor belong the spoils."

He noted the new agreement on Greenland without mentioning his earlier threat to seize the territory by force even though it has long been administered by Denmark, a fellow Nato member.

He raved about slaughtering drug suspects at sea, claiming they are "at war with civilization" and "should be killed … as enemy combatants". But there is no real war, only a rhetorical one.

Drug traffickers form a criminal cartel, not an organized force in armed conflict with the United States. They should be arrested and prosecuted, not summarily executed by drone. The killings are murders and arguably crimes against humanity.

Many of the victims were on boats registered in Columbia or Venezuela – both at the time members of the ICC.

That would give the court jurisdiction over these crimes, which may be why Trump reprised his attack on this important institution of justice. Trump wants to be restrained only by his own warped "morality".

It has been reported that Trump may soon supplement his sanctions against 13 ICC personnel – judges and prosecutors – with sanctions against the court as a whole. But that would only compound the criminality of his conduct, because retaliation against court personnel for the performance of their official duties is obstructing justice under article 70 of the court's statute.

Trump emphasized his role as a peacemaker. "I have made peace," he declared, as he claimed to have "settle[d] eight wars". Yet the reality is more complicated.

He said he had "ended the war in Gaza". In fact, despite the "ceasefire", Israel's continuing attacks continue to raise the death toll. Trump mentioned his 20-point peace plan for Gaza without noting that virtually none of it has been implemented. Israel continues to kill Palestinians and block needed supplies, while Hamas has not disarmed. He didn't even bother to mouth the word "Palestinian".

Indeed, the Trump administration has rejected a leading candidate for the next UN secretary general because she has publicly recognized that Israel committed genocide in Gaza, suggesting that Trump will accept only future UN leaders who are willing to deny this reality.

He claimed to have "contribute[d] to peace" between Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, without noting that Rwanda's M23 militia continues to occupy large swathes of eastern DRC. Trump seems fine with that, so long as the murderous M23 brings the region's mineral riches to the western market.

He claimed to be making progress in securing peace in Ukraine, without acknowledging his prior suggestion to reward Vladimir Putin's aggression by having Ukraine not only cede territory already illegally occupied by Russia but to hand over additional chunks of its territory as well.

Meanwhile, Trump belittled the problems that the UN, able to convene the world's nations, is ideally suited to address. He called the existential threat of climate change a "hoax". Ignoring the enormous risks posed by artificial intelligence, he attempted to relabel AI as "superintelligence" and derided efforts to regulate it as "globalist."

This week Trump meets with the Chinese leader, Xi Jinping. Yet rather than outline the important issues to be addressed, Trump chose to self-promote: "We're leading now over China by a lot".

Most would say only that Trump is leading in national embarrassment. It is sad and dangerous that at such a perilous moment, the United States is saddled with a president who excels mainly in disseminating self-promoting fantasies while flouting the most basic rules of decency. His UN speech put that all on painful display.

- Kenneth Roth is a Guardian US columnist, a senior fellow at Yale University and a former executive director of Human Rights Watch. He is the author of Righting Wrongs: Three Decades on the Front Lines Battling Abusive Governments

EXHIBIT 6

(Declaration of Kenneth Roth)

Trump says U.S. will destroy a bridge or power plant for each Iranian attack in the Strait of Hormuz

World Jul 22, 2026 3:42 PM EDT

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — President Donald Trump warned Wednesday that the U.S. will destroy one bridge or power plant each time Iran shoots at a ship in the Strait of Hormuz.

Trump's latest threat to target civilian infrastructure came as the unpopular war spirals with no clear off-ramp, threatening further worldwide economic disruption and sending fuel prices up ahead of midterm U.S. elections this fall. Both sides have dug in on their dispute over the strait, a crucial waterway for global energy that remains largely closed because of Iranian attacks.

READ MORE: Senators grilled Hegseth on Iran. Here are 3 big moments from the hearing

The U.S. carried out another wave of strikes on Iran overnight into Wednesday, and air defenses opened fire over the capital, Tehran. Iran launched a missile attack on a Jordanian city on Israel's doorstep, and alerts were issued in Bahrain and Saudi Arabia.
With negotiations largely stalled, both sides have sought leverage by targeting civilian infrastructure. Iran has responded to U.S. attacks by targeting energy infrastructure and desalination plants that provide drinking water in parched neighboring Gulf countries.

WATCH: Trump attends dignified transfer of 4 U.S. service members killed in the Middle East

International law generally prohibits such attacks unless the infrastructure is being used for military purposes. United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres decried such attacks as "unacceptable" on Tuesday.

