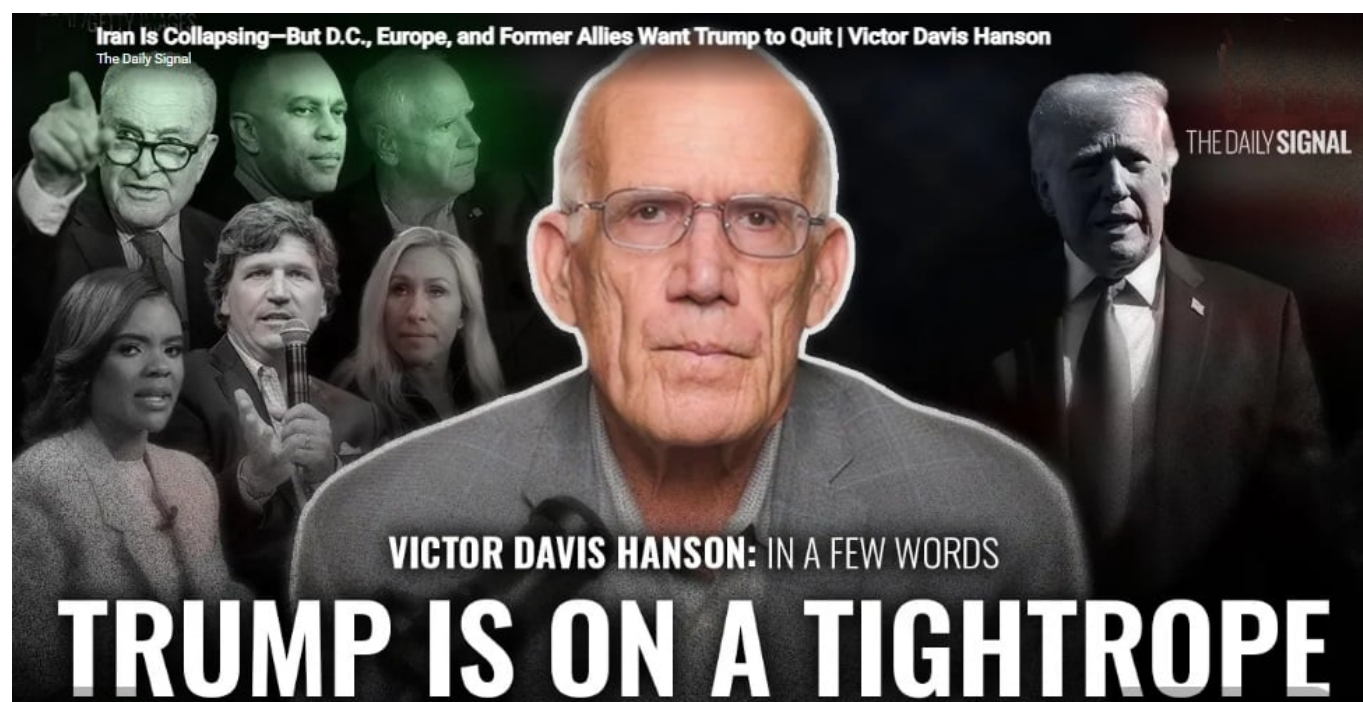


Winning the War, Fighting the Swamp: Trump's Toughest Battle Isn't Iran

By Victor Davis Hanson

We are now entering the 50th or 52nd day, somewhere in that period, of the ongoing war with Iran. We're in the [middle of negotiations](#). We have a blockade on Iranian shipping going in and out, Iranian-bound shipping going in or out of Iran, as well as the Iranians are claiming that they too are trying to stop shipping that is pro-Western or related to the United States.



We don't really know [who we are dealing with](#). We don't know whether it's the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps or the army or the elected—what's left of the elected government or the theocrats themselves. They're all vying for power. They're all arguing with each other, so it's a very complicated situation in Iran, even though they're prostrate. They don't have any military or economic capability left. And yet,

they remain defiant.

Now, why do they remain defiant when the next cycle of this war could [knock out their bridges](#), their electrical power, and destroy what's left of their military, and we could do it very easily? They believe that President Donald Trump is on a tightrope, that he has certain constraints, prohibitions that are self-imposed upon him, through political calculus or other outside criteria that will force him to stop his neutering of Iran. And it will allow them, at some point, to rearm?

What are those? Well, first of all, they are watching the midterm elections very carefully, and they're looking at the polls and they feel that the Democratic Party is a great ally, the leftists, especially in it, the hard left.

They look at Tim Walz, the former failed presidential nominee of the Democratic Party, he was in Spain this week at an international socialist conference. Spain, remember, was very anti-American, has refused American use of its NATO base and airspace. And what did he say?

