

## **Slide 1**

### **Opening slide for Chapter & Chatter Cafe**

## **Slide 2**

Trump's Path to World Peace: American Strength and Economic Partnership

By William Sullivan

Despite having overseen both the obliteration of Iran's nuclear ambition *and* a cessation of hostilities in a war that had been raging between Israel and Iran for nearly two weeks, President Trump is not being treated to any praise that should come with such an accomplishment.

Several American presidents have signified that a nuclear-armed Iran would be unacceptable, and have committed to ensuring that it would never happen.

Yet actually ensuring that outcome would require a credible threat of consequences for Iran's noncompliance, and to have any credibility in making threats requires action beyond clandestinely sending pallets of cash to Iran, like Obama did. Love him or hate him, President Trump had the intestinal fortitude to exert America's military might in order to establish a global order of deterrence by using Iran as an example. He did this without suffering a single American casualty in the operation.

The competence and seemingly flawless strategic execution of this operation were refreshing for most Americans. By comparison, the previous US withdrawal from Afghanistan, was an inept tragedy of errors that anyone paying even a little bit of attention could recognize.

Consider what has happened over the past few weeks.

## **Slide 3**

In close coordination with America and many of the formerly-hostile surrounding Arab nations, Israel's missiles and planes traveled over 1,000 miles to decapitate the Iranian military, its top nuclear scientists, and to completely destroy Iran's anti-aircraft defense capability.

In a response that was reported by CNN, Dana Bash reported that Trump told her: “Iran should have listened to me when I ... gave them a 60 day warning. And today is day 61.”

This one statement suggests that Trump offered Iran a clear alternative, and also that Iran could have easily avoided this outcome through negotiation.

#### **Slide 4**

Then, as B-2 bombers were already in the air from America, carrying payloads that would destroy Iran’s three remaining nuclear facilities (including one that was built 300-feet below ground), Trump told the world that he would make a decision within the next two weeks as to how to proceed.

That was a brilliant smoke screen, as we now know. Within days, Iran’s nuclear facilities were destroyed, the result of bombs being precisely launched into ventilation shafts. The operation was so expertly planned and technologically advanced that the defenses had already been taken out by the time our bombers arrived, and there was no need for a daring trench run at low altitude like in the movies *Star Wars* or *Top Gun: Maverick* in order to deliver the payload.

Afterward, the American pilots simply flew home safely.

Naturally, the mainstream media quickly began questioning the effect of America’s attack on Iranian nuclear facilities. They began questioning whether he had the authority to do it at all, despite having no such questions for Barack Obama when he decided to bomb Libya and Syria during his terms. The leading reason for opposition, if we set aside those who seem to really just hate Israel or Jews or both, seems to be that it risked a greater war in the region or World War III if China and Russia became involved.

Certainly, it did involve such risks.

So, what did Operation Midnight Hammer accomplish? Well, if reports are to be believed, Iran's ability to create and deploy a nuclear weapon against Israel has been delayed by several years. That is a good outcome, even if you disagree with us destroying Iran's nuclear facilities because we risked World War III by doing so.

There's lots of chatter about all of that, and it's often muddled by lots of political commentators.

### **Slide 5**

But China hasn't rushed to Iran's aid as Trump's critics have predicted. Given that the Strait of Hormuz wasn't immediately closed after the attacks, it seems likely that China has been critical in keeping it open for trade, as China heavily relies on oil imports from the Persian Gulf.

And far from being angry with America for having destroyed Iran's nuclear facilities, China has reportedly just signed a trade deal with America.

Russia is unlikely to come to Iran's defense. In Putin's words, there are two million former Soviets living there, and that is a serious consideration. Also reportedly, Trump's negotiations in the Ukraine/Russia war continue quickly, seemingly uninterrupted by the destruction of Iran's nuclear capability.

### **Slide 6**

No one tends to talk about, however, the most important accomplishment that has been achieved by the Trump presidency – he has reestablished America's presence as the leading power for civilization in the world by the virtue of “peace through strength.”

And, perhaps most importantly, other *Arab* nations that once wanted to destroy Israel are getting on board.

Fifty-eight years ago, six nations aligned in an aggressive war to destroy Israel once and for all. These nations consisted principally of Jordan, Egypt, and Syria, supported by Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and Lebanon.

