Taiwan is on Xi's menu, and Trump may be tempted to bargain it away



Romance of the Three Kingdoms is regarded as one of the four great classic novels of Chinese literature. Set in second- and third-century China, it recounts, among other stories, the exploits of a general of the Shu kingdom, Zhuge Liang. When his fortress city of Xicheng was besieged by a vastly superior Wei army, Zhuge did the unthinkable: he ordered the city gates flung wide open, told his soldiers to disguise themselves as ordinary townsfolk, and sent them about their daily routines in full view of the enemy. Zhuge himself sat atop the gate, calmly playing the 'qin', a Chinese string instrument. Suspicious of such brazen confidence, the Wei forces assumed an ambush awaited them inside. They made a hurried withdrawal in panic.

As US President Donald Trump visits China on May 13, 2026, he will do well to remember this story. China often shows one thing and means another. Trump, too, understands power in similar terms. But there is one crucial difference: Trump's strategy is often immediate, transactional, and aimed at short-term wins. China thinks long-term, often in decades. Trump negotiates for the next news cycle; Xi negotiates for the next century. Officially, the agenda of the Trump-Xi summit will range from trade and tariffs to Iran and rare earths. However, it is Taiwan that seems to be the main menu. In Taipei, the fear is palpable. So much so that ordinary Taiwanese civilians are now sharpening their self-defence skills ahead of the summit. Xi sees Trump's visit as an opening. Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi has already warned Secretary of State Marco Rubio that Taiwan remains the "biggest risk" in US-China relations. The message is simple: if Washington wants Chinese cooperation elsewhere — on Iran, trade, tariffs and rare earths — it must soften on Taiwan. Beijing believes Trump might. Unlike previous presidents, Trump has openly questioned why America should defend Taiwan. He has accused Taipei of "stealing" America's semiconductor industry. He has denied Taiwanese President Lai Ching-te a transit stop in the US. He has also delayed major arms sales to Taipei. To Beijing, Trump looks less like a strategic rival and more like a negotiator waiting for the right price. China knows exactly how to price the American president: promises of seamless rare-earth supplies, Boeing orders, American soybean purchases and headline-grabbing investment pledges.

It does not need Trump to abandon Taiwan outright. It only needs him to introduce doubt, to make Taiwan wonder whether America would actually show up when the missiles fly across the strait. Xi knows Taiwan is an American red line that cannot be crossed militarily without serious consequences. His strategy, therefore, will be subtler: sow distrust, deepen division, and make unification seem inevitable. All Beijing needs is a hint of ambivalence from Trump. That, China believes, would be enough to weaken Taiwan's resolve. And that resolve is already under strain. A section of Taiwanese society and politics is drifting towards accommodation — some formula of Taiwanese autonomy under Chinese supremacy dressed up as realism. Beijing will happily amplify that tendency. Xi may also leverage the recent visit of Taiwanese Opposition leader Cheng Li-wun, who favours closer ties with Beijing, to portray the country's current leadership as reckless hawks disconnected from mainstream public opinion. He may try to dazzle Trump with trade deals and rare-earth diplomacy to convince him that America should restrain Taipei rather than back it.

The Chinese also know such investment promises are often just that — promises. One remembers how the mouth-watering $83.7 billion West Virginia memorandum of understanding announced during Trump's 2017 Beijing visit has never materialised.

What makes Trump especially vulnerable this time is that, unlike in 2017, he arrives in Beijing with almost no leverage. Then, he came as a president trying to shape the relationship. Now, he comes as a president trapped by Iran, and squeezed by rare-earth threats. His military gamble in Tehran has dragged on far longer than expected. What he thought would be a quick demonstration of strength has become another Middle Eastern quagmire.

Without China's cooperation, Washington risks remaining strategically bogged down. Beijing knows this.

Xi holds the cards. He can offer support on Iran while quietly demanding strategic ambiguity on Taiwan. It is classic Chinese statecraft: help your rival escape one trap by leading him into another.

