STUDY NOTES · BASIC CONCEPT

What are Trump's 6 major failures in the Iran war? Explained

International Relations

26 Apr 2009

Iran–US War: “Strategic failure on all fronts” – Brahma Chellaney explains Trump’s 6 major failures (Detailed)

1. Failure of Regime Change Strategy

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According to Brahma Chellaney, the primary objective of the US under Donald Trump was to trigger a regime change in Iran, but this goal completely failed. Instead of weakening the Iranian leadership, the war strengthened it. External military pressure created a surge of nationalism within Iran, uniting the population behind the regime. This increased the government’s legitimacy and reduced internal dissent. In short, the war produced the opposite of what the US intended.

2. Loss of Strategic Control over Strait of Hormuz

The Strait of Hormuz is one of the world’s most critical oil transit routes. The US aimed to secure and dominate this passage, but post-conflict dynamics shifted in Iran’s favor. Iran leveraged its geographic and military position to increase its influence over the strait, introducing concepts like “regulated passage.” This demonstrated Iran’s ability to disrupt global oil flows at will, thereby enhancing its strategic leverage.

3. Severe Impact on Global Economy

The war triggered widespread economic consequences beyond the region. Oil prices surged sharply, supply chains were disrupted, and global energy markets became volatile. Chellaney highlights that this conflict ranks

among the most economically damaging in recent decades. Developing nations were hit the hardest due to rising fuel costs and inflationary pressures, worsening existing economic vulnerabilities.

4. Diplomatic Isolation of the United States

The conflict exposed cracks in US alliances. Several key partners did not fully support the military action, and some openly criticized it. This indicated that the US acted without broad international consensus. Even within alliances like NATO, differences emerged, weakening collective unity and raising questions about America's global leadership and decision-making approach.

5. Damage to US Global Credibility

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Chellaney argues that the war significantly undermined the credibility of the United States. Repeated military interventions without clear, successful outcomes reduce trust among global partners. Many countries began reassessing their strategic alignment with the US and exploring alternatives, including closer ties with other major powers like China. This shift reflects a gradual erosion of US influence in global geopolitics.

6. Negative Domestic Political Impact

Domestically, the war did not yield the political gains the Trump administration may have expected. Instead, it led to increased criticism over the costs of war, potential casualties, and long-term uncertainty. Public opinion became more divided, intensifying political polarization. As elections approached, this conflict risked weakening Trump's political standing rather than strengthening it.

Conclusion

Brahma Chellaney's analysis suggests that the Iran–US war turned out to be a multi-dimensional strategic failure for the United States. Key objectives were not achieved, Iran emerged stronger, global economic stability was

disrupted, and the US suffered diplomatic and political setbacks.

Ultimately, the conflict highlights a critical lesson: military power alone cannot resolve complex geopolitical challenges—sustainable outcomes require diplomacy, strategic balance, and global consensus.

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