

What next for Trump?

Iran's Revolutionary Guards on Sunday pledged that Tehran's enemies would be trapped in a "deadly vortex" if they were to make a wrong move in the strait.

AFP | Washington, United States

The failure of US-Iran peace talks has left President Donald

Trump with several unpalatable options, as analysts say his order to blockade the strategic Strait of Hormuz could further complicate his next move.

Any hopes that US Vice President JD Vance would emerge from the marathon day of negotiations with top Iranian officials with a deal to end a war that has rippled across the Middle East were dashed when he left Pakistan empty-handed.

Protracted talks would undermine

Trump's insistence that Iran has "no cards" left to play, while ramping up military action would expose US forces to heightened risk and could alienate voters -- already angry with surging gas prices -- ahead of midterm elections.

And the blockade of the strait through

which a fifth of the world's oil moves would do little to ease global economic jitters.

For Brian Katulis, a senior fellow at the Middle East Institute, Trump's propensity to talk off the cuff and make threats -- what he called the president's "carnival barker" style -- leaves his close aides scrambling to chart a path forward.

"He may be simply buying more time to move in more military assets or because he doesn't know what else to do. I wouldn't call it a strategy; it is a military-centric approach without strategy," Katulis told AFP.

Shibley Telhami, a professor of peace and development at the University of Maryland and

a fellow at the Brookings Institution think tank, says the threat of a blockade was "bewildering and seems self-defeating."

Iran already has no trust in Trump," Telhami told AFP.

More than 80 percent of respondents said the United States should seek to reopen the strait and improve global access to oil, which would bring gas prices down, and make sure that the Iranian people are "free." But fewer than 10 percent said they believed those goals had been achieved.

"Hard to understate what this makes of what's left of America's global credibility."

'Untrustworthy and duplicitous'

Iran's Revolutionary Guards on Sunday pledged that Tehran's enemies would be trapped in a "deadly vortex" if they were to make a wrong move in the strait.

Danny Citrinowicz, a fellow at Israel's Institute for National

Security Studies, said a naval blockade would indeed expose US forces to increased risk.

"There is little reason to believe that a blockade would force Iranian capitulation. If anything, Iran's demonstrated resilience thus far suggests the opposite," Citrinowicz wrote on X.

"Iran's geographic scale and military capabilities mean that sustaining such an operation would demand substantial and prolonged allocation of American resources."

And such a prolonged military engagement may not sit well with Americans who say they are worried and stressed about the conflict, which began in late February.

A CBS News poll published Sunday revealed that worry, stress and anger far outweigh safety and confidence, when those polled were asked how they feel about the war.

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"I don't see how, 40-plus days into this war, that we are safer, that our allies are safer. I'm not even sure Israel is safer," Democratic US Senator Mark Warner said Sunday on CNN's "State of the Union" talk show.

"I don't understand how blockading the strait is going to somehow push the Iranians into opening it. I don't get the connection there."

So if the blockade is not an answer, what about more

negotiations?

Democratic Senator Tim Kaine suggested that would not be an easy path, given that Trump removed the US from a 2015 accord reached by Tehran and world powers on restricting its nuclear program in exchange for sanctions relief.

"This is not going to be an easy negotiation because the last negotiation that led to a control of Iran's nuclear program, the US made the decision to tear it up and walk away from the deal," Kaine told CNN.

Katulis echoed that idea.

"Iranian officials are also untrustworthy and duplicitous, but the Trump administration is providing the mirror image of that," he said.

"If I were an Iranian official leaving Islamabad, I would wonder if I am back on the Israeli kill list."



The current tensions between United States and Iran have repeatedly threatened the Strait of Hormuz—a narrow waterway through which around one-fifth of the world's oil supply passes, making it one of the most strategically critical chokepoints in the global economy.

World urges more negotiation

AFP | Paris, France

World figures urged the United States and Iran to keep negotiating after marathon Washington-Tehran talks in Islamabad ended yesterday without a deal to end the war in the Middle East.

Pakistan urges ceasefire

"It is imperative that the parties continue to uphold their commitment to cease fire," said Pakistan's foreign minister Ishaq Dar, whose government hosted the talks and acted as a mediator.

"Pakistan has been and will continue to play its role to facilitate engagement and dialogue between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the United States of America in the days to come," he said in a brief statement broadcast by state media.

EU urges diplomacy

Diplomacy is "essential" to resolve the war in the Middle East, a European Union spokesman said.

Noting failed US-Iranian talks hosted by Pakistan, EU foreign affairs spokesman Anouar El



The motorcade of US Vice President JD Vance is seen after his arrival at the Serena Hotel in Islamabad

Anouni said "we salute Pakistan for its mediation efforts" and added Brussels would contribute to further efforts to reach

settlement in coordination with its partners

Putin offers mediation

Russian President Vladimir Putin told his Iranian counterpart Masoud Pezesh-

kian that he was ready to help mediate efforts to achieve peace in the Middle East, the Kremlin said.

"Vladimir Putin emphasised his readiness to further facilitate the search for a political and dip-

Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif (R) greets US President Donald Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner during their meeting amid the US-Iran peace talks in Islamabad



lomatic settlement to the conflict, and to mediate efforts to achieve a just and lasting peace in the Middle East," the Kremlin said in its readout of the call.

UK disappointed

"It's obviously disappointing that we haven't yet seen a breakthrough in negotiations and an end to this war in Iran that is a sustainable one," UK health minister Wes Streeting told Sky News.

"As ever in diplomacy, you're failing, until you succeed. So while these talks may not have ended in success, (it) doesn't mean there isn't merit in continuing to try," he added.

Australia urges more talks

"The priority now must be to continue the ceasefire and return to negotiations," Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong said in a statement, adding it was "disappointing that the Islamabad talks between the United States and Iran have ended without agreement".