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Important words used in editorial

Durable : lasting, permanent, sustainable, enduring, long-term.

Substantive : Meaningful, significant, serious, real, considerable

Enforce : Implement, apply, execute, impose, carry out

Regime : System or method of government, or a particular set of rules or practices.

Dismantle : **Break down, take apart, demolish, scrap, destroy.**

Armada : **Fleet, navy, squadron, flotilla, task force.**

Submission : **Surrender, capitulation, compliance**

Intransigent : **Stubborn, uncompromising, unyielding, rigid, inflexible.**

Mitigate
alleviate

Stalemate : **Deadlock, impasse, standoff, draw, standstill**

Strike : **Attack, hit, assault, bombard, raid.**

Blockade : **Siege, barrier, blockade, obstruction, encirclement.**

Fragile : **Delicate, weak, brittle, frail, vulnerable.**

Flimsy

Intransigent : **Stubborn, uncompromising, unyielding, rigid, inflexible.**

Defiant : **Rebellious, resistant, insubordinate, challenging, uncooperative.**

Retaliate : **Hit back, counterattack, revenge, reciprocate, avenge.**

Escalation : **Increase, intensification, growth, rise, surge.**

Playbook : **Strategy, plan, scheme, method, approach.**

Underscore : **Highlight, emphasize, underline, stress, accent.**

Dilemma : **Predicament, quandary, plight, difficulty, puzzle.**

Emboldened : **Encouraged, heartened, strengthened, empowered, confident.**

Ceasefire : **temporary agreement to stop fighting between opposing sides, truce** VVVVIP

Important idioms and phrases used in the editorial

Revert to : To return to or go back to

Make concessions on : To yield or give in on specific points during negotiations.

In good faith : With honest intentions and sincerity, without any intention to deceive

Back off : Retreat, withdraw, pull back, yield, recede.

Strategic stalemate: On the U.S.-Iran conflict, The U.S. should lift the blockade before asking Iran to open the Strait of Hormuz. President Donald Trump's decision to back off from striking Iran, just hours after threatening to seize the country's Kharg Island, underscores the dilemma he faces in dealing with Tehran.

Mr. Trump, who launched the conflict with his ally Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel on February 28, now wants to end it through talks. But Iran, which survived 40 days of U.S.-Israeli bombing and now controls the Strait of Hormuz, appears unwilling to hand him a diplomatic victory. Caught between an uncontrollable Israel, whose bombing of Lebanon threatens the fragile U.S.-Iran ceasefire, and an emboldened Iran that has become increasingly defiant and intransigent, Mr. Trump reverted to his familiar playbook of using military pressure to alter Tehran's negotiating position. On Wednesday he ordered strikes on Iran after confirming that a U.S. Apache helicopter had been shot down over the Strait of Hormuz.

Iran retaliated by striking U.S. bases in Kuwait, Bahrain and Jordan. After two nights of tit-for-tat strikes, Mr. Trump backed off on Thursday, claiming progress in talks. Over the past two months, he has claimed dozens of times that a deal with Iran was within reach. In the war's escalation cycle, Mr. Trump takes one step forward, two steps back.

When Mr. Trump despatched his "armada" to Iran's shores in February, he wanted to force Tehran into submission through military pressure. The U.S. and Israel had an ambitious list of demands, including dismantling Iran's nuclear programme, degrading its missile capabilities and ending its support for non-state militias. When the U.S. and Israel launched the war, they wanted regime change in Tehran. More than three months later, the war, which failed to achieve any of its declared objectives, has hardened Iran's positions.

If Iran was willing to make concessions on its nuclear programme on February 27, it now insists that any discussion on the nuclear file can take place only after the U.S.-Israeli hostilities cease and the blockade is lifted. The war has fundamentally altered the strategic reality of the region. Yes, Iran has absorbed significant military and economic costs, but it has emerged strategically stronger by taking control of the Hormuz Strait and effectively trapping the U.S. in a costly stalemate. Rather than chasing a delusional Iranian surrender, Washington should adopt a phased, realistic diplomatic approach.

The priority should be to enforce and extend the ceasefire in good faith and lift the blockade in exchange for Iran reopening the Strait of Hormuz. Once stability is restored, both sides can return to substantive talks on Iran's nuclear programme and work towards a durable end to the conflict.

1. What is the central argument of the passage?

- (1) The U.S. ~~should intensify military~~ operations against Iran.
- (2) Iran ~~should immediately~~ surrender its nuclear programme.
- ~~(3) A phased diplomatic approach, beginning with lifting the blockade and reopening the Strait of Hormuz, is the most practical solution.~~
- (4) ~~Israel should take~~ complete control of negotiations with Iran.
- (5) ~~The conflict can only be resolved through regime change~~ in Iran.

2. According to the passage, why does the author describe the situation as a "strategic stalemate"?

(1) Neither side has suffered any losses.

(2) The U.S. has achieved all its objectives while Iran remains defiant.

(3) Both sides have gained decisive military superiority.

(4) Despite significant costs, neither side has achieved its principal objectives, leaving the conflict unresolved.

(5) Israel has withdrawn completely from the conflict.

3. Which of the following can be inferred from the passage regarding Iran's position after the conflict?

- (1) ~~Iran is more willing than before to accept all U.S. demands.~~
- ☒ (2) Iran's stance has become more rigid and conditional.
- (3) ~~Iran has abandoned its nuclear programme.~~
- (4) ~~Iran has lost control over the Strait of Hormuz.~~
- (5) ~~Iran no longer seeks negotiations with the U.S~~

4. What does the phrase "**emboldened Iran**" most nearly mean in the context of the passage?

- (1) ~~An economically weakened Iran~~
- (2) ~~An isolated Iran~~
- ☒ (3) A more confident and assertive Iran
- (4) ~~A politically divided Iran~~
- (5) ~~A diplomatically dependent Iran~~

5. Which of the following best explains the author's criticism of U.S. policy?

- (1) The U.S. relied excessively on diplomacy from the beginning.
- (2) ~~The U.S. failed to support Israel adequately.~~
- (3) The U.S. underestimated Iran's military strength alone.
- ☒ (4) The U.S. pursued unrealistic objectives through military pressure, which ultimately hardened Iran's position.
- (5) ~~The U.S. refused to engage in any negotiations with Iran.~~

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