In Trump's first term, he declared Jerusalem to be Israel's capital, a promise made by many presidents but executed only by our current one.

### **Slide 7**

Trump was instrumental in the development of the Abraham Accords – originally an economic partnership between Israel, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Morocco, and Sudan.

Economic partnership, as the Trump Doctrine has seemingly established, is the path to peace.

The Abraham Accords were a tremendous step forward in normalizing Arab relations with Israel, and were based upon economic partnership. Now, Hezbollah, which is an Iranian terror proxy, has sensed Iran's weakness and is reportedly repositioning from southern Lebanon.

This creates the conditions for both Lebanon and Syria, the latter being under new leadership in the post-Assad era, to join the Abraham accords, along with potentially Saudi Arabia.

It is the prospect of economic partnership with the United States and Israel that has led to the isolation of the terrorism-sponsoring rogue nation of Iran and the prospect of peace between Israel and its less hostile neighbors.

So how big of a project has Trump undertaken. How about a little history?

### **Slide 8**

Known as Persia until 1935, Iran became an Islamic republic in 1979 after the ruling monarchy was overthrown and Shah Mohammad Reza PAHLAVI was forced into exile.

In 1979, conservative Muslim clerical forces led by Ayatollah Ruhollah KHOMEINI established a theocratic system of government with ultimate political authority vested in a religious scholar referred to commonly as the Supreme Leader who, according to the constitution, is accountable only to the Assembly of Experts (AOE) - a popularly elected 88-member body of clerics.

## **Slide 9**

As we all know, US-Iranian relations fell apart when a group of Iranian students seized the US Embassy in Tehran in November 1979 and held 60 embassy personnel hostage until mid-January 1981.

The trigger for this action was President Jimmy Carter's decision to allow Iran's deposed Shah, a pro-Western Iranian leader, who had been expelled from his country several months before, to come to the United States for cancer treatment.

However, the real cause of the situation was that it provided a dramatic way for the student revolutionaries to declare a break with Iran's past and to put an end to American interference in its affairs.

It was also a way to raise the worldwide profile of the revolution's leader, the anti-American cleric Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini.

The students set their hostages free on January 21, 1981, 444 days after the crisis began and just hours after President Ronald Reagan delivered his inaugural address. Many historians believe that hostage crisis cost Jimmy Carter a second term as president.

The Iran hostage crisis actually started with a series of events that took place nearly 50 years before it began.

## **Slide 10**

The source of tension between Iran and the U.S. came from the conflict over oil.

British and American corporations had controlled the bulk of Iran's oil reserves almost since their discovery following WWI.

This ties back to the mandate system set up as a result of the Treaty of Versailles at the end of WWI that allowed Great Britain to occupy Iraq and Iran following the war.

This was a very profitable arrangement that they had no desire to change.

### **Slide 11**

However, in 1951 Iran's newly elected prime minister, a European-educated nationalist named Muhammad Mossadegh (moo sa day), announced a plan to retake control of the country's oil industry.

In response to these policies, the American C.I.A. and the British intelligence service devised a secret plan to overthrow Mossadegh and replace him with a leader who would be more receptive to Western interests.

Sure enough, Mossadegh was overthrown and a new government was installed in August 1953.

The new leader was a member of Iran's royal family named Mohammed Reza Shah Pahlavi.

The Shah's government was nonreligious, anti-communist and pro-Western. In exchange for tens of millions of dollars in foreign aid, he returned 80 percent of Iran's oil reserves to the Americans and the British.

For the C.I.A. and oil interests, the 1953 coup was a success.

However, many Iranians bitterly resented what they saw as American intervention in their affairs.

The Shah turned out to be a brutal dictator whose secret police tortured and murdered thousands of people.

Meanwhile, the Iranian government spent billions of dollars on American-made weapons while the Iranian economy suffered.

By the 1970s, many Iranians were fed up with the Shah's government.

### **Slide 12**

In protest, they turned to the Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, a radical cleric whose revolutionary Islamist movement promised a break from the past and turn toward independence for the Iranian people.

In July 1979, the revolutionaries forced the Shah to disband his government and flee to Egypt. The Ayatollah installed a militant Islamist government in its place.

