

...a formality to be rushed through. When you ask, "Did you sleep well?", you

...classrooms, literacy is still taught in narrow terms, reduced to reading passages, writing answers, and passing

come with culture. Yet these everyday practices—how they greet, inquire, listen, and respond—are rarely recog-

Or imagine beginning the same with structured greeting exchanges that encourage learners not just to respond,

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BERLIN. Ten years ago, Donald Trump defeated Hillary Clinton and won the US presidency largely on the strength of his criticism of the reckless Iraq War and the political establishment responsible for it.

Neoconservatives under President George W Bush had led the country into a quagmire, squandering American blood and treasure, and Clinton, while serving in the US Senate, had supported it. Trump promised to put America first by keeping the country out of costly "forever wars."

Then, following his return to the White House in January 2025, Trump became a warmonger, intervening in Venezuela and abducting its president in January, and, together with Israel, going to war against Iran.

Trump seems to have assumed that, as in Venezuela, eliminating Iran's top political and military leaders—above all Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei and figures such as Ali Larijani—would top-

ple or neutralise the regime overnight. When Iran instead responded by closing the Strait of Hormuz and attacking critical infrastructure across the Middle East, Trump found himself in an instant quagmire war, with no clearly defined objectives and no strategy beyond wishful thinking.

Once again, the harsh, unforgiving realities of the Middle East have caught up with an American president who went to war under the illusion of US omnipotence. The Iranian regime has not only proven stable but managed to expand the war to the entire region (the "gas station of the global economy") while enjoying windfall revenues from its own oil exports, which are among the only shipments still transiting the strait. As a result, the US-Israeli "excursion" against the Islamic Republic has spiralled into a global economic crisis and soured the political mood among

American voters ahead of this year's midterm elections.

Likewise, failure by the US to reopen the Strait of Hormuz and guarantee the secure passage of oil and gas shipments would be a highly visible defeat, with far-reaching regional and global implications. America's rivals and adversar-

GLOBAL IMPACT

The ongoing Iran war has rapidly evolved into one of geopolitical and economic crises. Since Iran restricted access to Strait of Hormuz, in response to US and Israeli strikes, global energy flows have been disrupted, with estimates indicating that oil transit has dropped by more than 90 percent.

ies would have proof of the hegemon's decline—giving them a green light to pursue their own foreign-policy excursions around the world.

Like the war in Ukraine, the war with Iran highlights an ongoing revolution in battlefield technologies and tactics. Cheap drones, mass-produced and deployed with the help of AI, now allow lesser powers to stand up to the most advanced, expensive Western and Russian military technologies.

Suppose the US ultimately is defeated in the Gulf and the Iranian regime remains in power and in control of its nuclear program. The Islamic Republic's influence in the Gulf will have been strengthened decisively, and its grip on the throat of the global economy will be even tighter.

Europe, for its part, still insists that Trump's war is not its war. But outside of the Middle East, it is Europe that will

bear the brunt of the consequences. Prolonged destabilisation of the Middle East will affect their security more than anyone else's.

The Trump administration entered this war with utter disregard for the lessons that the US learned the hard way in Iraq and Afghanistan, and without the slightest attempt to coordinate with its European allies.

With yet another dangerous geopolitical crisis unfolding on its doorstep, Europe finds itself completely alone. Genuine security requires doing what is necessary to make Europe a sovereign power in its own right.

Joschka Fischer, Germany's foreign minister and vice chancellor from 1998 to 2005, was a leader of the German Green Party for almost 20 years.