

Close Iran, Open Hormuz

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July 10, 2026

National Naval Mine Blockade Strategy

National strategy

not

Naval strategy

Clausewitz: *plans to not win a battle but to win the war*

Mine Blockade Strategy - Unprecedented Potency

War against Iran: a test case of its efficacy

- Will it produce victory over mullah regime of Iran?
- Mine blockade has two broad goals:
 - Close Iran, open Hormuz
 - Prevent Iran from ever acquiring nuclear weapons
- Replace current autocratic mullah regime—cannot be reached by any military means USG would choose to pursue
 - No full-scale invasion of Iran, no occupation of Tehran

Defeat of Mullahs: Contest for New Government

Length/Scale Depends on IRGC

- If IRGC (Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps) deserts mullahs, contest could be short with minimal violence.
- If IRGC stays loyal, mullahs will fight on—possible long civil war.
- New phase of conflict involving Iran to be kept in mind, addressed when time comes

U.S. Must Set Priorities Among War Goals

- To repeat, the first goal is immediate Close Iran, Open Hormuz.
- The second goal—to prevent Iran from ever acquiring nuclear weapons—on hold till primary goal achieved.
- Arab Gulf states bend maximum effort to “Open Hormuz”
- Arab states know there are no circumstances U.S. will accept a nuclear Iran.
- (No nation believes Iran should have nuclear weapons, not even Russia)
- Denuclearization can safely be given secondary priority.
- Naval mine blockade has great promise to leverage Iran to foreswear nuclear weapons in perpetuity.

What is U.S. Fighting to Achieve Today?

To Right an Historic Wrong

- Mullah government of Iran holds hostage the economies of all states.
- The U.S. and allies will take strong military and political actions against Iran.
 - Declare actions will not end until Iran 1) opens Hormuz, allows free navigation throughout the Gulf, 2) ceases attacks on territories of U.S. Arab allies and Israel.
- When these conditions met, this phase of war will be over, with U.S. the winner.
- U.S. will fight on to achieve other political goals.

Aims of This Meeting

- “We” means community of analysts of naval/national strategy.
- Immediate purpose: investigative
- Larger purposes:
 - 1) Raise awareness of U.S. senior leadership that “Close Iran, Open Hormuz” option even exists.
 - 2) Call attention that the strategy is a complex, all-of-government undertaking; all components must be implemented simultaneously; each is critical.

Defining Victory Means Iran:

- Foreswears nuclear weapons in perpetuity
- Ends blockade of Hormuz and attacks on shipping throughout Gulf
- No longer attacks Arab neighbors, Israel, U.S. forces
- Issues apology in U.N. for damage caused to Arab Gulf states, world economy
- Offers reparations to Arab neighbors
- Adopts self-determined, democratic government
- Rejoins world economy and community of nations

Resume Strategic Bombardment; Impose Mine Blockade

- Force Iran's navy to stay in port or near-shore waters
- Deprive Iran of hard currency earned through export of oil and its products
- Lead to mass starvation by denial of food imports
- Mean Iran's economy would never grow again unless the blockade is relaxed or removed—decision entirely in U.S. hands
- Points to keep in mind:
 - Even if Iran is able to brush away U.S. minefields, U.S./allies could seize enemy tankers before they reached market.
 - U.S./allies would never attack/sink a laden tanker in the Gulf.

USG Must Consult with Allies

NATO/Asian allies will provide military forces

- But, if USG acts unilaterally, without consultation, it strengthens mullahs at home and abroad and weakens its own position.
- USG must recognize that this dynamic is real; and must consult with allies, give them titular and substantive role, and responsibilities as much as possible.
- Goal of subduing common Iranian enemy should leaven inter-Arab rivalries.

Assumption: Mine Blockade Can “Close Iran,” **Which Lacks Means to Respond**

Experience shows mine removal laborious, time-consuming even in peaceful environment

- In Gulf today:
 - Each side blockades the other
 - Iran defends and reseeds
- U.S. would do the same if the need arose
- Also, can U.S. complete Iran's isolation from world?
- Make Iran a “no-fly zone,” destroy all air transport aircraft on ground, possibly in the air?
- Interdict rail and roads leading into Iran?

