Vietnam and Trump's art of the debacle

By Frank , 23 June 2026

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This defeat of U.S. imperial power is on par with the shame of the Vietnam War

With images that underscore the Western atrocities committed in Vietnam. Their suffering was indescribable.

When Trump launched his war against Iran on February 28, his maximalist demands included regime change, total surrender, no nuclear program, and no enriched uranium. None of that has been achieved. Iran has emerged stronger, the U.S. looks weaker, its military assets in the region battered, and Tehran is calling the shots on what a final deal will look like, based on its unbowed terms.

Nearly four months on, the American president is hailing a peace deal with the Islamic Republic, but one where Tehran is writing the terms, not Washington. It’s a debacle for Trump, exposing the limits of U.S. global power like never before. Even the Western media is commenting on how Trump has come out as the loser.



Photo courtesy of Nguyen Thai / Góc nhìn Annam nguyenthai.sondn82@gmail.com

By Frank Dumon

Historians might note this epic failure as another inflexion point in the decline of the U.S. global empire.

> As for the framework agreement announced last weekend, admittedly, anything that this president puts his name to has to be taken with a pinch of salt. This week at the G7 summit in France, Trump was threatening in The Times of Israel a return to bombing and all hell raining down on Iran if it didn't comply with his supposed demands.
>
> Who knows what the Israeli regime will do, too. Netanyahu is scorned for his association with Trump's sell-out to Iran. The Israelis are continuing to bomb Lebanon in violation of the U.S.-Iran Memorandum of Understanding that will be formally signed in Geneva on Friday. Tehran has warned that Trump must rein in the Israelis to abide by a ceasefire covering Lebanon, or else all bets are off. Will the Israelis bomb the incipient peace deal into oblivion to spare Netanyahu from going to jail over long-time corruption charges?

Or will the Mossad blackmail Trump with files from the Epstein pedophile scandal to get back to bombing?



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The peace negotiations that the Trump administration and Iran will engage in following the MoU signing are going to be fraught and long-drawn-out, liable to be crashed from several angles. **But at least, at this stage in the conflict, it is evident that Iran is the winner and Trump a monumental loser.**

> Ironically, the initial deal was agreed on June 15, the same day that Trump hosted a cage fight spectacle on the White House lawn to celebrate his 80th birthday. If Trump were in a cage with Iran, he would emerge with his nose bloodied and a few teeth knocked out.

The text of the peace deal has been kept under wraps so far, but a draft obtained by U.S. outlets CNN and Bloomberg shows massive concessions forced on Washington. Out of a 14-point list, Iran is to have all historic U.S. sanctions removed, it will resume export of oil and oil products, and also avail of billions of dollars from released frozen assets.

An Irreversible Blow to Israel: The New Geopolitical Reality in the Middle East

Based on the recent analysis by Judge Andrew Napolitano and the highly respected former British diplomat Alastair Crooke.

The geopolitical cards in the Middle East are being reshuffled, and for the first time in decades, it is not the West holding the pen. In a recent and revealing interview between American Judge Andrew Napolitano and British Middle East expert Alastair Crooke, the current deadlock in the region is ruthlessly analyzed. The conclusion is stark: the traditional hegemony of Israel and the unconditional support of Washington are crumbling, making way for a new reality dominated by Iran.

War Crimes and Diplomatic Blackmail

The negotiations over the future of the region are being poisoned by the United States. During ongoing talks, President Trump openly threatened to assassinate the Iranian negotiating team. As Napolitano and Crooke emphatically point out: **threatening to murder a negotiating delegation is a blatant war crime** and a violation of all diplomatic protocols.

When Vice President Vance attempts to downplay these threats as mutual "trash talk," it is a sign of weakness. Iran's threats were purely defensive in nature: if you strike our infrastructure, we will strike yours. This is in no way comparable to Trump's explicit promise that the Iranian team would not see Tehran alive. This kind of unbridled aggression is not only a war crime; it is also counterproductive and drives the region further into the arms of anti-Western alliances.

The IDF in a Trap: Manpower Shortages and Excessive Force

Israel is trapped in a series of unwinnable wars: in Lebanon, Gaza, the West Bank, and Syria. The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) are suffering from a structural lack of manpower. Reservists are refusing en masse to return to Lebanon because they know it is a quagmire. This has led to a situation where highly trained professional officers are dying on the battlefield because the ordinary soldier no longer wants to fight.

Moreover, the IDF's tactics are disastrous for their international standing. Even Trump recently remarked mockingly that the Israelis are "too heavy-handed" and "kill too many people." The industrial-scale killing of innocent civilians is not only a moral bankruptcy but strategic suicide. It creates a generational resentment that makes any form of future stability impossible.

