

The War on Iran and Trump's Lies That Move Oil and Unsettle the World



Niccolò Niccolò Machiavelli underscored the value of deception in politics in his most famous political treatise, *The Prince*. Machiavelli did not invent anything new; deception had always been part of politics. What he did in *The Prince* was legitimize it and cloak it in the allure of theory, presenting it as a desirable practice in the service of a strong state. All leaders, then, lie but what distinguishes the lies of Donald Trump?

Trump may have taken this tradition a step further. His falsehoods ushered in what has come to be known as “alternative facts.” Trump does not lie he offers “alternative facts.” Since his first rise to power in 2016, he has opened a new chapter in political science debates, one previously explored in depth by Noon Post.

In the ongoing war on Iran, Trump's lies or alternative facts, if you prefer have acquired unprecedented significance. These falsehoods now shape the very contours and outcomes of the war. When Trump speaks of striking Iran's infrastructure, he effectively places targets across the Gulf within range of Iranian missiles. When he speaks of an imminent agreement, oil prices fall and stock markets rise.

His lies no longer merely construct a world he prefers to inhabit one in which he is widely popular and presided over the largest inauguration in U.S. history they

now influence the trajectory of war and the rhythms of the global economy. Here, we attempt to trace how Trump's falsehoods have created the realities of a month-long conflict.

How to Lie Like Donald Trump

According to J nis S rts, Director of Strategic Communications at NATO: "We will no longer believe what we see. This is a radical shift in human history. Alongside artificial intelligence and cognitive warfare, there are also influential human factors such as U.S. President Donald Trump and his statements."

Much of the media coverage of the war has become acutely aware of Trump's role as a generator of falsehoods and speculative scenarios. Curiously, he even became the focal point of a discussion referenced by S rts at the recent Leipzig Book Fair, which revolved around an absurd question: Has fiction become more real than reality?

Trump's formula for lying is simple. He dug his own hole quite literally, given his campaign slogan during the victorious 2024 presidential race: "Drill, baby, drill," emphasizing the importance of the oil sector in reviving the U.S. economy. His war on Iran came hand in hand with a blockade of the Strait of Hormuz, a chokepoint of immense importance to global energy policy.

The resulting market volatility and short-term price fluctuations have made planning difficult in an industry that depends on stability to attract investment.

In doing so, Trump undermined what he had achieved by effectively seizing Nicol s Maduro, seeking control over Venezuela's vast heavy crude reserves. Reviving Venezuela's long-neglected infrastructure would require billions in investment precisely from an industry he is now jeopardizing through war with Iran.

In an article published in Der Spiegel, journalist Klaus Hecking vividly illustrates Trump's reliance on deception. In a sharply critical piece dated March 24, Hecking portrays Trump as a joke-cracking wartime leader.

He begins: "Trump knows how to move markets. Shortly before 7 a.m. on Monday, at his residence in the Mar-a-Lago resort in Florida, global oil prices were nearing record highs while U.S. stocks were at their lowest levels. Then, as usual, the president stirred a frenzy on Truth Social, writing: 'I am pleased to announce that the United States and Iran have held productive and very good talks over the past two days regarding a comprehensive resolution of our differences in the Middle East.'"

He then postponed his own ultimatum threatening to bomb Iranian energy facilities if Tehran continued closing the Strait of Hormuz. Immediately, oil prices

dropped by about eight dollars per barrel, while the Dow Jones Industrial Average surged by roughly 1,300 points in futures trading.

Those who had bet on falling oil prices or rising stocks moments earlier suddenly became richer by thousands, hundreds of thousands, or even tens of millions of dollars within minutes.

Ignoring Reality, Fueling Noise

Disregard and incessant chatter form the twin pillars of Trump's machinery of deception. In his attempt to project optimism, he ignores facts on the ground. Reports from agencies close to Iran's Revolutionary Guard denied that any talks had taken place, yet Trump claimed he was negotiating with a "highly respected leader."

According to Axios, citing an Israeli source, this "leader" was Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf. Trump alleged that Ghalibaf was "pulling the strings," and that U.S. envoy Steve Witkoff and his son-in-law Jared Kushner had negotiated with him.

Ghalibaf categorically denied such talks on X, calling them "fake news aimed at manipulating oil and stock markets to escape the quagmire the United States and Israel have created for themselves."

Trump, however, dismissed the denial as a misunderstanding within Iran's leadership. This episode encapsulates his method: ignore inconvenient facts and continue projecting confidence, backed by a stream of promises.

Trapped in His Own Maze

A March 25 press briefing by White House spokesperson Karoline Leavitt illustrates how Trump constructs and clings to his fabricated reality. Despite consistent Iranian denials, she spoke of "productive talks" and reiterated Trump's claims that Iran had been militarily defeated and was now seeking an exit.

Yet Trump's erratic decisions suggest he may now suspect he has led himself and his country into a dead end. At one point, he declared that countries benefiting from the Strait of Hormuz should secure it themselves; at another, he gave Iran 48 hours to restore normal shipping, only to later abandon the ultimatum and promote talk of a comprehensive settlement.

The partial truth embedded in these lies is that they echo Trump's falsehoods elsewhere. As in the Ukraine conflict, he repeatedly issued ultimatums that yielded no tangible results. His rhetoric toward Tehran ultimately reflects his personal inability to resolve a crisis of his own making.

From the outset, his illusions shaped the war's near-stalemate trajectory. He

believed that eliminating Ali Khamenei would end the Iranian regime. He celebrated prematurely, yet the war dragged on for nearly a month afterward. He also claimed that killing top Iranian officials would end the conflict and declared Iran “wiped off the map” none of which altered realities on the ground.

The Loser's Options in a Game of Chicken

The tragedy unfolding today echoes an earlier conflict. In *The New Cold War*, scholar Gilbert Achcar quotes historian John Lewis Gaddis criticizing NATO expansion: defeated adversaries are often assumed to have no options an assumption that is both arrogant and short-sighted.

Trump appears to believe that Iran, presumed defeated, has no choice but to submit. This brings the world perilously close to catastrophe. In the classic “game of chicken,” two actors race toward collision: if one swerves, the other wins; if neither does, both crash.

Iran's potential “crash” option returning Gulf states to the “Stone Age,” a phrase favored by Trump would not only devastate the region but plunge the global economy into crisis. Trump, meanwhile, faces two grim choices.

According to Maximilian Popp of *Der Spiegel*, one possibility is the unthinkable: the use of nuclear weapons, tactical or strategic the worst conceivable outcome.

The second option aligns with Trump's strategy of obfuscation. A recent report by CNN suggests he may be buying time through talk of ceasefires while preparing militarily to seize Kharg Island, which handles 90% of Iran's crude exports.

Such a move would neither resolve the Strait of Hormuz crisis nor end the war. Instead, it risks drawing the United States into another prolonged ground conflict echoing Vietnam War, Iraq War, and War in Afghanistan against a far more capable adversary.

In the words of Henry Kissinger, describing Vietnam: the army loses if it does not win; the guerrilla wins if it does not lose.

Thus, Trump remains mired in Iran, awaiting an outcome beyond the logic of war one that would allow him to claim victory. Otherwise, he risks retreating, ending his second presidency in farce, having once built his reputation as a dealmaker rather than a warmonger. Between the contradictions of his two terms, one constant remains: Trump's lies his compass and his constant.