Mine Blockade Strengthens U.S. Position

Brings unused, potent military power into play

- Low cost and risk
- Force Iran to devote resources to respond
- Question: Why would the U.S. not mine blockade Iran?

Uncertainty About Iran's Ability to Defeat Mine Blockade

A crucial assumption yet to be assessed by mine warfare analysts

If it is judged Iran can easily remove U.S. minefields, your speaker will apologize to all for leading an excursion into a blind ally and return to the work bench, redraft this talk.

In the hope and expectation that will not be necessary, let's continue the session as is.

Mine Blockade Must Not Cause Iran's Populace to Starve

U.S. calls on U.N. to declare Iran humanitarian disaster zone

- U.N. to oversee delivery of food aid, as in Gaza.
- U.S permits food to flow through mine field corridors (locations known only to U.S.)
- Corridors give U.S. unique ability to control events.
- Under U.S. leadership, organize Arab/Muslim groups, European & Asian allies, other friendly states provide aid
- All international organizations support U.S. plans for food aid to Iran.
- No one would support Iran except Russia and its allies.
- Iran's populace may not starve, but Iran cannot rebuild its military; its economy will collapse because blockade will deny exports (oil/LPG) and imports (everything large and heavy) by sea.
- Iran's people will face immiseration only because the mullah government engages in policies that damage all states of the world.
- To repeat: The mullahs are at war with the world.

Limit Blockade Action; Exploit Arms Control

Weaken international political support for Iran; build support for U.S., allies

- Do not seize Kharg Island or attack oil infrastructure; U.S. will exploit a "green" strategy.
- Blockade makes attacking oil infrastructure pointless. U.S. will seize any Iranian ships that sail south.
- More important: U.S./allies will never give Iran justification for answering attacks on Arab oil facilities.
- If Iran attacks Arab oil infrastructure, mullahs cannot justify their actions
- U.S. will seek U.N. resolution, to 1) prohibit delivery of sea mines to Iran and 2) to ban the use of sea mines in international waters anywhere in the world.

Mount Major InfoWar Campaign

Vital Complement to U.S. diplomacy

- Is Iran willing to see starvation of its own populace and countenance starvation of tens of millions elsewhere (forecast by FAO)?
- Iran's closure of Hormuz and attacks on military, civilian infrastructure in all states within range of its weapons is reckless, Hitlerian behavior.
- All states, bar Russia and allies, will oppose Iran and rally behind the United States.

Green Strategy is Highly Advantageous

Takes advantage of world green sentiment; further weakens mullahs

- World knows war damages ecology of region where fought.
- Iran already complains that Israeli strikes on its oil storage infrastructure have produced "black rain" on Tehran.
- Iran, nonetheless, continues to attack oil infrastructure of its Arab neighbors.
- United States/allies call on all states—including Iran—to match their commitment not to attack oil infrastructure in today's war.
- "Green strategy" costs U.S./allies nothing but inhibits/deprives Iran exploitation of a main weapon used since 2/28/26, when Israel and U.S. attacked Iran.

Highlight President Trump's MIGA

U.S. at War Only With Mullah Regime

- Focus strikes on the IRGC/Basij
- Avoid Artesh (regular army)
- Avoid desalinization plants: hurt civilian population far more than mullahs' ability to fight
- MIGA strategy appeals to patriotic Iranians
 - Peel off Artesh from mullahs
- All actions support MIGA's vision of reborn Iranian nation

No MIGA if Hormuz Not Open

- If Hormuz open, 125-200 ships ready, loaded, crewed to sail south
- Bring oil to market; stabilize prices; meet enduring need
- USG provides political risk insurance for friendly ships throughout Gulf; USG should invite Arab Gulf states to underwrite it.
- Bring fertilizer/precursors to market; forestall 43 million deaths forecast by U.N. Food and Agricultural Organization
- The U.S. immediately must request U.N. to 1) organize/oversee dispatch of fertilizer-carrying ships, 2) call on Iran not to interfere. Iran will have to comply, highlight its malign influence on world stage.