Iran as the New Hegemon and Stabilizer

A realization is slowly trickling into Israeli society, although most refuse to face it: **Iran will become the dominant power in the region, not Israel.** Even prominent Israeli journalists and analysts like Amos Harel and Ronen Bergmann acknowledge in the Hebrew press that the Middle East has fundamentally changed.

The painful truth, whispered even in strategic circles in Tel Aviv, is that *any form of regional stability is impossible without an understanding with Iran*. The current policy of Washington and Tel Aviv, which relies on the destabilization of Tehran, is a fantasy. Iran is the key to stabilization. Without Iranian stability, the region will sink into permanent chaos.

Israel as the Eternal Spoiler

Should one then expect Israel to quickly adjust its policy? Crooke warns against holding one's breath. Israeli policy toward Iran is not merely a secular power game; it is deeply rooted in an **eschatological, messianic vision**. In this religious worldview, Iran is seen as the ultimate barrier to redemption and the messianic age.

As long as this theological blind spot is not processed, Israel will act as the *spoiler* par excellence. It is in their nature to sabotage any agreement, much to the frustration of Trump and Washington. They will continue to provoke because their ideology leaves no room for secular *realpolitik* with their "arch-enemy."

The Slow Squeeze and the Lebanese Tragedy

How will this new balance of power manifest itself? Iran will not crush Israel in one blow, but will **slowly but surely squeeze them** in Lebanon, Syria, and Gaza. In

Lebanon, for example, Iran will initially let the IDF take a few strategic positions, only to slowly tighten the noose around them. Hezbollah has the upper hand and is systematically grinding down the IDF with drones and precision strikes.

At the same time, an internal drama is unfolding in Lebanon that exacerbates regional tensions. The current Christian-led Lebanese government is trying to suffocate Hezbollah. They are attempting to create a kind of mini-state for Christian radicals and Sunni elements, with the aim of disarming Hezbollah and stripping them of their political, social, and financial rights. This is a dangerous provocation, as Hezbollah and their constituency represent no less than **40% of Lebanese society**. It is an attempt to marginalize and deprive 40% of the population of their right to exist.

Conclusion: A New Era

The analysis by Crooke and Napolitano leaves no room for doubt: the era of unpunished Israeli expansion and American dictates is over. Trump's threats may be war crimes, but they will not stop the rise of Iran. The region requires a new architecture, and it will not be imposed by the West, but shaped by the regional actors themselves, with Tehran as the inevitable center of gravity.

It is up to the astute observer to look beyond daily propaganda and acknowledge that history has its own, relentless course. The illusion is over; the reality is harsh, but it is irreversible.



Photo courtesy of Nguyen Thai / Góc nhìn Annam nguyenthai.sondn82@gmail.com

Trump will crow about Iran forswearing any effort to acquire nuclear weapons. But that's what Iran has always said, that its civilian nuclear program was peaceful, non-military, and legally entitled under international law. Again, Trump will crow about the Strait of Hormuz being reopened to oil shipping. But it was his war of aggression against Iran that closed off the Strait and 20 per cent of global oil supply. In short, Trump gains nothing despite the astronomical cost of his debacle.

Iran is not going to surrender its nuclear program. Its government and military are stronger than ever, and its 90 million people are more united than ever.



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Iran's defiance of U.S. aggression and threats of nuclear annihilation resulted in a strategic defeat of American power. The damage to the U.S. international image is incalculable as Washington's allies find themselves betrayed by empty promises of protection. Trump, who wrote an ego-trip book, Art of the Deal, about his supposed business genius as a real estate mogul, is shown by Iran to be **a charlatan with no smarts, only bluster and bluff, arrogance and a big mouth**, and an exemplar of the art of capitulation.

He blundered into a situation in which he was way out of his depth in terms of understanding and strategic thinking. His stupid arrogance was the only force driving his moves. With American citizens appalled by the senseless war, the barefaced lies,

the U-turns, the economic misery inflicted, Trump's reckless and callous indifference to their opposition, and the mid-term elections looming, the spoiled-brat president realized he had no choice but to stop digging a hole and scrape his way out of it.

Let's not forget, too, that over 7,000 people have been killed in the U.S. and Israeli aggression against Iran and Lebanon, **including 168 Iranian schoolgirls murdered** in a multiple airstrike on February 28.

Trump's hawkish former national security advisor, John Bolton, got it right when he derided the deal with Iran from the U.S. point of view. He is scathing that Iran "played Trump like a fiddle". "That's why they've got the deal that they want," Bolton told Euronews.

The economic damage that Iran was inflicting on the U.S. from closing the entire Persian Gulf oil supply via the chokepoint Strait of Hormuz, totally under Iran's control, was forcing Trump to his knees. Iran knew it had the ace card, and its courage, military firepower, and national unity to defy genocidal threats was a quad of aces.



