

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

May 1, 2026

The Honorable Pete Hegseth  
Secretary of Defense  
U.S. Department of Defense  
1000 Defense Pentagon  
Washington, DC 20301

Secretary Hegseth,

On April 23, 2026, the Department of Justice (DOJ) charged an active duty, special operations U.S. Army soldier with using classified information to place bets on the prediction market Polymarket. DOJ alleges the soldier, who participated in the raid that captured Nicolas Maduro, wagered on both the timing and outcome of the operation and profited over \$400,000 on those bets.<sup>1</sup> If these allegations are proven true, this conduct is a profound betrayal of the soldier's oath and an outrageous breach of the trust placed in those to uphold our national security, to guard our nation's most sensitive secrets, and an unconscionable affront to his fellow soldiers.

We are certain you have seen additional reporting explaining the troubling and illegal use of prediction markets to profit on other bets regarding U.S. military action in places like Iran and Venezuela. Despite assurances from the prediction market industry that they do not issue contracts related to terrorism, assassination, and war, federally registered exchanges continue to post contracts on American military operations. For example, as of April 24, 2026, there were active bets on Polymarket about whether or when U.S. forces would wrest control of Kharg Island (see appendix A). Before DoD rescued the pilots shot down over Iran, there was a bet about whether DoD would successfully rescue those pilots (see appendix B).

Without question, these contracts, along with the numerous offerings like them attached in Appendix below, threaten our national security (see appendix C). The pattern of likely government insiders or military personnel using classified, military information to place bets on these contacts risks the lives of our servicemembers and compromises operations. Indeed, the perverse incentives inherent in conflict-related contracts could prompt leaders to prioritize personal profit over mission success. Further, such bets,

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<sup>1</sup> Jeremy Roebuck, "U.S. Soldier Gannon Ken Van Dyke Charged for Bets on Maduro's Capture," *The Washington Post*, April 23, 2026, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2026/04/23/polymarket-soldier-maduro-bet-charges/>.


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especially in the hours proceeding a military action, can alert our adversaries of American intent and risk servicemember lives and the mission. Given the pattern of bets placed close to such actions, whether in Venezuela or Iran, it is highly likely that individuals charged with keeping our country safe have chosen personal profit rather than upholding their oaths to the Nation. This is immoral, unethical, illegal, and corrosive to good order and discipline.

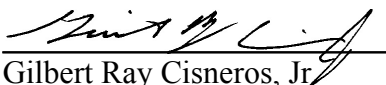
We urge you to issue a general order or regulation to prohibit all military and civilian personnel from utilizing prediction markets to place bets on any national security related topic. Our intent is not to ban prediction markets. However, contracts that implicate U.S. national security should remain out of bounds. To the extent that any individual, from a private to a general, violates this order, they should be held accountable in accordance with the Uniform Code of Military Justice.


We appreciate your attention to this urgent national security issue and look forward to your response.


Sincerely,

  
Eugene Simon Vindman  
Member of Congress

  
Troy Downing  
Member of Congress

  
Gilbert Ray Cisneros, Jr.  
Member of Congress

  
Donald Norcross  
Member of Congress


  
Chrissy Houlahan  
Member of Congress

  
Chris Deluzio  
Member of Congress


Congress of the United States  
Washington, DC 20515



Derek T. Tran  
Member of Congress



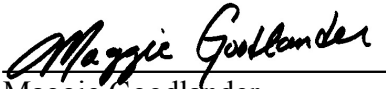
George Whitesides  
Member of Congress



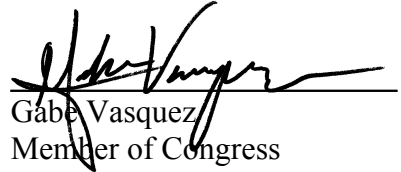
Wesley Bell  
Member of Congress



Seth Moulton  
Member of Congress



Maggie Goodlander  
Member of Congress



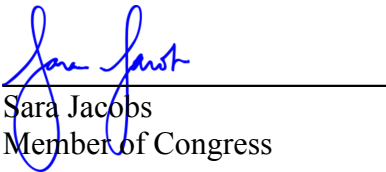
Gabe Vasquez  
Member of Congress



Patrick Ryan  
Member of Congress



Joe Courtney  
Member of Congress



Sara Jacobs  
Member of Congress




Herbert C. Conaway, Jr.  
Member of Congress

# Appendix A – April 24, 2026, Polymarket Contract on Iranian Control of Kharg Island Amid Regional US Military Deployments

