



5 signs US and Iran are not going to war anytime soon

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There have been many frightening developments over the last few weeks which have signalled that the US – and some of its closest allies such as the UK – are launching full throttle towards a war with Iran.

Even if war was not the immediate intention of the parties involved, it doesn't take a genius to see that a miscalculated move committed by either side could heavily escalate into an all-out conflict, and igniting a powder keg.

However, while these developments have unfolded, and since no such strike has taken place as yet, it is worth examining the signs currently overlooked by most mainstream media outlets in their typical assessments. Specifically, the numerous signs which actually suggest that perhaps a genuine war between Iran and the United States is currently unlikely, despite recent escalations.

1. Israel's security

Any war with Iran – whether commissioned by Israel or not – would involve multiple unanswered questions about Israel's security. Despite some hysterical commentary, the imminent threat posed to Israel does not come directly from Iran, but from Lebanon. Hezbollah has an estimated 120,000 missiles in Lebanon, allegedly embedded in approximately 200 Shi'ite villages in the South of Lebanon. Even the infamous Israeli air defense system, the Iron Dome, would struggle to contain such an overwhelming barrage of rockets.

This current dynamic was explained brilliantly in a recent interview with public intellectual Professor Noam Chomsky, who said:

“If there is a confrontation with Iran, the first victim will be Lebanon. As soon as there's any threat of war, Israel will certainly be unwilling to face the danger of Hezbollah missiles, which are probably scattered all around Lebanon by now. So it's very likely that the first step prior to direct conflict with Iran would be essentially to wipe out Lebanon or something like it.”

This would partly explain why Israel has been actively preparing for a war with Hezbollah in Lebanon for years, including running multiple military drills that have simulated an invasion of Lebanese territory. Last year, Israel even simulated a multi-front war in which Russia stepped in to protect Syria from Israeli attacks.

Therefore, unless the issue of Hezbollah in Lebanon has been addressed first, it seems unlikely that the US will rush to attack Iran without consolidating blowback against its closest and most

prized ally in the Middle East. If the US failed to protect and aid Israel in a meaningful way, the entire world would learn some very valuable lessons indeed.

2. Leaked cables and anonymous sources

Recently leaked cables pertaining to the British ambassador to the United States, Sir Kim Darroch, published by the Mail on Sunday indicated that Trump's entire strategy toward Iran was almost completely non-existent. Referring to Trump's policy as "*incoherent*" and "*chaotic*" the ambassador stated that it was unlikely that Trump's Iran strategy was "*going to become more coherent any time soon.*"

According to Sir Kim, Trump's grandiose claim that he had scaled back a strike plan against Iran following the downing of a US drone by Tehran due to its potential to cause widespread casualties "*doesn't stand up.*"

"It's more likely that he was never fully on board and that he was worried about how this apparent reversal of his 2016 campaign promises would look come 2020," the diplomat said.

Furthermore, there are anonymously-sourced indications that Trump was never going to strike Iran anyway as he had not secured the requisite permission – from Tehran. A farfetched claim for anonymous sources to make to say the least. But it is hard to see how it is any less farfetched than the idea that the US military was poised to strike Iran and the one person who pulled the plug was a reality TV star and real estate tycoon billionaire – the same man who once asked the CIA "*why did you wait?*" before it delivered a drone strike against a terrorist target who was still in the vicinity of the target's family.

3. Lack of international and domestic support

According to TIME, the US wanted to proceed with its plan to strike Iran without informing its British counterparts first. Apparently, Washington has become quite frustrated with Britain's commitment to the US foreign policy strategy toward Iran, with one senior US official calling the UK "*cowards.*"

Iain Duncan Smith, once leader of the British Conservative Party, recently told the BBC that then-prime minister Theresa May had turned down a US offer of help in the Persian Gulf, supposedly due to the risk of the entire situation escalating into armed conflict. The UK also rejected the opportunity to join the US' so-called "*Operation Sentinel*" which was to organise an allied patrol of the Gulf region. Will this all change under the recently announced leadership of Boris Johnson? Perhaps it will, but we can only speculate at this stage.

Approximately a month ago, a senior Russian diplomat said that Tehran "*won't be alone*" if the US decides to strike Iran. Stating that "*it's not just Russia, many other countries sympathize and empathise with Iran,*" Zamir Kabulov concluded that "*Tehran won't be alone if the US, God forbid takes wild and irresponsible actions against it.*"

Kabulov's comments ran in tandem with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov's statement that Moscow will attempt to initiate dialogue between Washington and Tehran, but this of course "*assumes the end to the policy of ultimatums, sanctions and blackmail.*" Some reports also suggested that Russia warned the US not to attack Iran after the downing of its drone, further stating that "*we aren't trading in our allies, our interests and our principles.*"

It's hard enough to go to war when the international community is allied against you. However, the case of Iraq in 2003 shows that the US is undeterred when faced with strong international opposition. What may really tip the balance against a war is the domestic mood at the time leading up to the strike. In its current state, this does not look good for the US either. According to recent polls, most voters agree with Trump's decision (if such a decision even existed) to call off airstrikes against Iran. 36 percent of those polled supported military action against Iran with a much more convincing 42 percent opposing military action.

Let's not forget that Trump ultimately has an election to win.

4. Iran seeks to avoid a war

Despite what war hawks say, the idea that Iran is run by 'apocalyptic religious fanatics' who have no grounding in the real world is simply not provable. As Professor Chomsky explains, Iran's entire military strategy is one of deterrence. Furthermore, Iran simply does not have the capacity to threaten the US in the way that has been portrayed by former and current administrations.

Iran complied with the JCPOA and was consistently certified as being compliant, even up until recently and even though the US had already reneged on the deal with the aim of strangling Iran's economy through sanctions in contravention of a preliminary ruling from the International Court of Justice (ICJ). Even in the face of many provocations from Israel, including the assassinations of Iranian generals and scientists, Iran's response has been somewhat measured (and more often than not, non-existent). As explained by the CATO Institute:

"On a purely logical level, Iran cannot possibly seek war with the United States. Regardless of how Iran interprets Trump's withdrawal from the JCPOA, despite the pain caused by the reimposition of economic sanctions, and in spite of recent American rhetoric, the worst possible outcome for Iran is war. A sustained campaign of American air strikes would be terribly painful; a full-scale invasion would be catastrophic."

5. Lack of legal avenues

You don't need to be a lawyer to understand that starting wars against sovereign nations require a sovereign basis. While the US continuously engages its military in nations without any legal basis (for example, Syria), at the end of the day, the US is still well aware of its legal obligations. In a recent letter on the very question of a possible commencement of war with Iran, the US State Department wrote:

"The Department of State has great respect for Congress' role in authorizing the use of military force. As Secretary Pompeo has noted, the Administration's goal is to find a diplomatic solution to Iran's activities, not to engage in conflict with Iran. Moreover, the Administration has not, to date, interpreted either AUMF as authorizing military force against Iran, except as may be necessary to defend U.S. or partner forces engaged in counterterrorism operations or operations to establish a stable, democratic Iraq."

That's why the Trump administration's preferred strategy is the so-called "*maximum pressure*" campaign, through the use of effective and crippling sanctions, which are getting the US incredibly close to liquidating Iran's economy. This is the ultimate aim of the Trump administration, and it is working like a charm.