The costs of war are mounting

The closure of the strait, through which a fifth of the world's traded oil and gas passed during peacetime, has jolted the world economy with effects far beyond the Middle East. A new threat by Iran-backed Houthi rebels in Yemen to target Saudi shipping in the Red Sea puts another trade chokepoint at risk.

"From this point forward, any time the Islamic Republic of Iran shoots at a ship in the Strait of Hormuz, whether it be by Missile, Rocket, Drone, or any other device or weapon, the United States will bomb and destroy ONE BRIDGE OR POWER PLANT," Trump wrote on social media.

Trump traveled to Dover Air Force Base on Wednesday for the arrival of the remains of four U.S. service members. A day earlier, his defense secretary, Pete Hegseth, estimated in a fiery Senate hearing that the U.S. had spent $37.5 billion on the war so far.

WATCH: Hegseth says Iran war has cost $37.5B so far and Pentagon needs $67B to restock arms

Benchmark Brent crude oil rose to more than $93 a barrel in trading. That's up from less than $72 early this month, which is roughly where it was before the war. Gasoline prices are also climbing.

Iran says it has the right to manage traffic and potentially charge fees in the strait, which was open to all and toll-free before the war. It has attacked ships using a route through the strait that is overseen by U.S. forces and intended to be outside Tehran's control.

Iran's parliament speaker, Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf, who has led negotiations with the U.S., appeared to brush off Trump's threats.

"If our security is not ensured, no infrastructure will be safe, and the security of the strait is in the absence of American forces," he wrote on social media. "We have repeatedly said that the situation of the strait will not return to prewar conditions."

Attacks shake Iran and Jordan

Jordan's military said it intercepted four Iranian missiles over Aqaba, while two others fell in "uninhabited areas." Plumes of smoke could be seen overhead in videos filmed by people in the nearby Israeli city of Eilat. Jordan said it also intercepted four Iranian drones.

Iran has avoided striking Israel since hostilities resumed last month, apparently hoping to keep it from reentering the war. But the attack on Aqaba, within sight of Israel's Eilat, raised concerns over a further widening of the conflict after an agreement to halt hostilities collapsed.

Another missile alert sounded in Bahrain, and Saudi Arabia warned residents of the Persian Gulf city of Dammam to seek shelter. Saudi authorities later said the danger had passed, without elaborating.

The U.S. military said earlier Wednesday that it had completed an 11th night of strikes on Iran, with targets including aircraft hangars and drone storage sites.

Iran's state-run IRNA news agency reported explosions across several provinces. Iran's Health Ministry says U.S. strikes over the past 11 days have killed 53 people, including six women and three children, and wounded nearly 600 people.

Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard insisted its retaliatory attacks would continue.

Diplomatic efforts show no signs of progress

Before the latest strikes, Iranian Interior Minister Eskandar Momeni visited Pakistan, a key mediator in the conflict, seeking to revive diplomacy. But it was unclear what new arrangement might be reached to end the war, which lately has become a battle for control over the Strait of Hormuz.

Iran's Interior Ministry spokesman Ali Zeinivand said "diplomacy isn't called off" and that messages were still being exchanged, without elaborating, according to IRNA.

An Arab diplomat said Gulf states are increasingly pessimistic about finding an off-ramp for escalating hostilities and are particularly concerned about the latest round of threats in which the two sides have warned they may attack civilian infrastructure.

The diplomat said countries in the region, in addition to Pakistan and Turkey, are continuing to push for de-escalation. But, he said the chances for any improvement currently appear bleak. The diplomat spoke on condition of anonymity due to the sensitivity of the situation.

At a regional summit in the Philippines, U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio denounced Iran's actions in the strait.

"If we create a precedent in the Middle East where a nation state can decide that they are going to control an international waterway, charge a toll and if you don't pay them, blow up your ships, we have created a very dangerous precedent which will repeat itself in other parts of the world, including in this region," he said.

Rubio said the U.S. remains open to negotiations with Iran, "but right now they don't seem to be serious about that" so instead the focus is on protecting shipping.

In response to Iran's attacks, the U.S. re-imposed a blockade on Iranian ports.

Trump signals U.S. may attack underground nuclear site

Speaking from the Oval Office on Tuesday, Trump gave a dim view on possible talks, saying the U.S. had "no interest in meeting."

He signaled that U.S. forces could soon target an under-construction Iranian nuclear site buried deep under a mountain.