Polymarket

How it works
Log In
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Trending
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Geopolitics · Khamenei


## Kharg Island no longer under Iranian control by...?

\$33,942,882 Vol. · Apr 30, 2026

Expiration	Current Price	Change	Buy Yes	Buy No
April 30 \$13,952,624 Vol.	4%	▼ 36%	Buy Yes 4.1¢	Buy No 96.0¢
May 31 \$2,265,182 Vol.	14%	▼ 32%	Buy Yes 14¢	Buy No 87¢
June 30 \$1,484,409 Vol.	16%	▼ 16%	Buy Yes 16¢	Buy No 85¢

View resolved

[Rules](#) [Market Context](#)


April 30

Buy
Sell
Market

Yes 4.1¢

No 96¢

Amount

\$0

+ \$1
+ \$5
+ \$10
+ \$100
Max

Trade

By trading, you agree to the [Terms of Use](#).

# Appendix B – April 3, 2026, Polymarket Contract on DoD Rescue of Aviators Shot Down in Iranian Airspace

The screenshot shows the Polymarket website interface. At the top, there is a search bar and a navigation menu with categories like Trending, Breaking, New, Politics, Sports, Crypto, Esports, Iran, Finance, Geopolitics, Tech, Culture, and Economy. A note on Middle East Markets is displayed, followed by the market title 'US confirms pilots rescued by...?' under the 'Politics · Iran' category. The market is marked as '+ NEW' and dated 'Apr 4, 2026'. Two outcomes are listed: 'April 3' with a 15% probability and 'Buy Yes 19¢' / 'Buy No 89¢' buttons, and 'April 4' with a 63% probability and 'Buy Yes 65¢' / 'Buy No 39¢' buttons.

Outcome	Probability	Buy Yes Price	Buy No Price
April 3	15%	19¢	89¢
April 4	63%	65¢	39¢

# Appendix C – April 24, 2026 Polymarket Contracts on US Military and National Defense Operations Globally



Geopolitics · Trump

## Will the Kharg Island oil terminal be hit by...?

</> 🔗 📌

Past ▾

Mar 31

\$2,252,384 Vol. | ⌚ Apr 30, 2026

Polymarket



April 30

\$706,870 Vol. 📄

9% ▼ 13%

Buy Yes 9¢

Buy No 92¢

Hide resolved ^



March 31

\$750,296 Vol.

No ❌



April 15

\$795,229 Vol.

No ❌



Geopolitics · Trump

## US obtains Iranian enriched uranium by...?

</> 🔗 📌

\$7,348,280 Vol. | ⌚ Apr 30, 2026

Polymarket

April 30

\$790,144 Vol.