The United States, afraid of stirring up hostilities in the Middle East, did not come to the defense of its old ally.

### **Slide 13**

President Jimmy Carter, aware of the Shah's brutality to his people, refused to defend him.

However, in October 1979 President Carter agreed to allow the Shah to enter the U.S. for treatment of an advanced malignant cancer.

His decision was said to be humanitarian, not political.

However, it was like throwing "a burning match into a bucket of kerosene." Anti-American sentiment in Iran exploded.

This triggered the storming of our Embassy and the seizing of the American hostages.

Diplomatic maneuvers had no effect on the Ayatollah's anti-American stance.

President Carter's efforts to bring an end to the hostage crisis soon became one of his greatest priorities. In April 1980, frustrated with the slow pace of diplomacy (and over the objections of several of his advisers), Carter decided to launch a risky military rescue mission known as Operation Eagle Claw. The operation was supposed to send an elite rescue team into the embassy compound.

However, a severe desert sandstorm on the day of the mission caused several helicopters to malfunction, including one that veered into a large transport plane during takeoff. Eight American servicemen were killed in the accident, and Operation Eagle Claw was aborted.

The constant media coverage of the hostage crisis in the U.S. served as the backdrop for the 1980 presidential race. President Carter's inability to resolve the problem made him look like a weak and ineffectual leader.

The Republican candidate, Ronald Reagan, took advantage of Carter's difficulties.

### **Slide 14**

On Election Day, one year and two days after the hostage crisis began, Reagan defeated Carter in a landslide.

On January 21, 1981, just a few hours after Ronald Reagan delivered his inaugural address, the remaining hostages were released. They had been in captivity for 444 days.

Now during the period 1980-88, Iran fought a bloody, indecisive war with Iraq that eventually expanded into the Persian Gulf and led to clashes between US Navy and Iranian military forces.

Iran has been designated a state sponsor of terrorism for its activities in Lebanon and elsewhere in the world and remains subject to US, UN, and EU economic sanctions and export controls because of its continued involvement in terrorism and concerns over expanded military development of its nuclear program.

However, let's not forget, Russia, China, and North Korea, all have ties to Iran.

The outbreak of a full-scale conflict would not be limited to US and Iranian forces alone.

### **What happens if we go to war with Iran?**

### **Slide 15**

It would start with a deadly opening attack. Nearly untraceable, ruthless rivals spreading chaos on multiple continents. Costly miscalculations. And thousands — perhaps hundreds of thousands — killed in a conflict that would dwarf the war in Iraq.



A US-Iran war, would have the potential to be one of the worst conflicts in history.

Importantly, both country's leaders say they don't want a war. But the possibility of one breaking out anyway shouldn't be dismissed, especially since an Iranian insult directed at Trump last month led him to threaten the Islamic Republic's "obliteration" for an attack on "anything American."

In other words, Tehran doesn't have to kill any US troops, diplomats, or citizens to warrant a military response — it just has to try.

Which means the standoff between the US and Iran teeters on the edge, and it won't take much to knock it off.

So, to understand how bad it could get, I researched and found the comments of several current and former White House, Pentagon, and intelligence officials, as well as Middle East experts, how a war between the US and Iran might play out.

The bottom line: It would be hell on earth.

"This would be a violent convulsion similar to chaos of the Arab Spring inflicted on the region for years," said Ilan Goldenberg, the Defense Department's Iran team chief from 2009 to 2012, with the potential for it to get "so much worse than Iraq."

US-imposed sanctions have tanked Iran's economy, and Tehran desperately wants them lifted. But with few options to force the Trump administration to change course, Iranian leaders may choose a more violent tactic to make their point.

Iranian forces could bomb an American oil tanker traveling through the Strait of Hormuz, a vital waterway for the global energy trade aggressively patrolled by Tehran's forces, causing loss of life or a catastrophic oil spill.

The country's skillful computer hackers could launch a major cyber attack on regional allies like Saudi Arabia or the United Arab Emirates.

Iranian-linked allies could target and murder American troops and diplomats in Iraq.

That last option is particularly likely, experts say. After all, Iran bombed the US Marine barracks in Lebanon in 1983 and killed more than 600 US troops during the Iraq War.