The site, known as Pickaxe Mountain, lies on the south side of Iran's Natanz nuclear enrichment site, which was bombed by the U.S. during the 12-day war between Iran and Israel in 2025. But Pickaxe Mountain has remained untouched as Iran continues to dig at the site.

Iran has always insisted its nuclear program is peaceful, while resuming the enrichment of uranium to near weapons-grade levels since Trump scrapped a 2015 nuclear deal during his first term. The U.S. and others believe Iran had a nuclear weapons program until 2003 and may reconstitute it in the future.

Binkley reported from Washington. Contributing were Associated Press writers Bassem Mroue in Beirut; Michelle L. Price and Jim Gomez in Manila, Philippines; and Christopher Weber in Los Angeles.

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By — **Jon Gambrell, Associated Press**

Jon Gambrell, the news director for the Gulf and Iran for The Associated Press, has reported from each of the Gulf Cooperation Council countries, Iran and other locations across the world since joining the AP in 2006.

By — **Collin Binkley, Associated Press**

EXHIBIT 7

(Declaration of Kenneth Roth)

The Nobel Prize and a Testy Phone Call: How the Trump-Modi Relationship Unraveled

President Trump's repeated claims about having "solved" the India-Pakistan war infuriated Prime Minister Narendra Modi of India. And that was only the beginning.

Listen · 14:56 min





By Mujib Mashal, Tyler Pager and Anupreeta Das

Mujib Mashal and Anupreeta Das reported from New Delhi, and Tyler Pager from Washington.

Aug. 30, 2025

Prime Minister Narendra Modi of India was losing patience with President Trump.

Mr. Trump had been saying — repeatedly, publicly, exuberantly — that he had "solved" the military conflict between India and Pakistan, a dispute that dates back more than 75 years and is far deeper and more complicated than Mr. Trump was making it out to be.

During a phone call on June 17, Mr. Trump brought it up again, saying how proud he was of ending the military escalation. He mentioned that Pakistan was going to nominate him for the Nobel Peace Prize, an honor for which he had been openly campaigning. The not-so-subtle implication, according to people familiar with the call, was that Mr. Modi should do the same.

The Indian leader bristled. He told Mr. Trump that U.S. involvement had nothing to do with the recent cease-fire. It had been settled directly between India and Pakistan.

Mr. Trump largely brushed off Mr. Modi's comments, but the disagreement — and Mr. Modi's refusal to engage on the Nobel — has played an outsize role in the souring relationship between the two leaders, whose once-close ties go back to Mr.

Trump's first term.

The dispute has played out against the backdrop of trade talks of immense importance to India and the United States, and the fallout risks pushing India closer to American adversaries in Beijing and Moscow. Mr. Modi is expected to travel to China this weekend, where he will meet with President Xi Jinping and President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia.

This article is based on interviews with more than a dozen people in Washington and New Delhi, most of whom spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss a relationship that has far-reaching implications for both sides, with Mr. Trump eroding a strategic relationship and India alienating its biggest trading partner as it tries to keep its economy afloat.



Commuters in Ahmedabad, India, passing images of President Trump and Prime Minister Narendra Modi of India during Mr. Trump's visit in 2020. Atul Loke for The New York Times

Just weeks after the June phone call, and with trade talks dragging on, Mr. Trump startled India by announcing that imports from the country would be subjected to a tariff of 25 percent. And on Wednesday, he slapped India with an additional 25 percent tariff for buying Russian oil, adding up to a crushing 50 percent.

Mr. Modi, who once called Mr. Trump "a true friend," was officially on the outs. After telling Mr. Modi that he would travel to India later this year for the Quad summit, Mr. Trump no longer has plans to visit in the fall, according to people familiar with the president's schedule.

In India, Mr. Trump is now seen in some quarters as a source of national humiliation. Last week, a giant Trump effigy was paraded around a festival in the state of Maharashtra, with signs declaring him a backstabber. The blows from the United States have been so intense that one Indian official described them as "gundagardi": straight-up bullying, or thuggery.

The two men have not spoken since the June 17 phone call.

At its core, the story of Mr. Trump and Mr. Modi is about two brash, populist leaders with big egos and authoritarian tendencies, and the web of loyalties that help keep both men in power. But it is also the tale of an American president with his eye on a Nobel Prize, running smack into the immovable third rail of Indian politics: the conflict with Pakistan.

A Political Nonstarter

Few in India expected Mr. Modi to end up in this situation.

