

IRAN: THE US EXERCISES THE VENEZUELAN PLAYBOOK. WILL IT WORK AND CAN BRICS SURVIVE?

The execution of Khamenei and two top Iranian military officials is either due to spectacular complacency or insidious treachery within the ranks of the Iranian ruling class and military establishment. It has been obvious for some time that one of the long-term purposes of sanctions is to split the ruling classes making them susceptible to penetration by Mossad, the CIA and Mi6. This is reminiscent of what happened in Venezuela, but Iran is likely to be a much harder nut to crack.

I was at the national demonstration outside RAF Marham where a wing of F35 jets purported to carry nuclear weapons is to be based. Despite the attack on Iran the turnout was in the low hundreds rather than in the thousands. Even the quickly called demonstration in London around the slogan *Hands off Iran* attracted hundreds rather than thousands of protestors. So different to 2003 and yet the consequences of this war are greater.

At Marham we were treated to speakers from Stop the War, CND and local councillors. Much was said about criminality, regime change, and even Epstein. But every speaker missed the point, and misunderstood, if not underestimated the enormity of what was going on in Iran, citing it as a regional war rather than what it was, a global war in one country and region. No one contextualised it within the hegemonic war between the US and China and the role Iran plays in this titanic battle. How they hope to build a real anti-war movement when they cannot even grasp the strategic implications, therefore provide conscious and mature leadership and guidance, is beyond comprehension.

The fog of war lingers. But what is clear is that the joint Israeli US attack was a saturation attack. This was the intent behind the huge build-up of US airpower. The scale of the attack can be seen by the [number of targets hit](#) in the first twelve hours. It most probably involved thousands of missiles. The purpose; to win a quick victory by overwhelming air defences and destroying missile batteries/arsenals. But given the low stocks of US munitions which could be depleted in days, it is an all or nothing strategy.

All Iran has to do is to survive the initial onslaught. And if it does, and retains hidden stocks of missiles, it means the war will shift in favour of Iran as it did last year. Already there is [evidence](#) of [failures by the Israeli](#) anti-missile defensive umbrella. We should not forget the primary lesson drawn from the 12-day war last year. It is that in the age of the missile, airpower comes second. Iran won the war last year with its missile dominance despite Israeli airpower. The US and Israel continue to rely on air power, the only difference this time is that they have created an air armada - 700 planes - but even this may not be enough. However, it is still too early to declare which side will prevail.

In addition, it appears Iran has closed the [Strait of Hormuz](#) through which about a third of seaborne oil exports and 20% of liquid natural gas exports pass. The financial consequences of this closure will only be known once the oil futures market opens on Sunday which they now have with prices rising 8% approaching \$80 a barrel. [JP Morgan](#) predicts that a prolonged closure could drive prices up to as much as \$120 per barrel despite many importing countries having built up their stocks in preparation. This price jump may be a bonanza for the insolvent US shale industry but catastrophic for the struggling world economy with CNBC reporting that it would precipitate a global recession. Clearly the US believes it can keep the Straits open, but if Trump has miscalculated and Iran is able to mine the Straits it will take weeks to reopen. The consequences for the Trump Presidency of this inflationary spike in

prices will be more severe than should he fail to execute regime change in Iran itself. Polls have shown the majority of the US population oppose this war including his MAGA base. The omens are not good for Trump, already Operation Epic Fury has been renamed Operation Epstein Fury.

It is too early to decide whether or not Chinese and Russian defensive systems failed in Iran. Whether the US and Israeli electronic warfare suites proved superior or whether the Chinese systems were not yet bedded down and integrated or were too few in number allowing the USAF and IAF to exploit gaps. Time will tell. Whatever the case, the war will provide valuable insights for the Chinese as to US capabilities.

