

President Museveni's call for "no more sleep for an Ugandan" is precisely what our economic liberation demands. With 67% of homesteads now participating in the money economy, we must accelerate this transformation. Limiting "sleep" means actively engaging in wealth creation across the four priority sectors:

commercial agriculture, manufacturing...  
Ugandans should emulate government-led poverty reduction initiatives, including the Parish Development Model (PDM) and...

# Against all odds, Iran forces America back to the table

Sometimes history is made before our very eyes, an event that is mythologised 200 years in the future, yet we fail to see its significance because it seems so ordinary, so pedestrian. When the people of Mexico celebrated Cinco de Mayo last week, for example, there was a complete re-enactment of the Battle of Puebla when the puny Mexican army defeated the mighty French army.

The event happened over 160 years ago, on May 5, 1862, when Mexico was indebted to France and Napoleon III was keen to establish French dominion over the Spanish-speaking country and ordered the occupation of Mexico city.

Commanding up to 8,000 professional French troops backed by modern artillery, Gen. Charles de Lorencez expected a quick victory, but along the way his troops encountered the Mexican irregulars commanded by Gen. Ignacio Zaragoza, who used his strategic vantage position to beat back the French army. Three times that day, the French launched their assaults and three times they were driven back by the Mexican army, finally forcing Gen. Charles de Lorencez to call it a day.

It is more than likely that when the Battle of Puebla occurred almost two centuries ago, the people alive then did not see it as a significant historical event. What likely happened was that the Mexican survivors buried their dead, tended to the wounded and organised for another battle they knew would surely come, which happened about a year later when the French army captured Mexico city and installed Austrian archduke Maximilian I as emperor of Mexico.

Instead, the lionising of the Battle of Puebla was left to future Mexican generations, which now commemorate it every year on the fifth day of May. During the 164th celebration this year, attended by President of Mexico Claudia Sheinbaum, the Mexican narrator, dressed in white, waxed poetic in the retelling of the story of the Battle of Puebla, on how the day was won because the defenders had God and love of country on their side.

In a similar manner, future Iranians will remember differently the ongoing war between Iran and the US and will celebrate it as a significant conflict in which Iran stood up to the mighty American army and lived to tell the story. They would be justified in celebrating what is clearly one of the biggest setbacks and



humiliations for the US since the failure in Vietnam when Saigon fell in 1975.

On the surface, especially with the upbeat daily media announcements by President Donald Trump, the US has all but destroyed Iran, which should be raising the white flag of defeat any time now. Indeed, when the US and Israel attacked Iran over two months ago, the devastating initial strikes decapitated Iranian leadership, killing the old Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and as many as 40 senior officials of the Revolutionary Guards, including commander of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps Mohammad Pakpour, Iranian defence minister Aziz Nasirzadeh and top security adviser Ali Shamkhani.

In a little less than 12 hours, by all appearances, Iran was on its knees and on its way to utter defeat without any attempt to fight back. Yet against all odds, Iran fought back, strategically using missiles and drones to its advantage. Both Israel and the US seemed caught off-guard when Iran focused its firepower on neighbouring Gulf States including the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Qatar, Oman, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Iraq. Iran's willingness to expand the conflict — to burn everything to the ground, so to speak — forced America and Israel to begin to improvise, including dropping as many as 30,000 bombs on various targets throughout Iran.

But Iran had the upper hand and the

mullahs in Tehran knew it. By shutting down the Strait of Hormuz, the gateway for much of the oil mercantile traffic between Asia, the Middle East and the rest of the world, they could afford to sit out for as long as possible while the US and the rest of the world dangled precariously on the brink of economic collapse. This was a game-changer that forced America to start looking for ways to blunt Iran's impact on world trade, including agreeing to a negotiated settlement under the mediation of Pakistan.

This is where the game of chicken currently sits, with each side waiting for the opponent to blink first. So far Iran seems to be winning, forcing Trump to lower his belligerent tone and the threats issued daily at the start of the war. So much so that Trump appears eager to play down Iran's actions, as happened last week when the two warring sides fired at each other. Trump called the media to minimise the incidents, reassuring Americans that the whole thing was "just a love tap" and that the ceasefire with

Iran still held. When Iran responded over the weekend with a counter peace proposal that clearly infuriated him, Trump was noticeably very careful to say the ceasefire was still holding. Gone were the daily harangues and invectives he had enjoyed hurling towards Iran, calling it a completely defeated force.

Trump's apparent change of tone is not inspired by a belated epiphany to the virtues of peace and love for Iranians, not by a long shot. The American president, known

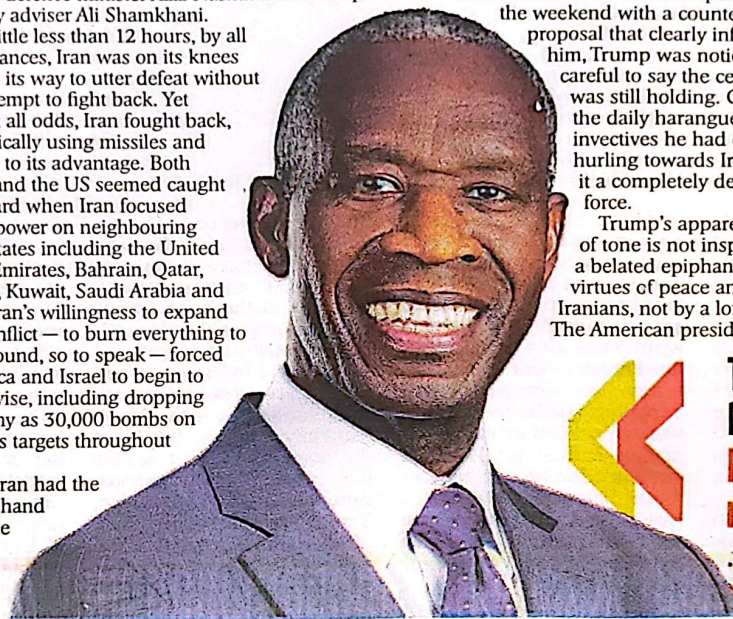
for his bombastic self-aggrandisement, has come to one unshakeable reality — Iran holds more cards than previously imagined, both by the US and by Iranians themselves. The leadership in Tehran, having found the one key that brought Trump to his knees — the Strait of Hormuz — is willing to use it.

What is happening now is a US president humbled and looking for a way out — but Trump will be very lucky if he can rustle up even half of the concessions that former president Barack Obama wrangled from Iran with the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action agreement, which among other things, eliminated 98% of Iran's enriched uranium stockpile.

Of course the end of the war is still far from certain and anything can happen in the coming days, including a resumption of bombing. But Iran, which is now more confident than ever in dictating the pace of the negotiations — did you notice how the Iranian leadership blew through the deadlines Trump previously declared, forcing the US leader to stop issuing them altogether because they were making him look ridiculous — one thing is certain: whatever the outcome, future Iranian generations will point to this war as the moment when Iran refused to be bullied, pushed around and forced to kneel before the mightiest army in the world.

Like the Mexicans do on Cinco de Mayo, Iranians of the future will re-enact what happened in 2026, mythologising it and celebrating it with pomp and circumstance.

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