



US President Donald Trump (L) and Vice President JD Vance chat during an event at the Oval Office of the White House to sign an executive order creating an anti-fraud task force headed by Vance.
 ● JONATHAN ERNST/REUTERS

Why Trump decided to extend Iran cease-fire indefinitely

INTERVIEW

Is the foreign policy of the United States toward Iran reflecting confusion, or are we confronting an entirely personalized and novel approach? From the initial slogans about changing Iran's established political regime and dismantling its nuclear program, to the peculiar strategy of a unilateral cease-fire prolongation, the behavior of the White House has engendered an incalculable multitude of questions. Whereas, according to the admission of numerous international relations experts, the United States and the Zionist regime failed to achieve any of their objectives in the 40-day war with Iran, the American president upon the expiration of the two-week cease-fire deadline with Iran, extended said cease-fire indefinitely. Has the policy of Donald Trump's administration, from its inception to the present day, been one of military and economic tension escalation with Iran, aiming for regime change, while simultaneously utilizing the diplomatic table for buying time? To what extent is the cessation of hostilities and the establishment of durable peace between Iran and the United States possible? What is Washington's objective behind the sudden announcement of the cease-fire extension? These questions were put to Rahman Ghahremanpour, a senior foreign policy expert and international relations analyst, in an interview, excerpts of which are translated below:



Rahman Ghahremanpour

Numerous experts have talked to international media about the chaos and confusion visible in United States foreign policy vis-à-vis Iran. For this claim, examples can be given as well, including the fact that Washington, over the last 18 months, has experienced negotiation, warfare, and now a cease-fire, all cyclically with Iran. Some believe that past negotiations were a ruse, and that the Trump administration's objective from the outset was a military assault upon Iran. Others consider the objective to be the weakening of Tehran and its coercion into conceding greater advantages at the negotiating table. What is your analysis of the White House's behavior toward Tehran?

GHAHREMANPOUR: A differentiation must be instituted between political rivalries and the analysis of American foreign policy. A portion of those who believe that American policy is confused, in actuality, propound this claim within the framework of intra-American partisan rivalries; for example, the Democrats consistently perceive Republican foreign policy as devoid of coherence, and conversely, the Republicans likewise assert to the Democrats that you lack a coherent foreign policy. The truth is that, for a multitude of American foreign policy behaviors, and especially those of Trump, we currently lack adequate explanatory concepts. For instance, what Trump executed in Venezuela — was that a confusion? A success in foreign policy? A classical regime change, or a regime change of a novel type? In other words, if we transcend the level of political rhetoric and attend to the sociologically relevant aspects and internal roots

of this novel team without considering what Trump and his team are executing as merely a transitory incident, we must acknowledge that Donald Trump's contribution to foreign policy and the influence of his attitudes and behaviors have become more pronounced. On the other hand, the actions that Trump is undertaking in relation to the Middle East, Europe, China, and other nations, will not be comprehensible within the structure of American foreign policy anytime soon.

To what extent do you believe that regime change in Iran was a shared objective of Israel and the United States? Did the White House, in truth, with that degree of intelligence and security apparatus, surmise that an attack upon Iran and the targeting of its political and military leaders would signify the termination of the established political order?

If we examine the totality of American foreign policy and Trump's behavior during his presidency, it appears that, with reasonable certainty, one can claim that the project of nation-state building and classical-style regime change (i.e., analogous to what transpired in Iraq in 2003 and in Afghanistan in 2001) was fundamentally not on Trump's agenda. Although, according to the exigencies of situations and events, he may have endeavored to test his luck; for example, certain individuals asserted that this could be accomplished, and, especially during the recent war, he made statements indicating that he was contemplating this matter. However, in terms of practical policymaking, it appears that Trump and his team fundamentally do not believe in the project of na-



When we juxtapose Trump's statements with those of his like-minded associates in this new team, we comprehend that their understanding of regime change is not that which transpired, for instance, in Iraq in 2003. The majority of them seek a type of regime change that is executed with minimal expenditure, does not disintegrate military institutions, and does not plunge the country into chaos. Their ideal model, in simple terms, is the very model that transpired in Venezuela; namely, the country does not descend into disorder, and merely the apex of the system is substituted.

tion-state building, regime change, and the obliteration of existing institutions. Therefore, when we juxtapose Trump's statements with those of his like-minded associates in this new team, we comprehend that their understanding of regime change is not that which transpired, for instance, in Iraq in 2003. The majority of them seek a type of regime change that is executed with minimal expenditure, does not disintegrate military institutions, and does not plunge the country into chaos. Their ideal model, in simple terms, is the very model that transpired in Venezuela; namely, the country does not descend into disorder, and merely the apex of the system is substituted. Trump awaits the rectification or transformation of the system from above, by individuals who themselves played a role in, and established, that system. In contrast, however, it appears that Israel's policy is precisely classical regime change in Iran because, from the perspective of Israeli officials, that which Trump defines as regime

change does not eliminate the Islamic Republic's threat against Israel.

The Islamic Republic of Iran emphasizes the termination of the war, not a temporary cease-fire. To what extent do you believe that, fundamentally, given the presence of a third-party actor named Israel upon this scene, the attainment of a cessation of hostilities between Iran and America, and the establishment of durable peace, are achievable?

It appears that the realization of a cessation of hostilities between Iran and America, and the establishment of durable peace, in the short term (i.e., within the forthcoming three to four months) are not attainable. This matter is attributable not only to Israel's acts of sabotage but also to the internal situation within Iran, the changes in domestic policy, and the transformations of the power structure. Likewise, both in Trump's statements and in those of his team, one can clearly observe that they believe the transformations they are pursuing will not materialize with this rapid-

ity nor anytime soon. Therefore, when a "comprehensive agreement" is discussed, its signification is that both parties have arrived at the conclusion that, in the short term and with this rapidity, a cessation of hostilities is impossible; rather, a series of actions must be undertaken by both parties to prepare the groundwork for this endeavor in the medium term.

What do you believe was Donald Trump's impetus for the unilateral cease-fire extension, and what signification does this situation hold for Iran and the ongoing war?

The creation of suspension or the preclusion of decision-making constitutes one of the methods of power exercise, recognized in political science as the "second face of power"; namely, the powerful party prevents the party it perceives as weaker from being able to decide, and, in effect, holds it in a state of suspension and irresolution.

It appears that Trump, through the unilateral cease-fire extension, also seeks to exercise power over Iran, so

as to create this irresolution in Iran's political and even economic decision-making. On the other hand, this cease-fire extension could, in actuality, signify a potential preparedness for the infliction of a military blow, under circumstances and at a time that America deems advantageous to itself. That is, with the cease-fire extension, if Iran maintains a state of high alert, naturally, over time, it cannot sustain that elevated state of readiness and experiences a kind of attrition; whereas, for instance, American forces are not in a state of high alert, and thus this matter itself, likewise, is a method of pressure application upon Iran. Now, the cease-fire extension and the creation of a state of suspension, irresolution, and indecision, can both lead to an augmentation of internal political and economic pressures upon Iran's political system, and can, on the external and military level, lead to an augmentation of the probability of future military engagement.

The full interview first appeared in Persian on IRNA.



US Navy sailors heave on a line during a fueling at sea on the flight deck of Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln (CVN 72) as part of Operation Epic Fury, on March 10, 2026.
 ● US NAVY