He won his third term in office on the promise of transforming himself and his country into global players. And even if Mr. Trump was known to focus more on personal relationships and less on geopolitical strategy, the Indians thought that dynamic would work in their favor.

During Mr. Trump's first term, he attended the large "Howdy Modi!" rally of the Indian diaspora in Texas. Months later, the American president visited Mr. Modi's home state of Gujarat for an event branded "Namaste Trump!"

Mr. Modi greeted him with a hug at the airport and then celebrated Mr. Trump with music, dancers and more than 100,000 cheering attendees.



Mr. Trump and Mr. Modi holding hands at a "Howdy Modi" event in Houston in 2019. Doug Mills/The New York Times



A crowd turned out for a rally with both leaders in Ahmedabad in 2020. Atul Loke for The New York Times

In Mr. Trump's second term, foreign leaders have found success by tending to his ego with compliments and gifts. The British prime minister arrived at the White House with a letter from King Charles. The Finnish president bonded with Mr. Trump on the golf course. Even President Volodymyr Zelensky of Ukraine, whom Mr. Trump once berated in public, showed up at the White House and thanked him in front of the cameras.

But what Mr. Trump wants most from Mr. Modi is a political nonstarter.

If Mr. Modi were to be perceived as having caved to American pressure for a cease-fire with a weaker nation, the costs at home would be enormous. Mr. Modi's strongman identity depends, in large part, on how tough he is on Pakistan.

Acknowledging that Mr. Trump had a role, let alone nominating him for a Nobel for it, would be seen as surrender. For Pakistan, which has found itself in Mr. Trump's good graces recently, the decision to nominate him for the prize came quickly.

Want to stay updated on what's happening in India, Pakistan and Russia? Sign up for Your Places: Global Update, and we'll send our latest coverage to your inbox.

It is difficult to quantify exactly how much influence the United States had in resolving the latest outbreak of violence between India and Pakistan. Mr. Trump contends that he used trade as leverage to get the two sides to stop fighting. After these enticements and warnings, he said, "all of a sudden they said, 'I think we will stop'" the fighting.

India denies that.

Washington does carry a lot of sway on both sides, and historically, messages from American leaders have helped quell tensions. But the fact that Mr. Modi could not find a way to even subtly acknowledge some Trump role, given the stakes, shows how explosive the issue is for him. Analysts say the extreme rigidity of the Indian response also speaks to how power over the past decade has been increasingly centralized at the service of protecting Mr. Modi's strongman image at all costs.

"The idea that Modi would accept a cease-fire under U.S. pressure or that he needed or sought mediation — it doesn't just go against his personality," said Tanvi Madan, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution. "It goes against Indian diplomatic practice. Modi sold his relationships with U.S. presidents as an asset — strategically and politically — and now the opposition is portraying his friendship with Trump as a liability."



Mr. Modi inspecting an honor guard this month in New Delhi. If he were to be perceived as having caved to American pressure for a cease-fire with Pakistan, the political costs at home would be enormous. Money Sharma/Agence France-Presse — Getty Images

After the June call with Mr. Trump, Indian officials put out a statement saying Mr. Modi had “firmly stated that India does not and will never accept mediation” and that “President Trump listened carefully” and “expressed his support toward India’s fight against terrorism.”

The White House did not acknowledge the call, nor did Mr. Trump post about it on his social media accounts. And yet, four days after he spoke with Mr. Modi, Mr. Trump mentioned the issue again when he announced a peace deal between Congo and Rwanda.

“I won’t get a Nobel Peace Prize for this, I won’t get a Nobel Peace Prize for stopping the War between India and Pakistan,” Mr. Trump posted. “No, I won’t get a Nobel Peace Prize no matter what I do.”

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‘This Is About More Than Just Russia’

Mr. Trump says the tariffs on India are punishment for buying Russian oil and for the protectionist nature of the Indian market, a longstanding complaint for Mr. Trump and other American presidents.

The White House insists that the two men have “a respectful relationship” and “remain in close communication,” Anna Kelly, a White House spokeswoman, said in a statement.

“President Trump was able to successfully bring peace to the conflict between India and Pakistan,” she said, repeating the assertion that India had flatly denied.

But to many officials and observers, the colossal penalties on India in particular appear to be punishment for not falling in line rather than any kind of cohesive effort to reduce the trade deficit or cut off funding for Mr. Putin’s war. They point out that China, the biggest importer of Russian crude, has been spared.

