



Iran Chamber Society

Could Iran be the Troy of the 21st century?

The Greeks gave the Trojans an illusory victory, then sacked their city. Are the United States and Israel doing the same to Iran with the MoU?



By **Shapour Ghasemi**

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The Procession of the Trojan Horse into Troy, by Giovanni Domenico Tiepolo c. 1760

A collective of Greek (Achaean) naval forces attacked the city of Troy in 12th century BCE. They wanted to take back Helen to her husband, King Menelaus of Sparta. After 10 long years of siege and sea blockade and some clashes outside the city walls, suddenly in one morning when Trojans woke up they saw all the ships are gone and the beaches are empty, except they left a giant wooden horse outside the city walls in front the gate. Trojans cheerfully

congratulate each other for the victory they achieved by their resistance and endurance to the siege and blockade.

The Trojans were initially highly suspicious of the giant wooden horse. "*I fear the Greeks, even those bearing gifts,*" the Trojan priest Laocoön warned the Trojans. To overcome this skepticism, the Greeks left behind a single soldier named Sinon, who allowed himself to be captured. He delivered a masterclass in deception by claimed that the Greek leader, Odysseus, hated him and had chosen him to be a human sacrifice. He pretended to have barely escaped with his life. He told the Trojans that the wooden horse was an offering to the goddess Athena to ensure a safe journey home for the Greeks.

Sinon claimed the Greeks made the horse massive so the Trojans couldn't bring it inside. He warned that if the Trojans brought it into their city, Athena's favor would shift to Troy, and they would eventually conquer Greece.

Trojans tricked by Sinon tears, and eagerness to secure Athena's blessing, they tore down a portion of their own city walls just to drag the massive horse inside. After the wooden horse was inside the city, they started to celebrate their victory over such a large army and that a very long siege could not defeat and bring them to their knees.

Once night fell and the Trojans fell into a deep, drunken sleep, Sinon lit a beacon fire to signal the hidden Greek fleet behind the rocky island of Tenedos. He then crept over to the horse and unlocked the secret hatch to let a couple dozen Greek elite warriors came out of hiding. The hidden elite warriors dropped down from the belly of the horse, killed the sleeping guards, and opened the main gates. What followed was a massacre, the Trojans were trapped completely off guard, most Trojan men were killed in their beds or on the streets. The women of Troy were divided up among the Greek kings as spoils of war. And finally, the Greeks plundered everything of value and set Troy on fire, leaving the once-mighty city in absolute ruins.

This masterpiece of deception is depicted in *The Aeneid*, a mythological epic poem written by the Roman poet Publius Vergilius Maro in the 1st century BCE.

Now, back to the present century.

In the past 47 years, Iran has been subject to one of the most inhumane economic sieges in the history, imposed primarily by the United States, with the support of the United Nations Security Council. These sanctions have restricted Iran's access to a wide range of goods, including medical supplies, equipment, and medicines.

A particularly significant measure was Iran's exclusion from the SWIFT (Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunications) network, the principal messaging system used by financial institutions to facilitate international transactions. Critics have argued that this exclusion severely constrained Iran's ability to participate in global trade and financial markets.

In addition, billions of dollars of Iranian assets held abroad have been frozen under the pressure and threat of the United States. Critics of these measures contend that they lack sufficient legal or moral justification and have imposed substantial economic costs on the Iranian population.

Furthermore, Iran has long viewed the extensive U.S. military presence in the West Asia (Middle East), including deployments in neighboring countries, Afghanistan and Iraq, and surrounding waters, as a source of persistent strategic pressure and intimidation.

Iran has also been accused of pursuing nuclear weapons capabilities and has been subjected to sanctions on that basis. Iranian officials have consistently emphasized that the country's nuclear program is intended exclusively for peaceful purposes.

Critics of U.S. policy have argued that the evidence presented to support claims of an active Iranian nuclear weapons program has often been insufficient or inconclusive. They further note that several assessments by U.S. intelligence agencies have concluded that Iran had not made a decision to build a nuclear weapon.

Iran has repeatedly rejected allegations that it seeks to develop nuclear weapons, arguing that such weapons are both morally and religiously unacceptable. This position has been reinforced by the fatwa (religious decree) of Iran's supreme leader, late Ayatollah Khamenei, who has declared

the production and use of nuclear weapons to be contrary to Islamic principles and highly immoral.

