

Funding the Future

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As I write, the story that the world is hearing is that there is a ceasefire between Israel and Iran, brokered by the USA.

Supposedly, both sides have stopped bombing, although that was certainly not the case overnight.

This needs some reaction.

First, ceasefires are good news. I celebrate them.

Second, I have my doubts if this will last.

Third, let's look at the winners and losers.

The loser is Israel. Under sustained attack, which its supposed missile defence system was clearly unable to counter, it has suffered severe damage to civilian and maybe military targets. Its claimed military superiority and declaration of air superiority over Iran did not stop Iran's attacks. Nor did Iran run out of weapons, as it was claimed would happen. Instead, Israel might have been at risk of doing so. It appears to be the loser here.

Iran appears to be a winner. It has sustained a counterattack when that was thought to be unlikely. That counterattack worked. It even mounted one, albeit performatively, against the USA. What is more, with ample notice, its nuclear stockpiles have almost certainly survived US attacks, and maybe much of its nuclear equipment did as well. We don't know, but that is the whole point as far as Iran is concerned: there is no proof that the US succeeded as yet. And for Iran, that is a win. They retain the threat they had before the US attacked. That is sufficient for them.

And the US might, for now, appear to be a winner. Trump can claim his bombs were delivered. I suspect that the gain will be very short-term, but for now, he can claim he has created a ceasefire, and that is bad news for those who do not believe in aggression as a source of resolution to conflict, which I do not.

Where do things go from here?

First, the world is on a war footing: the likelihood that the economic consequences I have been talking about will not happen is low. We remain at real risk: the neoliberal leaders of the world have caught war fever, and so a war is what they will eventually demand. I fear that we remain in deep trouble.

Second, the chance that this ceasefire is sustainable is low, in my opinion. There is no evidence that any of the causes of this conflict have been resolved: each side is, to some degree, retiring hurt and taking the opportunity to regroup. I fear that they will, and then return to the fight.

Third, the USA has decided that it is now the arbitrator of right and wrong, and has decided it has the right to bomb at will. Good luck opposing what Putin is doing in Ukraine in that case, because the moral ground for doing so has disappeared. Once might is considered more important than law, international agreements and respect for nationhood, wait and see what happens when those with might you do not like choose to use it.

Fourth, the descent of the USA into fascism will continue.

And, fifth, nothing is resolved in Gaza. Let us never forget that. Netanyahu's genocide continues.

Finally, debate has to turn to peace: that is the only real solution, and this is just a ceasefire, and the two should not be confused. What is the new world order going to be when it is apparent that this one is now failing, incredibly badly? Isn't that what talk should really be about, and not rearmament? That it is not is what worries me most.