Workers packing boxes of prawns for export in Kochi, India. Elke Scholiers/Getty Images

"If this was a real change in policy in trying to squeeze Russia, Trump could have put his weight behind legislation that would have imposed secondary sanctions on countries that buy Russian hydrocarbons," said Richard M. Rossow, the chair on India at the Center for Strategic and International Studies. "The fact that they have uniquely targeted India says this is about more than just Russia," he added.

India is now alone with Brazil, led by a president who has antagonized Mr. Trump directly, in being subject to 50 percent tariffs, higher than any other country. (Pakistan came away with 19 percent.)

Another point of tension has been the power of the anti-immigrant sentiments within Mr. Trump's base. Indian officials believed early on that they could find common ground with the American right-wing movement but they were caught off

guard by the rift among Mr. Trump's supporters over H-1B visas, with much of the attention directed at Indians, who make up the largest holders of such visas.

Indian students also make up one out of every four foreign students in the United States, so Mr. Trump's crackdown on student visas took the country by surprise.

Stephen Miller, a top adviser to Mr. Trump, has repeatedly complained to the president about the high numbers of undocumented immigrants from India, who are among those who have been rounded up and deported as part of Mr. Trump's crackdown on illegal immigration. The method and timing of some of those deportations caused headaches for Mr. Modi and made clear Mr. Trump would not be sensitive to the political realities the Indian leader was facing.



A U.S. military plane carrying Indian deportees landing in Amritsar in February. Adnan Abidi/Reuters

Planeloads of deportees in shackles and handcuffs arrived in India in February, causing an uproar just as Mr. Modi was departing for a trip to Washington.

But at a friendly news conference during the visit that month, there were signs that the two sides could still find a way forward, with India buying billions of dollars more of American oil and gas, to assuage Mr. Trump's grievance over the balance sheet.

"We can make up the difference very easily with the deficit," Mr. Trump said, with Mr. Modi standing next to him.

'Do You Believe Me or Trump?'

Then, in May, some of the worst fighting in decades erupted between India and Pakistan.

The conflict began after 26 people were killed in a terrorist attack on the Indian side of Kashmir, a contested region between the two nations, while Vice President JD Vance and his family were on a visit in India. Mr. Trump dialed up Mr. Modi to express his sympathies.

As the fighting raged, with both sides firing drones and missiles over four days, the Trump administration stepped in to lend its weight for a diplomatic solution, with the vice president and the secretary of state making calls to both sides.

Early in the evening on the fourth day of fighting, reporters were called for a news conference in New Delhi with rumors that a conditional cease-fire had been agreed to by the two sides. But just before India's foreign secretary, Vikram Misri, stepped up to the podium to make the announcement, Mr. Trump upstaged him by flashing an announcement of "FULL AND IMMEDIATE CEASEFIRE" on Truth Social.

Minutes later, Marco Rubio, the secretary of state, announced that India and Pakistan had agreed "to start talks on a broad set of issues at a neutral site."

That statement in particular was galling to the Indians because it has been India's policy for decades that the issue of Pakistan — especially in relation to Kashmir — is one for the two countries to handle alone, without third-party mediation.

A woman surveying the damage to her home in Kashmir during the conflict between India and Pakistan in May. Atul Loke for The New York Times

The funeral of an Indian border security soldier who was killed during fighting in the Kashmir region in May. Atul Loke for The New York Times

The shock and anger was clear on the faces of the Indian officials in the room. Mr. Misri stepped up and read his statement, making no mention of any outside role or Mr. Trump's claim, and left. When reporters swarmed around other officials and asked about Mr. Trump's declaration, one official pushed back: "Do you believe me or Trump?"

A Declined Invitation to Washington

By the time Mr. Trump and Mr. Modi got on the phone in June, there might have been an opportunity to mend ties and refocus on the ongoing trade negotiations.

But that did not happen.

The call, which lasted 35 minutes, took place as Mr. Trump flew back to Washington on Air Force One after he left early from the Group of 7 industrialized countries meeting in Canada, which Mr. Modi also attended.

Mr. Modi declined an invitation from Mr. Trump to stop by Washington before he flew home. His officials were scandalized that Mr. Trump might try to force their leader into a handshake with Pakistan's army chief, who had also been invited to the White House for lunch around the same time. It was another clear sign, a senior Indian official said, that Mr. Trump cared little for the complexity of their issue or the sensitivities and history around it.

