Sitting on shpilkes

written by David M. Weinberg | 22.02.2026
It is not easy to navigate the twilight zone between regular life and all-out war. Get on with it. Destroy Iran’s key nodes of military power and revolutionary repression. And free Israelis from suspense, from living on pins and needles.

Iran faces its most dangerous moment in decades

written by Dr. Yossi Mansharof | 22.02.2026
Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei’s decision to enter into a direct confrontation with Israel has placed Iran in an unprecedented reality. The regime now finds itself more exposed than ever, without an effective regional buffer, facing mounting external pressure alongside a deepening internal crisis.

From Cyrus to today: Iranian resistance outlasted regime indoctrination

written by Ruth Wasserman Lande | 22.02.2026
Despite years of indoctrination and incitement, the Iranian people have not fully succumbed to the coerced messaging of the regime.

Iran’s likely response to a US attack

written by Dr. Yossi Mansharof | 22.02.2026

As US forces reinforce the region and President Trump escalates deterrent messaging, regime-linked discourse in Tehran has increasingly focused on potential response scenarios. Senior figures have openly threatened a preemptive strike. Iran’s available options center primarily on its missile and drone capabilities, but also include asymmetric measures such as targeted assassinations in Israel, possible activation of sleeper cell operatives inside the United States, and a ground incursion carried out by an actor from the Axis of Resistance, under the guidance of the Quds Force.

No opportunity to topple Iran’s regime should be missed

written by Meir Ben Shabbat | 22.02.2026

Less than 24 hours have passed since the arrest of the dictator from his palace in Caracas was announced, and the world remains in shock. US President Donald Trump’s bold decision to send his forces to arrest a sitting ruler, and his declaration that the US will govern Venezuela until the completion of the regime change process, have shaken the foundational assumptions of leaders, diplomats, security officials, legal experts, and academics regarding the rules of the game in the international system. This is happening at a difficult time for Tehran, which is not only losing a significant partner and ally but also receiving a clear hint about the country’s internal conduct.

The stated factors that led Trump to approve, and perhaps even initiate, the

operation are well known. It should be assumed that deterrence considerations that such an action creates toward “problematic actors” like Khamenei were also taken into account. As the well-known saying goes, “Shout at the tree so the donkey will hear.”

Even before the Venezuela operation and the current wave of protests that struck Iran, the Israeli-American agenda addressed the question of dealing with Iran’s rearmament and Hezbollah’s rearmament. It is difficult to know what was agreed upon in the Netanyahu-Trump meeting on this issue. The American president’s statements were quite clear regarding his support for forceful enforcement measures to halt nuclear advancement and rearmament with ballistic missiles.

It should be assumed that the demonstrations in Iran and the possibility that they will develop into a threat to the regime’s stability place Israel and the US in a dilemma regarding military action against Iran.

It is difficult to assess the true strength of this wave and its potential to bring about fundamental change. Beyond the difficulty of forecasting how such events unfold during their occurrence and the complexities of identifying the point at which systems collapse under the accumulated weight of factors and circumstances, it isn’t easy to obtain even a complete and reliable picture of reality. Every report on events is influenced by the reporter’s position on the matter and their hopes regarding the impact on the regime’s survival.

The trend is escalation

Currently, it appears that the wave of demonstrations in Iran is escalating. The joining of labor unions and the expansion of demonstrations to universities, regions, and additional sectors, sometimes involving violent confrontations with repression mechanisms, are evidence of this. The disconnection of the internet by regime mechanisms, as reported in recent updates, also indicates growing tension in the country.

The prevailing assessment among Iran experts is that the current protest wave is very far from threatening the regime’s existence. The fact that no cracks have formed in the regime’s loyal mechanisms and the absence of an organized opposition capable of replacing the government raise doubts that this wave will end differently from its predecessors.

This does not exempt decision-makers from the dilemma. On the one hand, military action against Iran at a stage when the flames are still low could extinguish the fire completely and lead to consensus and a joint stance, even if temporary, against the external attacker. On the other hand, such action might actually give the protests a tailwind, divide attention among the repression mechanisms and thereby harm them, and additionally worsen the economic crisis that fuels these protests.