He said that our war effort, now he's talking about our soldiers at war against Iran during periods of intense combat. He is saying that they were fascists. That the whole idea was fascist. And when Iran hears that, they think, well, if a former vice presidential nominee of the United States is siding with us, then maybe Trump will relent.

There's also edgy Republicans. They want to, of course, they have to be reelected, carry out the MAGA agenda. Some of them are looking at their internal polls and saying the price of gas is hurting us. We're not paying attention to the economy. We have under seven months before the midterms. At some point, Mr. President, you gotta pivot.

Then there's [the Democrats](#). They've threatened the War Powers Act, where at Day 50, and at 60 days, 60 to 90, they can cut off funds. Now they don't have the votes in the House to do

that or the Senate, but they feel there's enough renegade Republicans worried about their own seats that they might get some defections. Something to worry about.

By the way, Barack Obama didn't worry about it at all. He bombed Libya for seven months without even consulting Congress. He had a Democratic Congress and he thought that whatever he did would be rubber-stamped. And he was absolutely correct.

The Europeans, they're kind of like a carrion force. They look at this, they didn't do anything to help. They did a lot of things to hamper our efforts on Iran. But they feel that the heavy lifting is over and they might just, sort of, creep back with an armada, one or two ships per country, 20 or 30 countries.

And then they can say they opened the strait. Get back in the good graces of the United States and patrol this crucial conduit that they export into and import oil out of. So, they're trying to tell Trump, stop the kinetic action. Let us in. Please, please.

At home, he's got, in addition to the Republicans who are worried about their, and with good reason, their careers. He has got the fanatic Left. He's also got a kind of a fanatic Right.

This week, Tucker had a guest on and they were quoting the Book of Daniel from the Bible about the antichrist, and the argument, thinly veiled, was that Donald Trump and the Iranian war fit the prophecies and the narrative of Daniel, who was talking about a king, i.e., the antichrist, who would have success in the Middle East, but then, of course, fail and meet his fate. It was almost a wish as much as a prophecy.

[Marjorie Taylor Greene](#), once a fanatic Trump supporter, without power now, and she's out of Congress. But she's now peddling the conspiracy theory that Trump really,

really wasn't the target of a real assassin in Butler, Pennsylvania. That he may have helped stage the incident. That's really loony.

Of course, Candace Owens is now regretting her, not just regretting her vote for Trump, but arguing that he's a very pernicious, almost a satanic figure. This is really unusual that somebody who was fanatically pro-Trump, as these three were and were habitués at Mar-a-Lago, all of a sudden, would not just say, well, I agree with him with 80% of his agenda. But the 20% I can't go along with.

But they've turned, not just against him, but many of their positions and much of their rhetoric is not that much different than the hard Left today. We don't know where they're going to end up, but they're on a trajectory to join the Never Trumpers at The Bulwark, perhaps.

And then there's also worry about the weapons shortage. We had not invested heavily enough in quantity. We have good quality of weapons, the best in the world. But we don't have enough Tomahawk missiles. We don't have enough Patriot missiles. And we need to have our stocks replenished and have them replenished quickly.

And if this war were to go on another three or four weeks, we would not be able to achieve the level of competency that we had in the first four weeks, simply because we would be hoarding and worried about weapons that would be short.

Put this all together and explains a couple things that are otherwise inexplicable. Why, after Iran has been militarily destroyed, it has a restive population that at almost any minute that it feels they can survive, they will rebel. And economically it was already in a period of depression, and now it's losing all of its revenue and it's just about ready to implode.

Why, with all this, does Iran keep saying that it's winning,

and why do people put pressure on Donald Trump as if he's losing?

And the answer is, the war is not necessarily about just military affairs alone. It's politics. And Trump's enemies at home and abroad feel that if they can drag it out. And if Donald Trump, for a variety of reasons, can't turn the tactical victory to long-term strategic success, he will be vulnerable.

And all of his economic progress that he's made so far, which is pretty impressive, the idea that he ended illegal immigration, the ability to flip Venezuela from an arch enemy into a successful state without any losses. All of that will be endangered. And he will be neutered in the midterm elections.

And so, therefore, Donald Trump is winning on the battlefield, but he has to keep going somehow and nullify all of these centrifugal forces around him, that are hoping for his defeat.

And yet, in the end, only he can win the war. If he continues a little bit longer, a week or two, Iran will be bankrupt. And when it's bankrupt, it will not have enough food, not have enough fuel, not have enough key consumer commodities, and the people will be very restive.

But the question now that we're looking at, will the pressures that surround him in a 360-degree fashion force Trump to relent when he's inside of a spectacular and historic victory?

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