More importantly, Trump must remember that it was America's own indulgence that helped create the China it now fears. When Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger made a grand outreach to Beijing in the early 1970s, China was weak, poor, and strategically desperate. Its per capita GDP was lower than Uganda's. Washington believed engagement would liberalise China. Instead, China liberalised just enough to become rich, powerful and technologically formidable. America thought markets would change the Dragon. China used markets to strengthen the Party.

Then came the next mistake: pushing Russia deeper into China's arms through strategic overreach in Europe. If Joe Biden trapped America in Ukraine, Trump has now done the same in Iran. Former diplomat Rajiv Dogra writes in Wartime: The World in Danger: "If and when a future Gibbon sits down to write a history of the decline and fall of the US, he might conclude that it was a case of self-harm — that the American obsession with China and its leadership was the cause of America's decline and China's rise." As Trump visits Beijing, the US is at a crucial juncture. Trump should realise that if he treats Beijing like another venue for deals, applause and transactional triumph, he would hand Xi the strategic victory of the decade. A bad deal on Taiwan will not just betray Taipei. It will shatter America's credibility, especially across Asia. Japan will recalculate. South Korea will hedge. Bharat will further modify multilateralism. And Southeast Asia will adapt.

Europe's real problem is dependency on America, not Donald Trump

A day after the Pentagon announced the withdrawal of 5,000 troops from Germany and Donald Trump said that the US would cut "a lot further than 5,000" troops, Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk said that the greatest threat to the Transatlantic Alliance isn't external but its "ongoing disintegration".

Trump's reckless decision was prompted by German Chancellor Friedrich Merz's comment that Iran had "humiliated" America in the war. Trump's aggression had the desired effect. Both Merz and his defence minister, Boris Pistorius, who had earlier said that "Europeans must take on more responsibility for our own security", downplayed Trump's latest move as "expected", not sudden.

Merz, in an interview with public broadcaster ARD, said that Trump's decision wasn't related to his Iran comment and that "Americans are important partners for us". Merz added that the US had also temporarily cancelled the Joe Biden administration's promise to deploy SM-6, Tomahawk, Dark Eagle (hypersonic) and PrSM ballistic missiles, and the Operational Fires ground-launched hypersonic missile system, in Germany.

As expected, Germany capitulated before Trump—and so have several other European nations. After Trump vowed to increase tariffs on European cars and trucks to 25 per cent, Merz blamed the EU and added that Germany shared Trump's "common goal" of stopping Iran from developing nukes.

Europe Important to US Operations

Europe's strategic location at the intersection of Africa, West Asia and Central Asia makes it America's largest overseas fortress, from where it projects power and force in every direction.

The US has around 68,000 troops stationed across 31 permanent bases and 19 military sites in Europe, according to the US Defense Manpower Data Center. The US European Command, headquartered in Stuttgart, Germany, oversees military operations across both Europe and West Asia by providing troops, fighter jets, bombers, intelligence, reconnaissance and logistics.

The US has nine Army garrisons in Europe: five in Germany, and one each in Belgium, Italy, Poland and the Black Sea region (Romania and Bulgaria). The garrisons in Germany house 36,436 active US troops. Bavaria Garrison, in Grafenwöhr, is the largest overseas American Army base in the world. America's largest overseas air base is in Ramstein, from where attack drones take off.

The US has 12,662 active-duty service members in Italy, 10,156 in the UK and 3,814 in Spain. Several other European nations also house US troops. The US Air Force has two bases each in the UK and Germany, and one each in Italy, the Azores and Turkey. Europe also played a major role in the Iran war, with American bombers taking off from UK bases, and Germany, Portugal, Italy, France and Romania refuelling US planes.

Despite Europe's contribution, Trump has slammed it for not helping the US in ending Iran's blockade of the Strait of Hormuz. Trump also hasn't ruled out pulling out troops from Italy and Spain. "Why shouldn't I? Italy has not been of any help to us, and Spain has been horrible. Absolutely horrible," he told the media.

However, Trump is only one aspect of the challenge Europe faces. There are other factors which have contributed to Europe's weakness.

