

This war is a long way from over as yet, especially for...

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In another surreal overnight twist to the war in the Middle East, [Trump has declared](#) that he thinks it might be over in 2 to 3 weeks, whether or not the USA gets a deal.

The evidence that Trump is getting bored with the conflict that he started and is looking for a way out is very strong. As was always expected, he will chicken out in the end. That said, the possibility that everything will then return to normal is remote in the extreme.

In another twist in the last 24 hours, Trump [berated the UK](#) at the same time as he announced his delight at the [planned trip of King Charles](#) to the USA later this month. The dichotomy will not have gone unnoticed in the world, particularly in the Middle East.

Whilst [France is pouring scorn](#) on what Trump is doing, and the far-right government in Italy is [refusing the US](#) the right to refuel aircraft destined for the Middle East at American airbases in the country, not only is the UK providing a base for B-52 bombers, it is also providing its implicit diplomatic support for the regime in the USA by arranging a state visit in the midst of an illegal war.

The messaging is clear. As ever with a Labour government, an attempt is being made to triangulate the situation so that all sides can be kept happy, with the consequence that none is. The pretence that the special relationship with the USA is continuing is maintained, even though that relationship should be severed. The claim that this war has nothing to do with the UK is simultaneously shot to pieces by the permission granted for UK airbases to be used to support the illegal assaults on Iran. And no one in the UK is left in any doubt about the fact that the UK government is creeping, as ever, to the occupant of the White House, however obnoxious they might be.

This has consequences. As Donald Trump said yesterday, Europe "[can go and get its own oil](#)" from the Gulf states in the future. He did, of course, ignore the fact that we, and everyone else, were doing just that until he intervened. The problem that we now have is entirely of his creation, and the creation of Benjamin Netanyahu, but we would

be unwise to ignore the fact that whilst those states who have firmly stood up against the USA might be permitted by Iran to use the Strait of Hormuz again, if there is oil and gas to collect after the USA and Israel have finished their campaign, countries like the UK might still be blocked from access because of their implicit, tacit, or practical support for the USA during its campaign against Iran.

My suggestion is that Iran might seek to use the weapon of sanctions in a fashion akin to that previously used against it, meaning that not only will it block the passage of ships serving the UK from passing through the Strait of Hormuz when the immediate conflict is over, but might also sanction otherwise apparently friendly states that acted as an intermediary in that case, seeking to export oil from the Gulf for onward delivery to the UK via an intermediate port. The Strait of Hormuz is, in other words, going to remain a weapon for a long time to come, and to presume that the UK will be able to access oil and gas from anywhere in the Gulf when it has been an accomplice in acts of destruction in the Middle East is naive in the extreme. There is no reason why Iran should forgive and forget, and I do not think it will do so.

What is the consequence of all this? It is that Starmer is likely to have pulled off the UK's biggest foreign policy failure since the Suez Crisis in the 1950s. He will have simultaneously alienated the USA, Iran, and the British public. As an exercise in triangulation, that is some achievement, and we will all bear the cost of it.

Meanwhile, as I noted [in yesterday's video](#), there is no indication that the UK is preparing any sensible plans for the consequences of this war, even if it were to finish within 2 to 3 weeks, as Donald Trump is now suggesting, and those plans will be needed. To believe that all will return to normal after disruption on this scale would be an act of supreme folly. The economic consequences of this war are going to last for some time, not least because there is no indication that Israel will give up just because Donald Trump has, and if the USA continues to fund its activities, hostilities will outlast any supposed end to US involvement.

As the saying goes, the fat lady is a long way from singing as yet.