MIDDLE EAST WAR UPDATES

TRUMP FACES COALITION OF THE UNWILLING ON IRAN

WASHINGTON

President Donald Trump spent his first year back in power disparaging US allies. Now he wants them to help America in the Iran war – and they are none too enthusiastic.

From tariffs to insults and threatening to invade Greenland, Trump has rarely missed an opportunity in recent months to criticize America's partners.

Yet now the 79-year-old Republican has said he expects the same allies to help reopen the Strait of Hormuz to oil traffic and reacted angrily when they rebuffed him.

"It's an extraordinary demand," said Philip Gordon, the former national security advisor to vice president Kamala Harris and now an academic at the Brookings Institution.

"To justify risking people's lives, not only for that operation, but for a president who has done nothing but insult and berate you for the last 15 months, that's probably a bridge too far," Gordon told AFP.

Trump has warned that the NATO alliance could be at risk if it fails to step up to unblock the strategic waterway, saying other countries get most of their oil supply through it and must contribute.

But while he insisted Monday that "we don't need anybody" to clear the straits, he also thundered that US allies from Europe to Asia owe Washington for giving them decades of protection.

Trump has also hit out at China for failing to help.

'LAYERS OF IRONY'

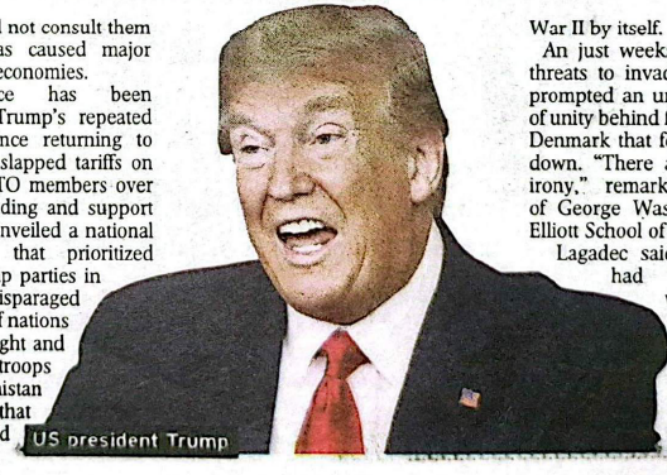
In foreign capitals there has been deep skepticism over getting involved in a war Trump did not consult them on, yet which has caused major disruption to their economies.

Their reluctance has been compounded by Trump's repeated tongue-lashings since returning to office. Trump has slapped tariffs on allies, berated NATO members over their defence spending and support for Ukraine, and unveiled a national security strategy that prioritized boosting pro-Trump parties in Europe. He has disparaged the contributions of nations whose soldiers fought and died alongside US troops in Iraq and Afghanistan – and claimed that America won World War II by itself.

AFP PHOTO



Smoke rises from the site of an Israeli air strike that targeted an area in the southern suburbs of the Lebanese capital Beirut yesterday. Israel launched a wave of strikes on Tehran and Beirut



US president Trump

An just weeks ago came Trump's threats to invade Greenland, which prompted an unprecedented display of unity behind fellow NATO member Denmark that forced Trump to back down. "There are several layers of irony," remarked Erwan Lagadec of George Washington University's Elliott School of International Affairs.

Lagadec said the United States had "launched a war without consulting allies, expecting them to mop up the mess, and that's not going fly."

NATO would also unlikely be in a position, or achieve consensus to launch any major mission in the Strait of Hormuz, Lagadec added.

BULLYING

Before the invasion of 2003, then-president W. Bush spent months building up what he ca "coalition of the will more than 40 countri back the United State

But Trump, whose c of the Iraq war and on quagmires was a centr of his "America First" failed to construct any similar alliance for a w believed would be over

European nations are struggling to deal w Ukraine and their o economies have very practical concerns abou getting involved now in said Liana Fix of the Co on Foreign Relations.

"It is not payback, but very real constraints and policy trade-offs," Fix tol AFP.

But while US allies will be wary of irking Trump over Hormuz, they may al choose to show that the can no longer be pushed around.

"If they do go along with him, his experience will be that bullying and blackmail work. That's been his experience for the whole first year, and ther Greenland put a stop to it," said Gordon, who was also a special assistant to president Barack Obama "Now the chickens are coming home to roost."

AFP