It's important to examine the US doctrine of strategic sequencing. This has always been the hallmark of capitalist reaction, not only in terms of the attack on nations but the attack on the working class itself. The capitalist class is a minority in society even counting its immediate supporters. To compensate for quantity, they make up with quality, the quality of centralising their forces to systematically attack one bastion of working-class resistance after another destroying the movement piecemeal. One outstanding example was the *Freikorps* in Germany in the early 1920s which went from town to town smashing workers' organisations in the absence of the German workers centralising their forces in response, due to the absence of a strong revolutionary worker's party. The same can be seen on any large protest where the protesters outnumber the police by at least 50 to one. To make their arrests or break up the protests the police gather up and link their forces in tight rows and then charge the demonstration.

The same applies to the USA. The USA is no longer able to fight on all fronts. So, it sequences its attacks, taking out one country at a time. Recently it was the proxy war on Russia. Then it was Syria, then Venezuela and now Iran. Piece by piece it is seeking to take countries which support Russia and China off the table. In this way it seeks to isolate both Russia and China. This is particularly important in the light of Trump's impending visit to Beijing. If Iran falls out of the orbit of China, it will represent a strategic defeat for President Xi allowing Trump to corner Xi at the meeting ensuring that the US will have a better handle on any agreement.

BRICS.

The attack on Iran and Venezuela is an attack on BRICS with Iran a full member while Venezuela was an aspiring member. Trump has made his hostility to BRICS known on numerous occasions. He has also targeted BRICS nations specifically. Were he to break Iran it would weaken the BRICS but if he loses credibility in the war with Iran, this will have the opposite effect, it will strengthen BRICS and hasten the migration of more countries to it.

In this [podcast by the incomparable John Elmer](#) he assesses whether BRICS can hold together. He cites three negative examples. Firstly, Indian Prime Minister Modi's visit to Israel where he addressed the Israeli Knesset (parliament) hugging Netanyahu. According to Elmer this was to curry favour with the Jewish Lobby in Washington with the aim of loosening Trump's tariffs on India. Modi, this astute politician really needs to work on his timing. If Iran prevails, Modi is going to pay a high price for his opportunism. Secondly, [India arrested three Iranian oil tankers](#) off its coast in February with one Russian flagged, again to curry favour with Washington. Finally, Elmer discusses Russia's offer to re-dollarize its economy in return for the lifting of some sanctions as the Russian economy stalls. However,

on this point Elmer was quite wrong as in Geneva, the Russians did not soften their stance on the Ukrainian talks.

Nevertheless, it does show how precarious BRICS is, held together by animosity to the USA until such time as one of them succumbs to a carrot. Until, the economic centre of gravity shifts decisively to China, and the BRICS economies restructure themselves to take advantage of the Chinese market, this fragility will prevail.

Conclusion.

As I write, there have been reports that as US casualties rise, munition stocks fall, missiles pound Tel Aviv and the [oil price spikes](#), [Trump has requested a ceasefire](#) which the Iranians have rejected. Trump should have listened to his previous [Chair of the Joint Chiefs of Staff](#) instead of firing him when he advised caution. After martyring Khamenei, the Iranians are in no mood to negotiate. IF anything, his needless death has only hardened their position and it served to stir up the Shiite populations throughout the area.

The call for a ceasefire is very significant. As I said in my previous article a failure by the US to attack Iran would represent the passing of the US empire. Only one thing could be worse than not fighting, it is if the US lost an all-out battle in the Middle East primarily because its industrial base could not sustain one. It is all very well having a technological edge but being unable to replenish munitions in the quantities needed to win, cancels out that edge.

It appears that Trump may have miscalculated. The geo intention was correct from the US's perspective, crush Iran before meeting with Xi. Isolate China. But if Iran prevails, if it is the US which needs to back off, then it is unlikely that Xi will be cornered, in fact it is unlikely that Trump will even show his face in Beijing. But before this war is over it is going to get worse. It's only a matter of time before the US deploys its heavy bombers to attack Iranian cities, second world war style, in retaliation for having failed to achieve its goals in the Middle East.

It is too early to declare victory on either side. However, if Iran prevails, it would be the case that Russia and China defeated US imperialism, not in direct conflict, but on the battlefields of Ukraine and Iran with the support of the proud Iranian people.

Brian Green, 2nd March 2026