Nevertheless, on June 13, 2025, while negotiations between Iran and the United States, mediated by Oman, were ongoing regarding a range of disputed issues—including Iran's nuclear program, frozen assets, and economic sanctions—Israel launched military strikes against Iran. According to reports, the operation targeted a range of locations, including military installations, research facilities, airports, and nuclear sites. Some of the targeted nuclear facilities had been subject to regular monitoring and inspection by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

Israeli operation was conducted with direct or indirect military, logistical, and political support from the United States and its Western allies. The strikes reportedly resulted in the deaths of senior military personnel and scientists, as well as civilian casualties. According to various accounts, more than a thousand civilians were killed and many more injured during the course of the attacks.

In retaliation, Iran launched a series of missile and drone strikes against Israel, including attacks involving Shahed drones and hypersonic missiles. The strikes caused significant damage to infrastructure in several Israeli cities despite extensive air-defense efforts.

On June 22, 2025, the United States Air Force joined the war directly and conducted airstrikes against Iranian nuclear facilities as part of Operation Midnight Hammer. The operation involved seven B-2 Spirit bombers that departed from Whiteman Air Force Base and delivered fourteen GBU-57 Massive Ordnance Penetrator bombs against deeply buried nuclear sites. According to U.S. military officials, the strikes were intended to damage Iran's underground nuclear infrastructure.

Following the U.S. strikes, the United States and Israel declared the operation a success and asserted that Iran's nuclear program and uranium-enrichment facilities had been effectively destroyed or severely degraded. U.S. President Donald Trump subsequently announced a ceasefire proposal, which was

accepted by the parties and took effect on June 24, 2025. Both the United States and Israel characterized the outcome as a strategic victory.

On June 25, 2025, the White House published a press release titled "[Iran's Nuclear Facilities Have Been Obliterated — and Suggestions Otherwise are Fake News.](#)" The statement presented the military operation as a decisive success and asserted that Iran's nuclear infrastructure had been effectively destroyed.

Following the 12-day war in June 2025, Oman re-initiated contact and officially asked the United States and Iran to return to the negotiating table in August 2025.

After months of negotiations, Oman's Foreign Minister, Badr Albusaidi, acting as mediator between Washington and Tehran, announced on February 26, 2026, that U.S. and Iranian officials had achieved "significant progress" in their negotiations in Geneva. According to Albusaidi, the parties agreed to continue negotiations "soon" after consultations in their capitals before resuming negotiations, while technical discussions were scheduled to take place in Vienna the following week.

On February 27, 2026, Oman's Foreign Minister, Badr Albusaidi, in his capacity as mediator between Iran and the United States, traveled to Washington, D.C., to present the results of the latest round of nuclear negotiations. During his meeting with U.S. Vice President JD Vance and briefed him on the substantial progress reportedly achieved during the intensive round of indirect talks that had concluded only hours earlier in Geneva. He further conveyed that the parties remained committed to continuing negotiations through subsequent diplomatic and technical-level discussions.

During his presentation in Washington, Badr Albusaidi also conveyed that a final peace agreement was "within reach." He reported that Iran had agreed to significant concessions, including a commitment to refrain from stockpiling weapons-grade nuclear material and to accept full verification by the International Atomic Energy Agency. While in Washington, he also gave an interview to CBS, in which he stated that substantial progress had been made in narrowing the remaining gaps between Washington and Tehran.

The next day, on February 28, 2026, while Minister Albusaidi was still in Washington, D.C., he received news via a publicly posted video message from U.S. President Donald Trump announcing that the United States had launched preemptive strikes against Iran for a second time within nine months. The announcement indicated that the operation was being conducted jointly with Israel as part of coordinated military action.

In his publicly released video announcement, U.S. President Trump talks about “regime change in Iran” as one of the primary objectives of this military operation called “Epic Furry.” In the first hours of the airstrikes, the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Ayatollah Khamenei, and many of his close family members, including his daughter and his 14-month-old granddaughter, were assassinated at his home. At the same time, many other top-ranking military and civilian officials in other parts of Tehran were also assassinated.

On the morning of February 28, 2026, in the early hours of school time, at 10:00 a.m., an American Navy warship USS Spruance (DDG-111) fired three Tomahawk missiles at Shajareh Tayyebah Elementary School in Minab, killing 156 children, teachers, staff, and parents.

There have been indications and reports that several U.S.-aligned states in the Persian Gulf region—including Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, and Jordan—provided logistical support and granted access to military bases. Some accounts also suggest varying levels of operational involvement by these states.

The United States and Israel expected that a maximum of one week of strikes against Iran would be sufficient to destabilize the country and trigger widespread public uprisings aimed at toppling the government. However, the plan did not unfold as intended, leaving continued military escalation as the remaining option.