Later on, there was talk of trying to set up another call to finalize a partial trade deal. But with the trust between the two leaders eroding, the Indians were wary of putting Mr. Modi on the phone with Mr. Trump. Indian officials were nervous that Mr. Trump would post whatever he wanted on Truth Social, regardless of what agreements were made on the call, a senior Indian official said.

Mr. Trump, frustrated by the tariff negotiations, reached out to Mr. Modi several times, according to two people briefed on the discussions who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss them publicly.

Mr. Modi did not respond to those requests, they said.

Ms. Kelly, the White House spokeswoman, denied that Mr. Trump had reached out.

In the final stretch before the additional 25 percent tariff kicked in on Wednesday, Mr. Trump announced he was nominating Sergio Gor, a close adviser, to serve as ambassador to India, with the additional charge of special envoy for the region. (Indian officials were torn over how to read the nomination — Mr. Gor was close to Mr. Trump, yes, but they were offended that the "regional" envoy designation lumped India in with Pakistan.)

In the hours before the deadline, officials from the United States and India held a virtual meeting, discussing a range of issues from trade to defense cooperation.

But not only have the additional tariffs gone into effect as announced, Mr. Trump's advisers have continued railing against India. One called India's approach to trade negotiations "arrogant" and another went as far as calling the conflict in Ukraine "Modi's war."

Now, Mr. Modi, in public at least, appears to be moving on from talk of trade negotiations. Instead, he is talking about "self-reliance" and reviving his decade-old "Make in India" campaign as he continues to play to his home base.

And during this weekend's trip to China — Mr. Modi's first in seven years — he is expected to have a receptive audience for stronger and expanded ties with Beijing and Moscow.

Mujib Mashal is the South Asia bureau chief for The Times, helping to lead coverage of India and the diverse region around it, including Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal and Bhutan.

Tyler Pager is a White House correspondent for The Times, covering President Trump and his administration.

Anupreeta Das covers India and South Asia for The Times. She is based in New Delhi.

A version of this article appears in print on , Section A, Page 1 of the New York edition with the headline: The Striking Split Between Trump and Modi

EXHIBIT 8

(Declaration of Kenneth Roth)

Learn more about LSEG

Trump's Kim gambit deepens doubts over US reliability at a key moment for Asia

By **John Geddie**, **Yukiko Toyoda**, **Ben Blanchard** and **Aftab Ahmed**

August 24, 2026 2:01 AM EDT · Updated August 24, 2026



U.S. President Donald Trump meets with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un at the demilitarized zone separating the two Koreas, in Panmunjom, South Korea, June 30, 2019. REUTERS/Kevin... Purchase Licensing Rights **Read more**

Summary

- Trump scales back South Korea drills long opposed by North
- Rapprochement with Pyongyang could backfire, Japan official says
- Allies reassess US support amid security talks, Xi summit

TOKYO/TAIPEI/NEW DELHI, Aug 24 (Reuters) - Donald Trump's olive branch to North Korea's Kim Jong Un at the expense of a long-standing ally comes at a pivotal moment for U.S. security ties in Asia, as partners from Japan to India reassess how much they can rely on Washington.

The U.S. president's abrupt decision to cut back military drills with South Korea last week, which he described as hostile to Pyongyang, has reinforced fears that Trump's unpredictability could strain alliances that have long maintained peace in the region, government officials and security experts said.

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Feedback

Japan worries it too could find itself in Trump's cross-hairs as it embarks on thorny security negotiations; Taiwan is warily watching an upcoming summit between Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping; and India is growing less certain of its place in Washington's strategic calculus.

"The decision will certainly fuel growing doubts in the region about U.S. security commitments," said Jeremy Chan, a senior analyst with political risk consultancy Eurasia Group and former U.S. diplomat in Japan and China.

Adding to the anxiety, the United States cancelled another military exercise with South Korea scheduled for next month, Seoul said on Monday, after Washington cited constraints on U.S. forces due to the Iran war.

Trump has been frustrated by the failure of U.S. allies to support the war and made it clear that many of them must spend more on their own defence, a White House official said when asked about such concerns.

He is eager to restart talks with North Korea and secure a win on the international stage to counter his unpopular conflict with Iran, according to a person briefed on discussions between U.S. and South Korean officials.

'EXTREMELY TROUBLING' FOR TOKYO

Trump's push to meet Kim - which has so far drawn a frosty response from Pyongyang - could backfire and embolden nuclear-armed North Korea, said Itsunori Onodera, an influential Japanese lawmaker and former defence minister.