1% ▼ 3%

Buy Yes 1.2¢

Buy No 98.9¢

May 31

\$6,433,788 Vol. 📄

11% ▼ 8%

Buy Yes 11¢

Buy No 90¢

December 31

\$124,349 Vol. 📄

29% ▼ 14%

Buy Yes 29¢

Buy No 72¢



Geopolitics · Middle East

### Will the U.S. invade Iran before 2027?

</> 🔗 📌

Past ▾ Dec 31

32% chance ▲18%

Polymarket



\$16,906,495 Vol. | Dec 31, 2026

1H 6H 1D 1W 1M ALL 🔍 ⚙️

Buy Sell Limit ▾

Yes 32¢ No 69¢

Limit Price - 0¢ +

Shares 0

-100 -10 +10 +100 +200

Set Expiration

Total \$0

To win ⓘ \$0

Trade

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Politics · Venezuela

### Will the U.S. invade Cuba in 2026?

</> 🔗 📌

23% chance ▲11%

Polymarket



\$1,463,052 Vol. | Dec 31, 2026

1H 6H 1D 1W 1M ALL 🔍 ⚙️

Buy Sell Limit ▾

Yes 22¢ No 77¢

Limit Price - 0¢ +

Shares 0

25% 50% Max

Set Expiration

You'll receive ⓘ \$0

Trade



Geopolitics · Trump

### US x Cuba military clash in 2026?

<> 🔗 📌

41% chance ▲ 22%

Polymarket



\$92,967 Vol. | ⌚ Dec 31, 2026

1H 6H 1D 1W 1M ALL 📏 ⚙️

Buy Sell Limit ▾

Yes 42¢ No 60¢

Limit Price - 0¢ +

Shares

-100 -10 +10 +100

Set Expiration

Total \$0

To win 📈 \$0

Trade



Geopolitics · Venezuela

### US military action against Cuba by...?

<> 🔗 📌

\$3,169,312 Vol. | ⌚ Dec 31, 2026

Polymarket

December 31

\$990,273 Vol. 📈

33% ▲ 15%

Buy Yes 34¢

Buy No 68¢

View resolved ▾

#### Rules Market Context

Tensions between the US and Cuba have escalated due to the Trump administration's oil blockade, enforced since late January 2026 after capturing former Venezuelan leader Nicolás Maduro, severely disrupting Havana's energy supplies. Last week, reports emerged that Pentagon officials received a White House directive to accelerate contingency planning for potential military operations, prompting Cuban leaders to warn of readiness for aggression while US surveillance drones patrol nearby airspace. Diplomatic overtures persist, including unconfirmed proposals for economic deals, but no intervention order has been issued amid concurrent US actions in Iran. Congressional bills aim to restrict funding for force without authorization, underscoring political hurdles to escalation before any resolution deadline.

Experimental AI-generated summary referencing Polymarket data. This is not trading advice and plays no role in how this market resolves. · Updated Apr 24, 2026, 10:32 AM EDT

December 31

Buy Sell Limit ▾

Yes 34¢ No 68¢

Limit Price - 0¢ +

Shares

-100 -10 +10 +100 +200

Set Expiration

Total \$0

To win 📈 \$0

Trade



Geopolitics · Foreign Policy

### U.S. forces in Gaza before 2027?

Past **Dec 31**

20% chance ▼ 17%



\$49,829 Vol. | Dec 31, 2026

1H 6H 1D 1W 1M ALL

Polymarket

Buy Sell Limit

Yes 22¢ No 83¢

Limit Price - 0¢ +

Shares

-100 -10 +10 +100 +20

Set Expiration

Total \$0

To win \$0

Trade

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Politics · Iraq

### U.S. evacuates Baghdad Embassy by...?

Past **Mar 31**

\$422,590 Vol. | Apr 30, 2026

Polymarket

April 30

\$28,609 Vol.

3% ▼ 14%

Buy Yes 3.7¢

Buy No 97.0¢

View resolved

#### Rules Market Context

This market will resolve to "Yes" if the U.S. government announces a full evacuation of the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad, Iraq, or a full evacuation of the embassy is otherwise confirmed by April 30, 2026, 11:59 PM ET. Otherwise, this market will resolve to "No".

A full evacuation announced within this market's timeframe will qualify for a "Yes" resolution regardless of whether an actual evacuation subsequently takes place within the timeframe.

Announcements of a partial evacuation, where some staff are intended to remain, will not count.... [Show more](#)

April 30

Buy Sell Limit

Yes 3.7¢ No 97¢

Limit Price - 0.0¢ +

Shares

-100 -10 +10 +100

Set Expiration

Total \$0

To win \$0

Trade



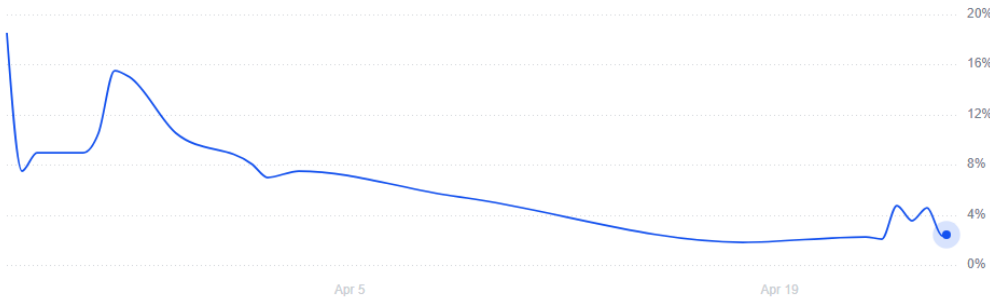
Politics · Israel X Iran

### U.S. evacuates Beirut Embassy by April 30?

Past ▾

Apr 30

2% chance ▼ 17%



\$18,597 Vol. | Apr 30, 2026

1H 6H 1D 1W 1M ALL

</> 🔗 📌

Polymarket

Buy Sell Limit ▾

Yes 2.9¢ No 98.1¢

Limit Price - 0.0¢ +

Shares 0

-100 -10 +10 +100

Set Expiration

Total \$0

To win \$0

Trade

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Politics · Trump

### US strike on Mexico by...?

\$3,285,223 Vol. | Dec 31, 2026

December 31

\$556,761 Vol. 📈

View resolved ▾

23% ▲ 9%

Buy Yes 24¢

Buy No 78¢

Rules Market Context

This market will resolve to "Yes" if a US-initiated drone, missile, or air strike on the soil of Mexico is announced or credibly reported to have occurred by the listed date ET. Otherwise, this market will resolve to "No".