The war on Iran continues, and Iran has retaliated by striking back forcefully. All American military bases in the region have been targeted, and some have reportedly lost operational capability. American radar systems stationed in

Arab countries were also hit, and some were destroyed, inflicting significant financial costs on the United States.

The United States, Israel, and their allies in the region bombed Iran indiscriminately and destroyed hospitals, medical research institutions, universities, civilian bridges, passenger aircraft on the ground, oil depots, factories, pharmaceutical plants, and residential neighborhoods.

Iran closed the Strait of Hormuz to all shipping traffic in both directions. The Strait of Hormuz is considered a strategic chokepoint for global oil exports; approximately 20 percent of the world's oil passes through it.

By closing the Strait of Hormuz, thousands of oil tankers and container ships were stranded both inside and outside the Persian Gulf; very few vessels were allowed to pass, and only with permission from Iran. This placed strain on the global economy by driving up energy prices.

The United States attempted to reopen the Strait of Hormuz by military means and issued threats that it would “send Iran back to the Stone Age” and “erase Iranian civilization.” These threats did not produce the intended outcome.

Meanwhile, Israel, despite a ceasefire with Lebanon, continued heavy attacks in southern Lebanon through bombardments, ground operations, and air raids on Beirut. Israel was using the situation to advance its strategic objectives related to the idea of “Greater Israel,” including the occupation and annexation of parts of southern Lebanon.

Eventually, on April 8, 2026, when all United States, Israeli, and Arab-aligned military options to reopen the Strait of Hormuz had failed to yield results, the United States and Iran, with mediation by Pakistan, agreed to a two-week ceasefire on all fronts, including Lebanon.

On April 13, 2026, the United States began a naval blockade of Iran, with no sea vessels allowed to enter or exit. Israel did not fully respect the ceasefire and continued military operations in Lebanon, while also sporadically bombing Iran. On April 13, President Donald Trump extended the initial ceasefire indefinitely while maintaining the naval blockade pending further talks.

Furthermore, during the negotiations, Iran presented its demands to the Pakistani mediators. Iran called for a comprehensive ceasefire including Lebanon, the lifting of the naval blockade, a permanent halt to all hostilities, the release of Iranian assets, and the termination, not lift, of all sanctions and embargoes. It also demanded the withdrawal of all American military forces from the Persian Gulf region.

The talks continued until the negotiators reached a framework agreement for a formal 60-day extension of the ceasefire to address long-term issues on June 12, 2026.

Finally, on June 17, 2026, the presidents of both countries and the Prime Minister of Pakistan, acting as mediator, formally signed a 14-point [Memorandum of Understanding](#) (MoU).

By examining the signed Memorandum of Understanding, we observe that all of Iran's demands were accepted, which raises considerable suspicion. Western media headlines described the MoU as a substantial victory for Iran. Israel expressed dissatisfaction and openly criticized the agreement, with some Israeli politicians using harsh language against President Trump. Western capitals viewed the agreement as a relief, particularly due to the reopening of the Strait of Hormuz. In the United States, some lawmakers who had previously criticized the conduct of the war on Iran have now become vocal opponents of the MoU. They argue that Iran effectively achieved its objectives and, in their view, outmaneuvered the United States by securing all of its key demands.

What is known is that the United States, Israel, and their allied countries did everything they could to achieve their objectives and bring Iran to its knees, yet they were unsuccessful. The United States now appears to be frustrated or defeated by suddenly accepting the terms of Iran and expressing willingness to lift the blockade and withdraw.

What, then, has fundamentally changed within the United States to cause such a reversal?

Has the Western economy suffered sufficiently from the closure of the Strait of Hormuz to prompt such a change in policy and course of action?

Has Israel suddenly lost its leverage over the U.S. administration, allowing Washington to make decisions without Israeli consent?

Does this not resemble the Greek stratagem used against Troy?

Point 6 of the Memorandum of Understanding provides for a \$300 billion reconstruction and economic development fund, financed by Persian Gulf states and European countries. The stated aim of this provision is to support post-conflict recovery; however, it has a mechanism that going also reshape Iran's external economic relations, including potentially reducing Chinese economic influence in the country and weakening an important strategic partnership. This, in turn, could leave Iran vulnerable to future threats from Israel or the United States.

In the short term, this strategy could involve the United States Navy pulling back and hiding behind the midterm election cycle, waiting for Iran to become overconfident, relaxed, and lulled into a deep sleep.

Could the story of Troy, once a mighty city, be repeated again?



By **Shapour Ghasemi**

A contributor to the Iran Chamber Society.

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