Europe's Lack of Unity on Iran War - Tusk was wrong in suggesting that the greatest threat to the European-American alliance is the "ongoing disintegration".

The greatest threat is a divided Europe. The Iran war has exposed deep divisions in the region. The war is hugely unpopular in Europe, but most leaders have been hesitant in criticising Trump's unprovoked aggression against Iran. Except for Spain's Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez, who denied US access to its airspace and the deployment of strategic bombers, other leaders only called for respecting international law, diplomacy and restraint.

France's President Emmanuel Macron, who initially said the war was "outside international law", allowed US fuel tankers in French airspace. In fact, France, Germany and the UK helped the US logistically without direct military intervention. The UK even allowed B-1B and B-52H bombers to take off from RAF Fairford and B-2As from Diego Garcia. Europe's lack of unity and will to be independent of the US was summed up by NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte, who said that European leaders had got Trump's message. "They heard the message loud and clear," Rutte said before a European Political Community meeting in Armenia.

Europe's Lack of United Defence - The reason Trump gets away with insulting and coercing Europe is the continent's dependence on the US to lead the bloc with its superior firepower and global reach. The EU does have an Article 5-like mutual defence clause. Article 42.7 of the Lisbon Treaty calls upon member states to assist a member attacked in its territory by all means in their power in accordance with Article 51 of the United Nations Charter.

Article 42.7 has been invoked only once—during the Islamic State (IS)-led attacks in Paris in 2015. But again, the anti-IS coalition was led by the US. The EU also has the Common Security and Defence Policy, which, however, allows military missions only to preserve peace, prevent conflict and strengthen international security in accordance with the UN Charter.

Even if an EU member is attacked, the bloc doesn't have a common army with a joint command structure. The idea of a European Army, as old as the Cold War, was revived several times but failed. The idea gained momentum after the Russian invasion of Ukraine and Trump's recurring threats to quit NATO. "It is time to create a European army," Sánchez said last year, with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy backing him.

However, the idea of a European Army faces several obstacles. First is NATO—23 of the 27 EU members are part of the military bloc. Article 42.7 specifies that assisting member states "shall be consistent with commitments under NATO, the foundation of their collective defence and the forum for its implementation". NATO's former Secretary General, Jens Stoltenberg, had said that money invested in an EU Army would be a loss for the alliance. Second, the EU is divided over a common army. Central and eastern countries prefer NATO, not a European Army, to deter Russia.

"We are not in favour of a single European Army," Portugal's Defence Minister Nuno Melo said last month. Besides, neutral nations like Austria, Ireland and Malta don't support the idea either. Third is interoperability.

Europe has 172 different types of major weapons systems, aircraft, vehicles and combat vessels, compared to just 32 in the US, according to Kaja Kallas, the EU's High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. For example, the EU has 17 different main battle tanks and 30 fighter planes.

On the other hand, NATO's



strength is interoperability, the defining feature of its joint operations. Interoperability ensures that allies can share common facilities, interact, connect and communicate, and exchange data and services with other equipment.

Removing these major obstacles will be a Herculean and time-consuming task. As Rutte recently said, "If anyone thinks here again that the European Union, or Europe as a whole, can defend itself without the US, keep on dreaming."

Europe's Reliance on US Arms - The Ukraine war has exposed Europe's inability to rapidly manufacture weapons useful to Kyiv—HIMARS, Patriot batteries and 155mm artillery rounds. Last year, the US produced 86 per cent of rocket artillery, 82 per cent of howitzer rounds and 70 per cent of long-range anti-aircraft systems supplied to Ukraine, as per Kiel Institute estimates. At the beginning of the war, the US was the leading arms supplier to Ukraine. Now, it's Europe. According to the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), Germany has provided the most military assistance to Ukraine, at $23.52 billion, followed by the UK ($16.78 billion) and Denmark ($11.69 billion) since 2022. However, Ukraine's annual demand for 155mm rounds and interceptor missiles (4,800 units annually) is far beyond European production capacity, according to CSIS. According to a March 9 report by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, Europe more than tripled its arms imports between 2016-20 and 2021-25, with a 217 per cent increase in US arms exports to the region. Ukraine received 9.7 per cent of all arms transfers in 2021-25.

