



Summary

- For the umpteenth time, U.S. President Donald Trump announced a deal with Iran this week.
- Despite his promises, Trump has less and less control over events in the Middle East.
- Since calling off the war against Iran, Trump has made mistakes in his dealings with the mullahs and with Benjamin Netanyahu.
- The Iranian leadership is making a fool of Trump, and even Israel's prime minister is only following him to a limited extent.
- The result is a great deal of uncertainty about what the future holds for Iran, Lebanon, and Gaza.

From Sacha Wigdorovits

Although not exactly every hour, US President Donald Trump has been repeatedly announcing on his social media platform "Truth Social" and in the American media over the past few weeks: "An agreement with Iran is imminent." He did so most recently this Thursday. To this, one might respond with Goethe's *Faust*: "I hear the message well, but I lack the faith." For Trump has been making this announcement for a good two months now—yet so far, it has never come true.

It is doubtful that anything will change this time either. Instead, it is becoming increasingly clear that Trump made a major mistake by prematurely calling off the war against Iran, which began in late February, under domestic political pressure.

For the belief that the mullahs can be persuaded at the negotiating table to abandon their nuclear weapons and missile programs is naive. They will never agree to do so and are using the talks solely to buy time. Because they know that the closer the midterm elections in November get, the less Trump can afford to engage in new military action.

That is why the Iranian government keeps provoking the U.S. with a series of petty provocations. The most recent one was the downing of a U.S. Apache attack



Donald Trump is losing control of developments in the Middle East

helicopter. It was clear to the regime in Tehran that Trump would have to respond with a counterattack in order to save face to some extent. And it was equally clear that the American response would then be met with another Iranian attack.

All of this shows that, despite Trump's domestic-driven rhetoric of peace, an agreement with the mullahs is highly unlikely. This is not changed by the fact that the U.S. president is now once again spreading optimism about a deal—while reports from Tehran indicate that such a deal is not yet a done deal.

For this reason, former Deputy Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff of the U.S. Army, four-star General Jack Keane, recently told Fox News that the Iranian regime is merely stalling for time in order to increase political and economic pressure on President Trump: "There will be no agreement (with Iran, ed.), and therefore there is no alternative to a war waged with full force." Former CIA Director General David Petraeus also views this as a realistic scenario.

The likelihood that the war against Iran will continue is all the greater given that Trump has also misjudged Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. He was certain that Netanyahu would go along with his demands in any case, so as not to jeopardize American aid to the Jewish state. Trump repeatedly stated this publicly in a manner that was humiliating to Netanyahu. In doing so, he also discredited him on the domestic front.

Last Sunday, the Israeli prime minister apparently lost his temper. Shortly after Trump urged him not to respond to the mullahs' rocket attacks, he ordered the Israeli Air Force to bomb targets in Iran. Also against Trump's wishes, the Israeli army targeted the Lebanese capital of Beirut, specifically sites belonging to the local terrorist organization Hezbollah—in response to Hezbollah's rocket attacks on northern Israel.

This "defiance" of the American president, who is known for his emotionality and unpredictability, is undoubtedly risky for Israel. But Netanyahu is willing to take this risk for two reasons. First, like Donald Trump, he is under pressure due to the upcoming parliamentary elections in Israel and needs to demonstrate success in the fight against arch-enemies Iran and Hezbollah. Second, he apparently no longer trusts Trump when it comes to Iran.

In fact, Netanyahu's fear is not unfounded: that the American president will strike a deal with the mullahs that is detrimental to Israel, simply to avoid a continuation of



the war and to appease his own voters. Against this backdrop, it makes sense for the Israeli prime minister to prioritize his own country's interests in Lebanon and in the fight against Iran, even if it means risking an open conflict with Trump.

Netanyahu has recently announced that he is prepared to wage war against Iran, Israel's mortal enemy, without U.S. support if necessary. In doing so, he signaled not only to his own countrymen and Trump, but also to the leadership in Tehran, that he will not allow the U.S. to dictate a solution detrimental to the State of Israel—U.S. aid or not.

All in all, the American president has maneuvered himself into a difficult position with his erratic policy toward Iran. Should the agreement with the Iranian regime—now announced with great fanfare—once again prove to be a pipe dream, the only way out of this impasse that would allow him to save face seems to be a continuation of the war against the mullahs with a victorious outcome.

This is all the more unwelcome for Trump given that his high-profile “Board of Peace” project is also at a standstill in Gaza. This is because the terrorist organization Hamas continues to refuse to surrender its weapons. This was a key provision of the 20-point peace plan announced by Trump in October 2025. As a result, normalization and reconstruction in Gaza remain a distant prospect.

For the Middle East as a whole, therefore, the same is true today as it has always been: uncertainty reigns.

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