Simultaneously with “Close Iran,” U.S. Must “Open Hormuz”

U.S./Allies must prevail in military action focused on Hormuz

- Mine blockade will free forces afloat to concentrate on defeating Iran at Hormuz, elsewhere in Gulf.
- U.S. must never intercept merchant ships in international waters outside war zone.
- Gross violation of international law
- Contrary to hallowed principle of Freedom of Navigation

Hormuz: Where Fight Will Focus, Where War Will be Decided

CENTCOM/CJCS responsibility

1. Maximize ISR at Hormuz.
2. Focus EW on Hormuz.
3. Declare the area a “no-fly-no-sail” zone.
4. Exploit robot mine-clearing capabilities of European/Asian allies.
5. Attack exposed enemy forces on eastern and northern shore and their supply lines.
6. Use SEAD at longer ranges and battlefield helicopters and tacair like the A-10 Warthog
7. Mobilize/pay friendly fishing/coastal commerce fleets as maritime militia.
8. Use converted merchant ships as uncrewed or very lightly crewed mine clearance vehicles to help friendly convoys to pass safely through Hormuz.
9. Defend friendly ships moving north and south in near-shore corridor
10. Declare U.S. certain intention to cease operations/withdraw forces only when free navigation restored throughout Gulf.

Naval Mine Blockade Underwrites Top U.S. War Goals

1) Opening Hormuz, 2) Iran's denuclearization

- Iran powerless against blockade; Russia cannot help
- Mine blockade closes Iran, collapses its economy, immiserates its populace.
- U.S. can keep mine blockade in place at essentially no cost.
- Timing/conditions of removal of U.S. mines gives U.S. the upper hand in diplomatic negotiations
- To end combat/reach settlement satisfactory to the U.S. - good definition of victory

Who will replace the mullahs?

A self-determined, democratic-elected government

- Such a government to emerge organically from long-existing political forces within Iran's society
- U.S./allies can assist new government to rewrite constitution.
- Bring Iran out of 7th-8th century A.D. into the Enlightenment era of the 18th century
- Era of U.S. Declaration of Independence (1776) and Federal Constitution (1783) and of French Universal Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen (1789)
- The Islamic Republic of Pakistan shows that democratic practice of rule of law can function in a theocratically based society.
- A new Islamic Republic of Iran can replace "Supreme Leader," with democratically elected one
- U.S./democratic nations have historic opportunity to help.

Naval Mine Blockade is New, Potent

Translate military victory into political success

- Tragically, senior U.S. leadership has not been made aware of naval mine blockade option.
- President Trump, Vice-President Vance, SecState/NSA Rubio, SecWar/Defense Hegspeth, Ambassadors Wickoff and Kushner have never mentioned it.
- Strategists on the Hill, in the media also in dark
- The United States Government must recognize and use this powerful new weapon today and in future
- Hopefully, this session will help make that recognition more likely.

What we Know About Naval Blockade

Potency widely underestimated

- If there is war, there will be mutual blockade.
- Naval mines play central role in war and negotiations to end combat and seek settlement.
- Blockade strategically efficacious, can determine course of war and contribute significantly to outcome; will cause starvation and collapse of enemy's war economy.
- Blockade highly efficient - weapons far less expensive than the forces they threaten; defeating blockade requires far more resources than imposing it.
- Blockade the least escalatory strategy, does not threaten enemy populace, leadership, or territory, including nuclear forces.
- U.S. blockade of Iran reveals an unprecedented weapon in nation's arsenal of strategies for diplomacy and war.

Justification for this Meeting

- We are a democracy. We depend on our government "... to insure domestic Tranquility and provide for the common defence...."
- Our citizens pledge to provide blood and treasure to achieve those goals; we are patriots; we have standing.
- Second, people/institutions here today, and many not present, are nation's strategic brain.
- Nation's strategic thinkers include active and retired officers of the armed services, of the Foreign Service, and the Intelligence Community, members of Legislative Branch and their staffs, semi-public institutions (war colleges, FFRDCs), and the Media the *Post*, *Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Foreign Affairs*, *The New Yorker*, and *The Atlantic*, as well as strategists abroad like Sir Lawrence Freedman.
- In our democracy this diverse collection of people and institutions is, critically, the nation's sole mechanism for self-correction; we have agency.