For the purposes of this market, a qualifying "strike" is defined as the use of aerial bombs, drones, or missiles (including FPV and ATGM strikes as well as cruise or ballistic missiles) launched by any United States operatives, including military forces, intelligence agencies, or other U.S. government operatives, that physically impact ground territory within the listed country.... [Show more](#)

</> 🔗 📌

Polymarket



December 31

Buy Sell Limit ▾

Yes 24¢ No 78¢

Limit Price - 0¢ +

Shares 0

-100 -10 +10 +100 +200

Set Expiration

Total \$0

To win \$0



Politics · Venezuela

### US forces enter Venezuela again by...?



Past ▾

Jun 30

\$1,282,477 Vol. | ⌚ Jan 31, 2026



June 30

\$197,714 Vol. 📈

11% ▼ 29%

Buy Yes 12¢

Buy No 90¢

View resolved ▾

Rules Market Context

This market will resolve to "Yes" if active US military personnel physically enter Venezuela at any point between market creation and the specified date, 11:59 PM ET.

Military special operation forces will qualify; however, intelligence operatives will not count.

US military personnel must physically enter the terrestrial territory of Venezuela to qualify. Entering Venezuela's maritime or aerial territory will not count.... Show more

June 30

Buy Sell

Limit ▾

Yes 12¢

No 90¢

Limit Price - 0¢ +

Shares

-100 -10 +10 +100 +20

Set Expiration

Total \$0

To win ⓘ \$0

Trade



Geopolitics · Trump Presidency

### US x Russia military clash by...?



\$601,181 Vol. | ⌚ Jun 30, 2026



June 30, 2026

\$69,575 Vol.

3% ▼ 43%

Buy Yes 3.3¢

Buy No 97.7¢

December 31, 2026

\$8,409 Vol.

10% ▼ 7%

Buy Yes 10.8¢

Buy No 90.0¢

View resolved ▾

Rules Market Context

This market will resolve to "Yes" if there is a military encounter between the military forces of the United States and Russia between May 28 and June 30, 2026, 11:59 PM ET. Otherwise, this market will resolve to "No".

A "military encounter" is defined as any incident involving the use of force such as missile strikes, artillery fire, exchange of gunfire, or other forms of direct military engagement between U.S. and Russian military forces. Non-violent actions, such as airspace violations, firing of warning shots (such as the June, 2021 Black Sea Confrontations between Russian forces and HMS Defender), or cyberattacks will not qualify.... Show more

June 30, 2026

Buy Sell

Limit ▾

Yes 3.3¢

No 97.7¢

Limit Price - 0.0¢ +

Shares

-100 -10 +10 +100

Set Expiration

Total \$0

To win ⓘ \$0

Trade



Politics · Nigeria

### U.S. strike on Nigeria by...?

</> 🔗 📌

\$281,317 Vol. | Jun 30, 2026

Polymarket



June 30  
\$810 Vol.

30% ▼ 20%

Buy Yes 36¢

Buy No 77¢

View resolved ▾

#### Rules Market Context

This market will resolve to "Yes" if the US initiates a drone, missile, or air strike on Nigerian soil or any official Nigerian embassy or consulate by the listed date, 11:59 PM ET. Otherwise, this market will resolve to "No".

For the purposes of this market, a qualifying "strike" is defined as the use of aerial bombs, drones or missiles (including cruise or ballistic missiles) launched by US military forces that impact Nigerian ground territory or any official Nigerian embassy or consulate (e.g., if a weapons depot on Nigerian soil is hit by a US missile, this market will resolve to "Yes").... Show more

June 30

Buy Sell Limit ▾

Yes 36¢ No 77¢

Limit Price - 0¢ +

Shares

-100 -10 +10 +100

Set Expiration

Total \$0

To win 📈 \$0



Geopolitics · China

### US x China Military clash before 2027?

</> 🔗 📌

8% chance

Polymarket



\$86,529 Vol. | Dec 31, 2026

1H 6H 1D 1W 1M ALL 🔍 ⚙️

Buy Sell Limit ▾

Yes 9¢ No 93¢

Limit Price - 0¢ +

Shares

-100 -10 +10 +100

Set Expiration

Total \$0

To win 📈 \$0

Trade