Why should this be given such great importance? Because today, more than ever, it is clear that a fundamental and permanent solution to the challenges Iran poses to the West and the threats emanating from it toward Israel will be achieved only when the regime is replaced. As long as the Mullah regime exists, it will continue to strive for regional hegemony and Israel's erasure. It will continue to build and also operate its strategic capabilities to achieve these goals.

Unlike democratic regimes, the regime in Tehran is not limited by term lengths and is not obligated to win public trust. It can afford to plan its moves with a long-term vision, without considering political needs and short-term considerations. A temporary slowdown or lowering of profile in the face of obstacles like what Trump represents does not constitute a deviation from policy. On the contrary, this is a built-in component in the strategy for dealing with resistance. From such a regime's perspective, it is quite reasonable to lower the head until Trump is gone, and then return and act with greater vigor to achieve the goals.

When this is the state of affairs, no opportunity to replace the regime should be missed, and since such replacement depends on internal forces in Iran, it is vital to exhaust every possibility for this and examine Israeli-American moves in this sphere.

Trump's formula

The formula that President Trump chose to deal with the Iran problem at this time is setting red lines regarding rearmament and regarding shooting at demonstrators. Alongside additional internal challenges and difficult economic problems, it places Iran in a dilemma regarding its conduct and creates potential for regime exhaustion. Trump's warnings to Iran about standing alongside demonstrators in case regime mechanisms act against them with shooting achieve three important goals. The first is encouraging the continuation of protests and,

indirectly, the growth of leadership that can lead them. The second is tying the hands of repression mechanisms. It should be assumed they would prefer to reach a quick extinguishing of the fire. Trump's position allows demonstrations to persist over time. The third goal is preserving the legitimacy of the protests, even if regime elements continue to claim they are the product of external interference.

The Israeli and American leadership do not hide the hope for the regime's fall. Although this was not defined as a strategic goal in efforts vis-à-vis Iran, it is clear that as long as this regime continues to exist, threats from it to stability and security in the region and beyond will continue.

Published in Israel Hayom, January 06, 2026.

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Iranian regime shows signs of weakening

written by Dr. Yossi Mansharof | 22.02.2026

A document attributed to a senior Iranian official proves that even after the blow it suffered at Israel's hands, Tehran isn't sitting idle – it is doing everything it can to lay the groundwork for another massacre. Yet ironically, this very effort may unintentionally expose a critical vulnerability at the leadership of the Islamic Republic.

Tehran’s Post-War Reset: Deterrence, Missiles, and Regional Ambitions

written by Dr. Yossi Mansharof | 22.02.2026

Tehran emerges from the Gaza War reeling from Israel’s unprecedented blows to its military and proxy network. In response, Iran is accelerating efforts to rebuild its deterrence through missile and nuclear advances and the restoration of its regional infrastructure. Yet beneath its defiant rhetoric lies growing insecurity, as the regime struggles to recover its standing and project power in a transformed Middle East.

Will Trump’s plan push Iran to attack Israel?

written by Dr. Yossi Mansharof | 22.02.2026

The deal to end the war in Gaza could be interpreted in Tehran as an overarching strategic move directed against the Islamic Republic. Internal pressure on Iran’s Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei to launch a surprise attack on Israel may now intensify.

Staying alert: A new strategic

phase in the Israel-Iran confrontation

written by Dr. Yossi Mansharof | 22.02.2026

Israel and Iran stand on the threshold of a new phase in their strategic confrontation, and Israel must act with heightened intelligence alertness.

‘The protective wall of all civilization’

written by Dr. Raphael BenLevi | 22.02.2026

According to Iran researcher Dr. Raphael BenLevi, the blow that Israel dealt to Tehran not only thwarted a serious strategic threat, but heralds a profound change in the status and role of the Jewish state. The tendency to explain global conflicts solely in military and economic terms, he says, misses the ideological war between West and East and between oppression and freedom.

Published in Israel Hayom, July 04, 2025.