Such a prospect is "extremely troubling" for Tokyo, he said on a Fuji TV news programme last Thursday. Despite Trump's overtures, Pyongyang fired a volley of ballistic missiles off its east coast earlier that day, triggering alerts in neighbouring South Korea and Japan.

What worries Japanese officials more is Trump's approach as Tokyo embarks on talks with Washington over how much it should pay towards the cost of hosting U.S. forces, America's largest overseas deployment.

Japan is bracing for the possibility that Trump could, with little warning, demand a sharp hike that would be politically difficult to swallow, said a senior Japanese government official, requesting anonymity due to the sensitivity of the matter.

Trump could also wield upcoming U.S. military exercises with Japan in October as leverage, analysts say. Officials in Washington and Tokyo said they did not expect the exercises to be curtailed, though Trump could change his mind at any point, they cautioned.

The drills, known as Keen Sword, may already be smaller than their 2024 iteration because of the diversion of U.S. assets and personnel to the conflict with Iran.

Feedback

That shift - which recently saw America's only forward-deployed aircraft carrier in Asia, the USS George Washington, depart for the Middle East to relieve the beleaguered USS Abraham Lincoln - has stirred concern that U.S. deterrence against China is being eroded.

During a visit to Asia this month, Pentagon policy chief Elbridge Colby said working with allies to ensure combat readiness along the so-called first island chain that runs from Japan through the Philippines is a priority for Washington.

TRUMP, XI AND TAIWAN

Nowhere are concerns about China's growing military pressure more acute than in Taiwan, the democratically governed island claimed by Beijing.

Trump has held up approval of a $14 billion package of arms sales to Taipei in order to maintain warm relations and a fragile trade truce with China's Xi.

As Trump prepares for his latest round of summitry with Xi in Washington next month, officials in Taipei say they expect Washington will at the very least carve up the arms sales into smaller chunks to try and avoid upsetting Beijing too much.

Domingo Yang of the Taiwan defence ministry's think tank, the Institute for National Defence and Security Research, says there is a distinction between Trump's rhetoric and actual U.S. behaviour,

noting U.S. intelligence sharing, training and patrols with Taiwan remain substantial.

A U.S. Navy aircraft transited the Taiwan Strait on Friday in a move the United States described as demonstrating its "commitment to a free and open Indo-Pacific."

Trump's latest actions have also rocked confidence in India, where the U.S. risks squandering years of efforts to draw New Delhi closer as a counterweight to Russia and China, security analysts say.

It also comes after the Pentagon's decision in June to rename its Asia military headquarters to Pacific Command from Indo-Pacific Command, a move some analysts say is a sign India is no longer as strategically important to Washington.

The Pentagon denied any such shift. But Trump's steep tariffs on Indian exports and repeated claims that he had mediated an India-Pakistan ceasefire had already exasperated New Delhi. Officials there are now "very, very cautious" about committing to long-term defence deals with Washington, according to two Indian sources with knowledge of the matter.

"The latest decision only reinforces President Trump's transactional view of foreign affairs and serves as a reminder that differences over specific policies, even among allies, can carry costs for the broader bilateral relationship," said Pearl Pandya, senior analyst at Armed Conflict Location & Event Data, a conflict monitoring group.

Reporting by John Geddie, Yukiko Toyoda, Nobuhiro Kubo and Tim Kelly in Tokyo; Ben Blanchard in Taipei; Aftab Ahmed in New Delhi; Greg Torode in Hong Kong; and Michael Martina, Idrees Ali, Trevor Hunnicutt and Phil Stewart in Washington; Editing by Lincoln Feast.

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John Geddie
Thomson Reuters

John is the lead writer for Japan & Greater China, reporting on everything from elections to earthquakes. Previously based in Singapore and London, his work has received several journalism accolades, including a 2022 SOPA Award for Excellence in Reporting on the Environment.

Feedback

Ben Blanchard
Thomson Reuters

Ben joined Reuters as a company news reporter in Shanghai in 2003 before moving to Beijing in 2005 to cover Chinese politics and diplomacy. In 2019 Ben was appointed the Taiwan bureau chief covering everything from elections and entertainment to semiconductors.

Aftab Ahmed
Thomson Reuters

Aftab Ahmed is Reuters' South Asia Chief Correspondent for Politics, based in New Delhi. He leads coverage of political developments, government policy, defence, security and elections across South Asia. During his career, he has reported on some of the region's most significant stories, including India-Pakistan tensions and conflict, India-China relations, civil unrest and protest movements, and major economic and business developments. His reporting provides readers with on-the-ground insight into the political, diplomatic, security and economic forces shaping South Asia.