Taking this step may seem extreme, but “Iran could convince itself that it could do this,” Goldenberg, now at the Center for a New American Security think tank in Washington, stated.

At that point, it’d be nearly impossible for the Trump administration not to respond in kind. The recommendations given to the president would correspond to whatever action Iran took.

If Tehran destroyed an oil tanker, killing people and causing an oil spill, the US might destroy some of Iran’s ships.

If Iranian-backed militants killed Americans in Iraq, then US troops stationed there could retaliate, killing militia fighters and targeting their bases of operation in return.

It’s at this point that both sides would need to communicate their red lines to each other and how not to cross them. The problem is there are no direct channels between the two countries and they don’t particularly trust each other. So, the situation could easily spiral out of control.

The US strategy would almost certainly involve using overwhelming air and naval power to beat Iran into submission early on. “You don’t poke the beehive, you take the whole thing down,” Goldenberg said.

The US military would bomb Iranian ships, parked warplanes, missile sites, nuclear facilities, and training grounds, as well as launch cyber attacks on much of the country’s military infrastructure. The goal would be to degrade Iran’s conventional forces within the first few days and weeks, making it even harder for Tehran to resist American strength.

That plan definitely makes sense as an opening salvo, experts say, but it will come nowhere close to winning the war.

“It’s very unlikely that the Iranians would give up,” Michael Hanna, a Middle East expert at the Century Foundation in New York, stated. “It’s almost impossible to imagine that a massive air campaign will produce the desired result. It’s only going to produce escalation, not surrender.”

It won't help that a sustained barrage of airstrikes will likely lead to hundreds of Iranians dead, among them innocent civilians.

That, among other things, could unify Iranian society against the US and put it firmly behind the regime, even though it has in many ways treated the population horribly over decades in power.

There's another risk: A 2002 war game showed that Iran could sink an American ship and kill US sailors, even though the US Navy is far more powerful.

If the Islamic Republic's forces succeeded in doing that, it could provide a searing image that could serve as a propaganda coup for the Iranians. Washington won't gain the same amount of enthusiasm for destroying Iranian warships — that's what's supposed to happen.

Trump has already signaled he doesn't want to send ground troops into Iran or even spend a long time fighting the country. That tracks with his own inclinations to keep the US out of foreign wars, particularly in the Middle East.

But the options facing the president at that point will be extremely problematic, experts say.

The riskiest one — by far — would be to invade Iran. The logistics alone boggle the mind, and any attempt to try it would be seen from miles away. "There's no surprise invasion of Iran," according to Eric Brewer, who is now at the Center for Strategic and International Studies think tank in Washington.

Iran has nearly three times the amount of people Iraq did in 2003, when the war began, and is about three and a half times as big. In fact, it's the world's 17th-largest country, with territory greater than France, Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium, Spain, and Portugal combined.

The geography is also treacherous. It has small mountain ranges along some of its borders. Entering from the Afghanistan side in the east would mean crossing two deserts.

"It's almost impossible to imagine that a massive air campaign will produce the desired result. It's only going to produce escalation, not surrender." —

according to Michael Hanna, a Middle East expert at the Century Foundation

The US could try to enter Iran the way Saddam Hussein did during the Iran-Iraq war, near a water pass bordering Iran's southwest. But it's swampy — the Tigris and Euphrates rivers meet there — and relatively easy to protect. Plus, an invading force would run up against the Zagros Mountains after passing through, just like Saddam's forces did.

It's for these reasons that the private intelligence firm Stratfor called Iran a "fortress" back in 2011. If Trump chose to launch an invasion, he'd likely need around 1.6 million troops to take control of the capital and country, a force so big it would overwhelm America's ability to host them in regional bases. By contrast, America never had more than 180,000 service members in Iraq.

And there's the human cost. A US-Iran war would likely lead to thousands or hundreds of thousands of dead. Trying to forcibly remove the country's leadership, experts say, might drive that total into the millions.

That helps explain why nations in the region hope they won't see a fight. Goldenberg, who traveled last month to meet with officials in the Gulf, said that none of them wanted a US-Iran war.

