

...nd constitutional duty. This will be achieved if the House focuses on its constitutional mandate.

For decades, legislators have been judged less by

among others. While these gestures ... needs, they distort the role of MPs.

To break this cycle, the 12th Parliament must embrace reforms that restore substance to politics. Strengthening

Coum ...
Uganda.

Uncertainty looms over Memorial Weekend

For Americans spending the Memorial Weekend worrying whether President Trump's on-and-off matrimony with Iran will ever take place, the time is now to head out to the field to pluck daisy flowers to seek folk wisdom on what will happen. This, after all, is the season for blooming ox-eye daisy in the US – from Texas to Southern California, the Midwest to the northern states and mountain areas. As we drove to spend last weekend in Fishkill, New York, we saw them along the beautiful Taconic Parkway. Why daisies?

Centuries ago, a tradition developed in Europe for a young, unmarried woman to pluck daisy flowers from the field to try to figure out whether she was loved by her boyfriend. Holding the flower in one hand, she plucked off the petals one at a time while chanting: "He loves me, He loves me not." In rural France, the rhyme commonly went like this: "*Il m'aime, un peu, beaucoup, passionnément, à la folie, pas du tout*" (He loves me, a little, a lot, passionately, madly, not at all). Depending on which part of the rhyme coincided with the plucking of the last petal, the young woman knew whether she was loved or not.

That is where Americans now find themselves. When Trump and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu decided to wage war on Iran in the middle of negotiations, Iran unexpectedly proved very resilient, its economy and military withstanding the most relentless pummeling with bombs since the Vietnam War.

When the use of force did not work, Trump switched back to diplomacy and threats, and that did not work either. In desperation, Trump decided to negotiate his way out of the quagmire. However, the back and



forth is beginning to worry Americans experiencing in their pocket the impact of the closure of the Strait of Hormuz and the continuing war with Iran.

As we saw with our own eyes when filling up in Danbury, Connecticut, the price of petroleum has gone through the roof. When we last crossed into the US in mid-May 2023, Biden was still president, and a gallon (about 4.5lts) of petrol cost \$2.95 (about sh11, 130). Last weekend, we returned to the exact petrol station we used three years ago, and petrol was up \$4.62 (sh17,420) a gallon; not cheap, even for Canadians who are used to dropping a load of cash for a tankful of petrol.

The problem is not that Americans are impatient with what Trump is trying to do to get a peace deal with Iran. Rather, the problem is that Trump himself does not know what he wants out of the deal. One moment, he sounds bullish about signing an agreement with Iran; the next, he sounds despondent. He woke up on Friday

morning sounding very upbeat about the possibility of a peace deal, saying almost all the framework had been agreed on, adding that only the finer details remained to be worked out.

However, when morning drifted into afternoon, and night crept into the chicken coop like a thief, and still no announcement, it became clear nothing was happening. On Sunday morning, all seemed good to go again. Everyone within the Trump administration, including Secretary of State Marco Rubio, who was in India, spoke positively about a deal in the making. But by lunchtime, as folks returned from Sunday morning Mass, everything had changed; Trump was now saying an agreement was not imminent.

What is going on? Well, there are a few hints. According to leaked information, the proposed agreement would open the Strait of Hormuz,

unfreeze Iranian cash assets, allow Iran to start shipping its oil and guarantee no further attacks on Iran. On the most contentious items of all – the enriched Iranian uranium and Tehran levying tolls on ships passing through the Strait of Hormuz – the deal would allow 60 days for the parties to reach an agreement.

If it had gone through, this deal would have given Iran just about everything it was asking for and more – in fact, straight up, it would have

made



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Trump the biggest loser since the biblical event in which a whale swallowed Jonah. Naturally, throughout Saturday into Sunday morning, American war hawks and pro-Israel lobbyists rained virulent criticisms on Trump. The pushback was so fierce that any possible deal was torpedoed.

This column predicted three weeks ago that this would happen. The math is very simple: America might have dropped tonnes of bombs on Iran, but the clear winner is Iran because it has shut down the Strait of Hormuz, which America and the world need for oil to flow. Moreover, if the strait does not open soon, Iran can hang in there for much longer, but the US and world economies will begin to teeter.

Charitably, Trump may have had an entry plan starting a war with Iran,

but he surely does not have an exit plan. His problem is compounded by millions of opinions on social media on what he should or should not do with Iran. And even when they are supportive, these views rarely translate neatly into national policy for a state, let alone of the world's most powerful nation.

The problem for Trump now is that if he returns to bombing Iran, which he may well do because nothing else he does is working, things will only become more complicated on the ground. Moreover, the Strait of Hormuz will stay shut even as Gulf states endure more missile bombardments from Iran.

However, if Trump chooses to go ahead with the deal currently being negotiated, he will end up with a worse than the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action that Barack Obama signed with Iran back in July 2015. And for Trump, more than anything else, the first Black president should never be seen to have done better than him.

Simply, to use the colourful language of one of Trump's fervent supporters on X: "This is a colossal f**k-up!" And since Trump mostly acts on a whim rather than on a well-reasoned position grounded in US national security, the idea of Americans using daisies makes sense. At least, playing with daisies would make citizens feel in control instead of being buffeted by unknown forces thrown willy-nilly like empty tin cans blowing down the street.

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