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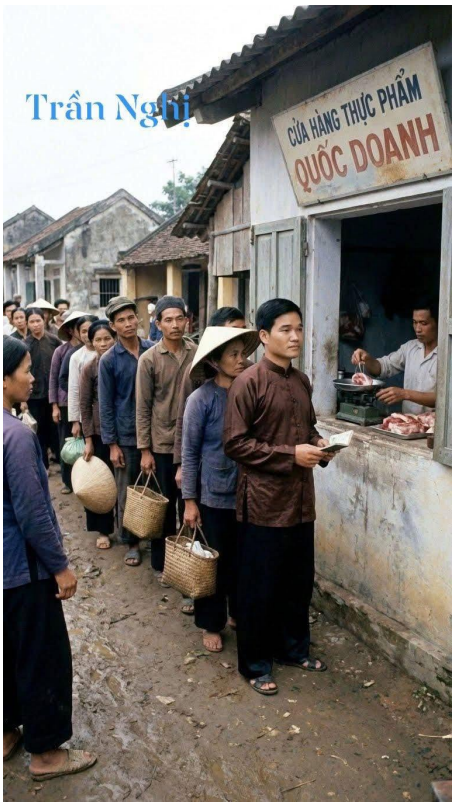
Bolton said the White House's reluctance to publish the text of the peace deal framework indicates that Trump knows he is a loser, despite the bravado and bluff.

> "If it were a great deal, it would be out in public. And I think that tells you pretty much what you need to know," remarked Bolton.

> **This defeat of U.S. imperial power is on par with the shame of the Vietnam War.** Back then, Trump was a rich-boy draft dodger during the 1960s.

Appropriately, perhaps, he finally experienced a similar Vietnam moment as a cheating president.



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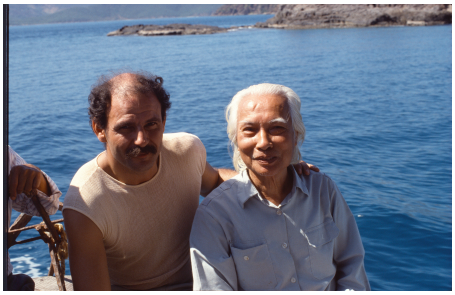
My Vietnam years

I had the exceptional privilege of contributing to the reconstruction of Vietnam, where I lived and worked from 1982 to 1988. First as a site manager for the construction of the Hanoi Textile Factory with 100,000 bobbins, and later as a UNICEF project officer for the renovation of the Pasteur Institutes in Dalat and Nha Trang, which enabled Vietnam to produce the DTP vaccines for Diphtheria, Tetanus, and Pertussis (whooping cough) locally.

The suffering of the Vietnamese population was immense and lasted for generations. With 3 million deaths and thousands of mutilated children due to the highly toxic dioxin used to defoliate the trees. Fuel such as propane gas, petrol, and diesel were unavailable to the population due to Western sanctions and an empty treasury. Electricity was scarce because the entire infrastructure and almost all power plants had been destroyed. During that period, I traveled thousands of kilometers, repeatedly from the far North to the deep South and back, as I was one of the few allowed to have a Toyota Land cruiser at my disposal. As a result, I created a unique

photo collection using my two Nikon F3s and my Leica.



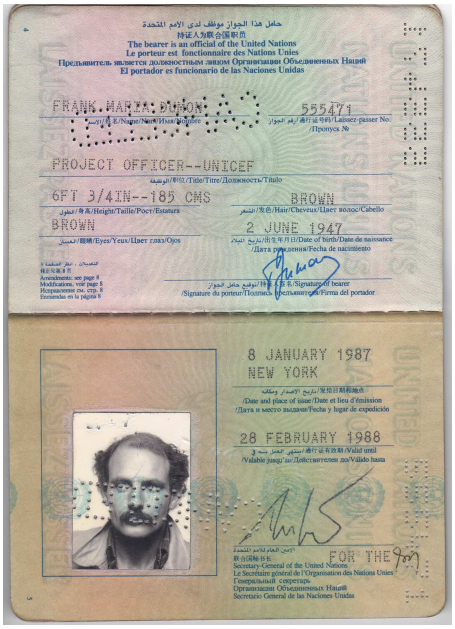
An ode to Mister Thanh, my father and spiritual mentor. He cured me of my Western pride, arrogance, and ignorance.



The limited public transport outside Hanoi used wood gasifiers as an alternative to gasoline or diesel.



Frank Dumon Vietnam UNICEF driver's license



Frank Dumon United Nations passport.

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https://youtu.be/KzZ9j0Sj4no