European nations will also worry greatly about millions of refugees streaming into the continent, which would put immense pressure on governments already dealing with the fallout of the Syrian refugee crisis. Israel also would worry about Iranian allies targeting them.

Meanwhile, countries like Russia and China — both friendly to Iran — would try to stop the fighting and exploit it at the same time, the Century Foundation's Hanna stated.

China depends heavily on its goods traveling through the Strait of Hormuz, so it would probably call for calm and for Tehran not to close down the waterway.

Russia would likely demand restraint as well, but use the opportunity to solidify its ties with the Islamic Republic.

So, folks, there you have the answers to several big questions. I'm sure you have questions as well.

## **Slide 16**

Clearly, the stakes in global affairs are high, and the ripple effects of international conflict can touch everything from energy prices to national security to humanitarian crises. That's why staying informed isn't just important – it's essential.

If you're looking for a reliable way to explore both national and local issues – from politics and education to health, business, and beyond—there's a great tool available to you: America's News. It features credible, vetted news sources from across the U.S., and you can access it 24/7 from any device.

All you need is your library card—just enter it without spaces, and you're in. It's a great way to dig deeper into the stories that matter, both globally and right in your own community.

## **Slide 17**

Whew—okay, that was a lot to unpack. Global conflict, diplomacy, and the high stakes of international relations...it's heavy stuff, but important to understand.

Now, let's take a breath and shift gears a bit. Because while the world stage can feel overwhelming, sometimes the best way to stay grounded is by connecting with what's happening right in our own communities.

And that is where your local library comes in. Whether you're looking to learn a new skill, meet new people, or just unwind with something fun, there are some great programs happening that you won't want to miss...

As we are still in the middle of our Summer Reading Program, kids ages 6 to 12 are invited to the Camdenton Library on Tuesday, July 22, at 2 pm to join us for an afternoon of imagination, laughter, and teamwork! In this interactive theater event, kids' comedian Dennis Porter leads a fun-filled session where creativity takes center stage. Inspired by the world of graphic novels, we'll explore how the Super Friends came together—not just through action and adventure, but through the power of being “drawn” together.

Kids will team up to create and perform their own stories, discovering how everyone's unique strengths can bring people together and make the world a little brighter. Expect improvisation, storytelling, and lots of smiles!

Perfect for kids, families and those who love superheroes, laughter, and a little bit of magic.

### **Slide 18**

Join us for a special evening celebrating storytelling, creativity, and local talent! The Osage Beach Library is thrilled to welcome Angela Roquet, beloved local author of the Lana Harvey, Reapers, Inc., and more, on Wednesday, July 23, at 6:30 pm.

Angela will share insights into her writing journey, her creative process, and the world of publishing. Whether you're a longtime fan of her books or just curious about what it takes to bring a story to life, this is a fantastic opportunity to connect with a talented writer in your own community.

Expect lively conversation, a reading from one of her works, and plenty of inspiration for readers and aspiring writers alike. Don't miss this chance to meet a local favorite and dive into the world behind the pages.

### **Slide 19**

Children, ages 4-6, are invited to the Camdenton Library on Thursday, July 24 at 10:30 am, for a breezy good time! In this hands-on weather adventure with Mad Science, your little ones will explore the mysteries of the skies—learning about wind, clouds, and more through fun, age-appropriate activities.

Kids will create their very own windsock to take home, while discovering what makes our weather tick. All supplies are provided, and a parent or guardian must stay with their child during the program.

Perfect for curious young minds who love to ask “why?” about the world around them!

### **Slide 20**

Got a curious kid who loves science and weather? Then mark your calendars for a fun and educational event coming up at the Camdenton Library!

On Wednesday, July 24, at 11 am, we're hosting Mad Science: Walloping Weather—a hands-on program where kids ages 6 to 12 dive into the mysteries of meteorology. They'll learn why it rains, what causes lightning, and even try their hand at creating their own weather forecasts!

It's interactive, it's exciting, and it's the perfect way to spark a love of science. Just a heads up—if your child is under 10, a parent or guardian will need to stay with them during the program.

So, join us for a whirlwind of fun at the Camdenton Library. We'll see you there—rain or shine!

That concludes our program for today, but we will be back on Thursday, August 21, at 8 am.