European states received 33 per cent of global arms imports, with the region's imports increasing by 210 per cent between 2016-20 and 2021-25—48 per cent of weapons transferred to European states came from the US. Europe has also purchased US weapons worth $4 billion under NATO's $10-billion Prioritised Ukraine Requirements List between August and November last year. If the US exits NATO and Europe decides to form a unified army, it would need massive amounts of arms and ammunition beyond the region's production capacity.

According to an analysis by European think tank Bruegel, a credible European deterrence would require a minimum of 1,400 tanks, 2,000 infantry fighting vehicles and 700 artillery pieces (155mm howitzers and multiple rocket launchers). This requirement is more than the combat power of German, French, British and Italian land forces. "Providing these forces with sufficient munitions will be essential—beyond the bare-bones stockpiles currently available." For example, a million 155mm rounds would be the minimum for a stockpile to last 90 days in a war. Europe would also need 300,000 troops for a unified army. Moreover, defence spending would have to increase by •250 billion annually, or around 3.5 per cent of GDP in the short term.

Europe Dependent on US Nuclear Umbrella - Since the Cold War, the US nuclear umbrella has been covering its European allies under NATO. The US has stationed tactical nukes at six bases in five European NATO allies under nuclear-sharing agreements.

There are 100 US nukes—B61-12, B61-3 and -4 gravity bombs—stored in Kleine Brogel, Belgium; Büchel, Germany; Aviano and Ghedi, Italy; Volkel, the Netherlands; and Incirlik, Turkey. F-16s, Tornados, Typhoons and F-35As can deliver these weapons, which aren't armed or deployed on aircraft but stored in underground vaults.

However, the launch codes are in American hands, meaning the US retains absolute control and custody over them. Decisions on their use require the NATO Nuclear Planning Group's approval and specific US authorisation. Therefore, the risk of Trump exiting NATO or not assisting a member under attack looms over the nuclear umbrella. France, the UK and Germany have realised that they could be left without the American nuclear umbrella.

TRUHOME FINANCE LIMITED (Formerly Shriram Housing Finance Ltd.)

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APPENDIX-IV-A [SEE PROVISION TO RULE 8(6)] SALE NOTICE FOR SALE OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES

E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with provision to Rule 8(6)] of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.
Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower/s and Guarantor/s that the below described immovable properties mortgaged/ charged to Truhome Finance Limited (formerly Shriram Housing Finance Limited), the Physical Possession of which have been taken by the Authorized Officer of Truhome Finance Limited, will be sold on "As is where is", "As is what is" and "Whatever there is" basis for recovery of the balance due to Truhome Finance Limited from the Borrowers And Guarantors, as mentioned in the table.
Details of Borrowers and Guarantors, amount due, Short Description of the immovable property, reserve price and earnest money deposit and date of Inspection are also given as:

Name of Borrowers/ Co-Borrowers/ Guarantors/Mortgagers	Amount of Recovery and date of Demand Notice	Reserve Price (Rs.) & Bid Increment	Date & Time of Auction	Contact Person Details – (AO and Disposal team)
1) Hariyani Bhargarv Chandulal 2) Hariyani Kupali Bhargavkumar 3) Hariyani Naimish Chandulal. 4) Hariyani Chandubhai Bhargavbhai Present Address:-BHATIYA SOCIETY, BHURIYA HANUMAN NEAR, SHIV MANDAP ST.Chandrapur, Wankaner, Gujarat-363621. Permanent Address:Maruti Park, Chandrapur,Wankaner – 363621. Business Address:I Mogal Maa Delux Sales Agecny, Jin para, H.W. Octroi Naka Near,Ground floor,Shop No.7,wankaner. Property Address:Plot No. 44/p south side,bhatiya soc.,Nr. Shri suryamukhi hanuman ji Temple,Wankaner high way, at- chandrapur – 363621. Present Address:-Hariyani Naimish Chandulal. Siddharth Nagar,Opp. Amarshi Mill Building -06,Flat 308, wankaner Permanent Address:-Maruti Park, Bhatiya Soc.At – Chandrapur, Wankaer LAN - SHLHRAJK0000812 Date of Possession & Type 10.05.2026 & Physical Possession Encumbranches known Not Known	13(2) Notice date 14.11.2025. ---- Rs. 1294581/-(Rs. Twelve lakh ninety four thousand five hundred eighty one only) as on Dated.07-11-2025 under reference of Loan Account No. SHLHRAJK0000812.	Rs.15,01,100/- (Rs. Fifteen lakh one thousand one hundred only) Bid Increment: Rs. 10,000/- and in such multiples. Earnest Money Deposit (EMD)(Rs.) Rs. 1,50,110/-(Rupees One Lakh Fifty thousand one hundred ten only) Last date for submission of EMD : 29 June 2026, Time 10.00 a.m. to 05.00 p.m	30-JUNE-2026 & Auction Time: 11.00 a.m. to 01.00 p.m.	Debjyoti Roy 98747 02021 Ashfaq patka Chauhan- 98194 15477 Property inspection Date. 29 June 2026, Time.11 AM to 1 PM

Description of Property
A Residential Building with land adm. 47-81 sq. mts. Of plot no. 44 p southern side of chandrapur RS No. 132, sub dist. Wankaner, Dist. - Morbi
Boundaries of the said Property . East : survey no. 134/1/p, West : Plot No.45, North : Plot no.44p, South : South Plot No. 43

Name of Borrowers/ Co-Borrowers/ Guarantors/Mortgagers	Amount of Recovery and date of Demand Notice	Reserve Price (Rs.) & Bid Increment	Date & Time of Auction	Contact Person Details – (AO and Disposal team)
1). MR.RAJAKBHAI ALARKHBHAI HALA 2) MR.BASIR ALARKHBHAI HALA 3) MUMTAJBANU RAJKAKHBHAI HALA Present Address & Occupation Address:- CHANDRAPUR, GALAXY PARK 1, WANKANER,Gujarat-363621. Permanent Address:-Titahava, Rajkot Property Address:-Plot No. 16 Kanaiya Park, Nr. Jalaram Park,At-Chandrapur, Tal- wankaner,Dist.-Morbi LAN - SHLHRAJK0001316 Date of Possession & Type 10.05.2026 & Physical Possession Encumbranches known Not Known	13(2) Notice date 15.09.2025. ---- Rs. 1249656/- (Rupees Twelve Lakh forty nine thousand six hundred fifty six only) as on dated. 09/09/2025 under reference of Loan Account No. SHLHRAJK0001316.	Rs.13,58,500/- (Rs. Fifteen lakh one thousand one hundred only) Bid Increment: Rs. 10,000/- and in such multiples. Earnest Money Deposit (EMD)(Rs.) Rs. 1,35,850/-(Rupees One Lakh Thirty five thousand eight hundred fifty only) Last date for submission of EMD : 29 June 2026, Time 10.00 a.m. to 05.00 p.m	30-JUNE-2026 & Auction Time: 11.00 a.m. to 01.00 p.m.	Debjyoti Roy 98747 02021 Ashfaq patka Chauhan- 98194 15477 Property inspection Date. 29 June 2026, Time.11 AM to 1 PM

Description of Property
A Residential building with land adm 86.25 sq. mts. Of plot no. 16p area known as "Kanaiya Park" of Chadrapur Revenue Survey no. 125/1 sub dist. Wankaner- Dist. Morbi.
Boundaries of the property:- East : Road, West : Plot No.15, North : Common plot, South : Plot no.17

