

## The attack on Iran -- or at least its timing -- is what historians call "overdetermined" (by Lyman Baker, 8 March 2026)

That is, it has more than a single cause, at least some of which were plausibly sufficient in themselves.

At the same time, it makes sense to consider that, for events of this magnitude, it's usually the case that "several logs are rolling all at once": more than one group's interest is nudging the deciding agent to take the plunge.

(Here, that deciding agent is normally the White House triumvirate of Trump-handlers, Stephen Miller, Russell Vought and JD Vance, corresponding respectively to the three pillars of the MAGA coalition [white supremacists, right-wing religious groups {especially Christian Dominionists}, and multi-billionaires]).

**One** force at work makes it reasonable for Jeff Tiedrich to dub the attack "Operation Epstein Distraction" -- the more so in view of the fact that a few days before the attack CBS reported that the DEA under the Obama Administration had opened an investigation into Epstein for running a cross-border drug and prostitution operation, an investigation, it turns out was dismantled during the first Trump Administration. In fact, the very day before the Iran attack, Senator Wyden (D-OR) made loud news announcing efforts to force the DEA to release its files bearing on that investigation and its closure. (See [here](#).)

But that immediate context is hardly the only, and surely not the deepest and historically longest-lasting factor behind the attack.

**(2)** Do set aside a few minutes to watch DoubleDown News's clip-rich summary of the history behind elite support in the U.S. and Israel of the attack on Iran under the banner of regime change" and "destruction of nuclear and missile technology." The evidence collected here make's clear ***there's a clear precedent – the invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan under the George W. Bush Administration*** -- one with dire results for the U.S., to say nothing of the populations of the country under attac).

**(3)** There's still more. We can't leave out of account the role of military-weapons producers in the U.S., and their corporate directors. This powerful, deeply engrained institutional factor has been at work through the cold war and, after the fall of the Soviet Union in 1989, when it went searching for new rationalization for its immense income from U.S. taxpayers.

Try a web search on the string ***What are the chief defense contractors and arms manufacturers in the USA?***

Keep in mind that the profits of these corporations depend on *continuing* sales of weapons; that increasing stockpiles reduce demand for new weapons; that these

suppliers thus have an ongoing interest in decreasing stockpiles of previously sold weapons.

As for *nuclear* weapons, when outdated these must be either updated or dismantled (making room for replacements). For obvious reasons, these cannot be swept away by being *used*.

With our stockpiles of **non**-nuclear weapons, the case is different, but dangerous in its own way.

Simply dismantling these -- retiring them to a missile and warhead junkyard -- would bring an angry reaction from Congress, which would be faced with questions from constituents about where the hell their taxes have been going. **The preferred option is to use them** -- such **inventory reduction** requires a continual series of military conflicts around the world, including large and long ones.

Now ask yourself whether these corporations have a significant impact on politics and society in the U.S.

For example, judging from their take (government funding), do you think this **industrial part of [what Eisenhower called the military-industrial complex](#)** might have over the decades exercised considerable financial influence over your and your parents' Congressional representatives?

[Recalling our point, above, about "log rolling," it's worth [reflecting on how religion is used to carry the military industrial complex's inventory reduction.](#)]

You might find it reasonable to conclude that this element of the U.S. political landscape has as much need of right-wing elements of Israeli society as the latter have of the military allocation of wealth within the U.S., considering the role these powerful conglomerates have in convincing American taxpayers that Iran poses an "existential threat" to the U.S. and other countries.

(4) I stressed above that the standing agents of decision in the Trump Administration are collectively three White House "aides -- nominal assistants who are in fact calling the shots (writing the scripts Trump is handed to perform, and hoping he won't veer off into a rant on one of his familiar obsessions.

→ But that does not mean that Trump himself never intervenes on behalf of one or another of his standing inclinations (for example, the lure of [lucrative economic opportunities in Gaza held out to him and his son-in-law by Netanyahu](#)).

That this was a factor in the timing if Trump's order is suggested by this remarkable piece of news on the morning immediately following the attack:

**Oman's Foreign Minister Said US-Iran Deal Was 'Within Our Reach.' Then Trump Started Bombing** | “The Omani FM decided to go public,” suggested one observer, “so that the American people knew that peace was within reach when Trump instead opted for war.” | By Jake Johnson (Common Dreams, 28 Feb 2026).

(a) First of all: If this was so, the attack was not urgent from the standpoint of U.S. interests.