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Asia Pacific

EXHIBIT 9

(Declaration of Kenneth Roth)

Post

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Kenneth Roth
@KenRoth

Trump claims Iran is desperate for a deal. To the contrary, its tough negotiating posture, as described by its foreign minister, sounds more like it simply doesn't trust Trump, who already ripped up one deal and then abandoned diplomacy for war.



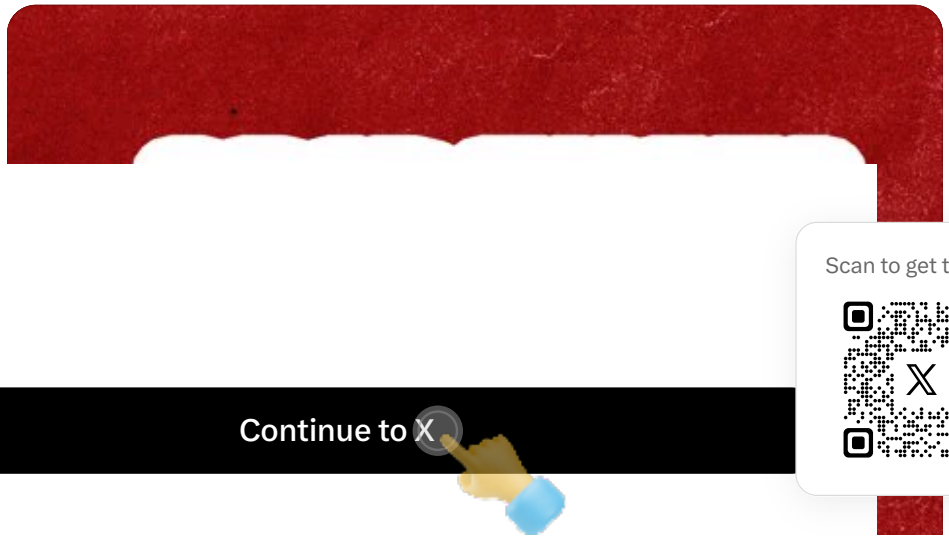
From nytimes.com

1:26 PM · Sep 26, 2026 · **5,656** Views

10 26 64 1

australiablueprint @ausblueprint · Sep 26

Tearing up the #JCPOA was a catastrophic ego-driven blunder. #Trump's #IranWar is one entirely of his own making. It has isolated the #US from allies, brought the US to the brink of an endless crisis with zero Plan B. Pure disastrous foreign policy. Make it stop in the #midterms.



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Sam Malekshahi Lor @Lakstan_ · Sep 26

Mr. Kenneth! I realize that we have different points of view... but I still respect and like you.
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Michael S @MIC1923 · Sep 26

TRUMP IS AN IDIOT, TRUMP ADM = FASCISM

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EXHIBIT 10

(Declaration of Kenneth Roth)

Post

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@KenRoth

The out-of-touch Trump keeps repeating: “We have the greatest economy in history.” Living a different reality, Americans see through his billionaire’s world view. The acquiescent Republicans are in trouble because voters want something different.



From theguardian.com

9:31 AM · Sep 28, 2026 · **5,782** Views

1 13 28 2

Carolyn Flowers Mathis @FlowersMathis · Sep 28

If Trump thinks this is the greatest economy, what would the worst economy look like 2 him? I think he knows better, knows the truth, he just does not care & he thinks that some of his people will & do now believe him. Read their posts. He’s right. He only needs 11k more votes🤮

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EXHIBIT 11

(Declaration of Kenneth Roth)

Post

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Kenneth Roth
@KenRoth

Trump’s war of choice with Iran was supposed to showcase America’s strength. Instead, he has illustrated the limits of its power — its weakness.



From nytimes.com

2:41 PM · Oct 7, 2026 · **5,095** Views

7 60 144 2

greenpost @greenpost · Oct 7
#AI翻訳 @KenRoth：トランプのイランに対する選択的な戦争は、アメリカの力を誇示するはずでした。代わりに、彼はアメリカの力の限界——その弱さを示してしまいました。 #politicusa #trump #iran #iran_vs_usa #greenpost #greenppost4 #ymd20261008

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TruthToLies @Wisdom_Cubed · Oct 7
It was a war of choice. 🇮🇷s choice. The Islamist Mullahs choice.

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