Name of Borrowers/ Co-Borrowers/ Guarantors/Mortgagers	Amount of Recovery and date of Demand Notice	Reserve Price (Rs.) & Bid Increment	Date & Time of Auction	Contact Person Details – (AO and Disposal team)
1). MR.RATHOD ANIL 2) RATHOD SANIGITA ANIL 3) RATHOD BECHARBHAI ANIL Present Address & Permanent Address:-SHANKARTEKRI, DANGARVADA JAMNAGAR,GUJARAT-361005 Occupation Address:-Jamnagar Municipal orporation,Lal Bunglow – Jamngar -361001 Property Address:-Om Sairam Park C,Dhinchada, Jamnagar Occupation Address:-RATHOD SANIGITA ANIL Alakh Housekeeping services. Bl. No. 248-B , Yogeshvardham, Hapa Dhuvav – Jamnagar – 361120. 3) RATHOD BECHARBHAI Present Address & Permanent Address:-SHANKARTEKRI 130,VALLABHNAGAR VALMIKI VAS, JAMNAGAR,GUJARAT-361005 Also: Occupation Address:- Alakh Housekeeping services. Bl. No. 248-B , Yogeshvardham, Hapa Dhuvav – Jamnagar – 361120 LAN - SHLHJMNG0000426 Date of Possession & Type 05.05.2026 & Physical Possession Encumbranches known Not Known	13(2) Notice date 15.09.2025. ---- Rs. 1249656/- (Rupees Twelve Lakh forty nine thousand six hundred fifty six only) as on dated. 09/09/2025 under reference of Loan Account No. SHLHJMNG0000426.	Rs.19,01,776/-(Rupees Nineteen lakh one thousand seven hundred seventy six only Bid Increment: Rs. 10,000/- and in such multiples. Earnest Money Deposit (EMD)(Rs.) Rs.1,90,177/-(Rupees One lakh ninety thousand one hundred seventy seven only Last date for submission of EMD : 29 June 2026, Time 10.00 a.m. to 05.00 p.m	30-JUNE-2026 & Auction Time: 11.00 a.m. to 01.00 p.m.	Debjyoti Roy 98747 02021 Ashfaq patka Chauhan- 98194 15477 Property inspection Date. 29 June 2026, Time.11 AM to 1 PM

Description of Property
In the dist. And Sub Dist. Jamnagar at Village – Dhinchada the land Bearing R.S. No. 37/p 1 adm. 12950 sq. mts. Jamnagar area development authority have sanctioned the lay out plan and the collector Jamnagar have converted in to non-agriculture land and as per layout plan this land divided into 1 to 88 residential plots known as " Om sairam Park C" pin code 361009. Out of this plots Om sai park – c plot no. 35 to 37 were amalgamated and given a new plot no. 35was sub plotted and divided into 5 sub plots i.e.35/1 to 35/5by the approval of Jamnagar area development authority out of sub plot no. 35/2 adm. Plot area 43.55 sq. mtr. And constriction area 54.96 sq.mtr.
Boundaries of the property:- East : 7.50 mtr wide road is situated, West : plot no. 32 is situated, North : sub plot no. 35/3 is situated , South : sub plot no. 35/1 is situated

1) **For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please refer the website of Truhome Finance Limited (Formerly Shriram Housing Finance Limited) website.**
2) **The intending bidders have to submit their EMD amount to be deposited by way of RTGS/NEFT to the account details mentioned herein below: BANK NAME: AXIS BANK LIMITED BRANCH: BANDRA KURLA COMPLEX, MUMBAI BANK ACCOUNT NO. Current Account No. 911020045677633 IFSC CODE: UTIB0000230.**
3) **The mortgagors/borrowers are given a last chance to pay the total dues with further interest before auction, failing which secured assets will be sold as per above schedule.**
4) **Please note that the secured creditor is going to issue the sale notice to all the Borrowers/ Guarantors/ Mortgagors by speed/ registered post. In case the same is not received by any of the parties, then this publication of sale notice may be treated as a substituted mode of service.**

Place : Morbi/Jamnagar
Date : 23-05-2026

Sd/- Authorised Officer- Truhome Finance Limited
(Formerly Shriram Housing Finance Limited)