And indeed, as Heather Cox Richardson notes, *Trump made little effort to present his case for military strikes against Iran to the American people. In his letter to Congress notifying them of his attack, Trump said he had acted under the 1973 War Powers Act, which permits a president to attack another country if there is an urgent threat. But the letter itself doesn't identify any such urgent threat. It simply said Iran is one of the world's largest sponsors of state terrorism and that it "continues to seek the means to possess and employ nuclear weapons."*

What then could have caused such a sudden cancellation of imminent prospects for diplomatic success in favor of war? What influential figure would have an intense interest in sabotaging an actual agreement? The most prominent candidate is Israeli PM Netanyahu, for whom a concluded agreement would frustrate *his* determination to attack Iran. An emphatic encouragement from him would mean he successfully persuaded President Trump to undertake a war on behalf of Israel.

(Note that, however intensely plausible, this line of analysis -- in contrast to others outlined so far -- remains speculative, pending release of Administration communication in the run-up to the order to attack. And we can't expect such a release any time soon.)

(b) **It also suggests that the Trump Administration could all along have been negotiating in bad faith.**

This possibility will not go unnoticed by our allies and our counterparts in future negotiations.

(c) There is an even worse -- but plausible -- hypothesis that urgently needs clarification.

The case for this is made by Thom Hartmann in **Jared Kushner has some explaining to do** (AlterNet | March 08, 2026 | 07:19 AM ET). This is a re-posting of **Did Jared Kushner Negotiate Peace — or Set a Trap for Iran's Leadership?** | As Iran's leaders gathered to debate a U.S.-brokered nuclear deal, American and Israeli intelligence already knew their location. Was this diplomacy, or something darker" (The Hartmann Report | Thu, Mar 5, 2026, 9:40 AM EST).

Hartmann's analysis is worth incorporating here in its entirety:

*Jared Kushner grew up sleeping in Benjamin Netanyahu's bed.*

*That isn't a metaphor or hyperbole. Netanyahu, during his visits to New York over the decades, was close enough to the Kushner family that, as *The New York Times* reported, [he slept in Jared's childhood bedroom](#). Jared Kushner didn't grow up watching Netanyahu on the news the way the rest of us did. He grew up knowing the man as something close to a family institution.*

*And that man, who has said publicly that he has "yearned" to destroy Iran's military and political leadership "for 40 years," is the same man whose government may have been coordinating directly with Jared Kushner in the days before the most consequential American military action since the invasion of Iraq or the Vietnam War.*

***We need to ask the question that official Washington is too timid, too compromised, or too captured by the moment's war fever to ask: "Was Jared Kushner sitting across from Iranian negotiators in good faith? Or was he trying to get the Iranian leadership to meet together so Netanyahu could kill them all in one single decapitating strike?"***

*Here's what we know. The third round of nuclear talks between the United States and Iran wrapped up in Geneva on February 26th and 27th. The Omani foreign minister, who'd been mediating the talks for months, [told CBS News](#) on the eve of the bombing that a deal was "within our reach" and that Iran had fully given in to American demands and agreed it would never produce nuclear material for a bomb, or an ICBM capable of striking the United States.*

*A fourth round had already been scheduled for Vienna the following week to work through the technical details following final discussions in Tehran. The Iranian foreign minister told reporters his team was ready to stay and keep talking for as long as it took.*

*And then, less than 48 hours after those talks in Switzerland concluded, the bombs began to fall.*

***On the morning of February 28th, Iran's Supreme National Security Council was gathered together in their offices for meetings. That body, the one that manages Iran's nuclear dossier and makes the regime's most consequential decisions, is exactly where you would expect the Iranian leadership to be sitting after a round of talks with America that their own foreign minister was calling "historic."***

*They were almost certainly deliberating whether to accept or reject Jared's American proposal. And [according to the Wall Street Journal](#), American and Israeli intelligence had verified that senior Iranian leaders would be gathered at three locations that*

could be struck simultaneously. How they knew that is, as the Journal carefully noted, still unknown.

***In other words, Iran's entire decision-making apparatus was assembled in one place most likely because they were in the middle of an active negotiation with Jared Kushner. The talks had created a predictable, intelligenceable window.***

Diplomats who were part of the earlier rounds of talks now tell reporters that the Iranian side has come to believe they'd been misled, and that Tehran now views the Witkoff-Kushner negotiations as, in their words, "a ruse designed to keep Iran from expecting and preparing for the surprise strikes."

***That's not the assessment of Iranian state media spinning a narrative after a military defeat; it's the conclusion of people who were in the room, speaking to American journalists, on the record.***

Now layer on top of that what we know about who Witkoff was meeting with in the days before they sat down with the Iranians. He flew to Israel and was briefed directly by Netanyahu and senior Israeli defense officials and then, with Kushner, flew to Oman and Geneva and sat across the table from the Iranian negotiators.

The man who briefed Kushner's partner (Witkoff) before those talks — Netanyahu — is the same man who said on the night the bombs fell that "this coalition of forces allows us to do what I have yearned to do for 40 years." He wasn't even remotely subdued or reluctant about the possibility of the Middle East going up in flames, perhaps even igniting World War III. He was, instead, triumphant that he finally got an American president to do something he'd been unsuccessfully pushing for decades.

***We also know that the Trump regime's explanations for why the attacks happened when they did have collapsed into open contradiction. Secretary of State Rubio initially told reporters the US struck because Israel was going to attack anyway and Iran would have retaliated against American forces. Trump then went on television and flipped the scenario upside-down, saying he might've "forced Israel's hand."***

The two most senior officials in the administration told two diametrically opposite stories within 48 hours of each other, and neither story explains why the diplomacy that the Omani mediator called substantively successful — that essentially got America everything we said we wanted — was abandoned without the final round.

***None of this proves that Kushner was running a deliberate double-cross operation designed to concentrate Iranian leadership in a killable location. What it does prove, though, is that the question is entirely legitimate and demands an answer under oath.***

*This is not the first time in American history that such a question has had to be asked, or that it damaged America's reputation on the world stage. In October of 1972, Henry Kissinger stood before the cameras and told the world that "peace is at hand" in Vietnam. The Paris negotiations, he assured everyone, were on the verge of ending the war.*

→ The Kissinger abuse of negotiations is not the worst in our country's history.

In connection with Hartmann's hypothesis we should recall **the Bloody Monday Raid that took place in Mogadishu, Somalia on 12 July, 1993.**

This episode was featured in the book version of ***Blackhawk Down*** (at least the version when it first came out).

The movie version omits this episode because the producers needed the cooperation of the U.S. military to dramatize the military operations featured in the film. (The author of the book, who received a screen-writing credit, complied with the DOD's insistence)

As a result, the fury of the local population at the U.S. presence in Mogadishu comes across as somehow stemming from some (intrinsically hostile nature of Somalians, who ungratefully refused to recognize the good intentions of the UN/US intervention in Somalia.

(That might in turn bring to mind the suicide bombing of the Marine compound in Lebanon in 1983, which Caspar Weinberger denounced as "a dastardly cowardly act." And recall how Reagan immediately -- and successfully -- asserted news-narrative control by invading Grenada.)

The costs to Americans in terms of dead and wounded in the ensuing Battle of Mogadishu is completely divorced (by outright erasure) from the U.S.'s attempt to decapitate Somali leadership gathered in a hotel to discuss the peace offer extended to it (apparently in outrageous bad faith) by the (as I [LB] recall) the then-U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan.

These are the incidents we should be mindful of as we digest what the Oman Foreign Minister has told us about the status of the negotiations immediately before the initial U.S.-Israeli attack on Iran

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(\*) There is an additional piece of history essential to keep in mind in evaluating Netanyahu's and the Trump Administration's claims that Iran's nuclear potential represents an "existential threat" to the United States.

Here is an excerpt from the [Wikipedia article](#) on the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, the agreement negotiated by the Obama Administration and various allies. The emphases are mine in light of the topic under discussion in this memo:

*Under the JCPOA, Iran agreed to constrain its nuclear program by limiting fuel cycle activities that could lead to the production of weapons-grade uranium or plutonium. The JCPOA restricted the number and type of centrifuges in operation, the level of uranium enrichment, and the size of Iran's enriched uranium stockpile. Key facilities at Fordow, Natanz and Arak were repurposed for civilian uses such as medical and industrial research. **Iran agreed to accept more intrusive IAEA monitoring measures of its fuel-cycle related activities.** In exchange for complying with these restrictions, Iran received relief from nuclear-related sanctions imposed by the United Nations, the EU, and the United States, but many U.S. sanctions unrelated to the nuclear issue—targeting Iran's missile program, support for militant groups, and human rights record—remained in place, limiting the economic effect of sanctions relief. The agreement also set a timetable to lift the UN arms embargo, contingent on Iran's continued compliance with civilian nuclear commitments.*

*The agreement took effect on 20 January 2016.<sup>[10]</sup> It was criticized and **opposed by Israel, Saudi Arabia, Iranian principlists, and some in the United States.**<sup>[11][12]</sup>*

*The United States withdrew from the pact in **2018**, imposing sanctions under its maximum pressure campaign. In a symbolic response, members of Iran's Islamic Consultative Assembly burned the text of JCPOA in Iran's Islamic Consultative Assembly.<sup>[13][14][15]</sup>*

*The sanctions applied to all countries and companies doing business with Iran and cut it off from the international financial system, rendering the nuclear deal's economic provisions null.<sup>[16]</sup> On 18 October 2025, in the aftermath of the June 2025 Iran–Israel war, Iran officially announced the termination of the agreement after 10 years.<sup>[4]</sup>*

→ For an ironic reminder of this history, see [here](#).