

# Israel braces for long wars of attrition

written by David M. Weinberg | 05.06.2025

Why has the US under President Donald Trump failed to broker an end to the Russia-Ukraine war, an end to the Hamas war against Israel and the hostage crisis, an end to Houthi assaults on Israel, and an end to the Iranian nuclear bomb program?

Because Trump and his team have the wrong paradigm in mind. They approach everything with a pragmatist, transactional perspective. They see everything through dispassionate business eyeglasses. They think that America's enemies do the same.

Worse still, Trump thinks that the weighty economic power of America and the force of his own HUGE personality will bend adversaries to his will.

But what if America's challengers are motivated by deeper, darker purposes? What if Russia, Iran, Hamas, and the Houthis (and even the Chinese) are driven by ideological ambitions that go far beyond the calculations of economic and other cold-neutral self-interest? What if these actors are prepared for decades of war against the West, and specifically against Israel, no matter what "great deals" Trump offers them?

The latest example of such American miscalculation is the reported Trump administration proposal to shoehorn Iran's program for enrichment of uranium to atomic-bomb levels into some wacky offshore consortium of Middle East countries including Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Turkey alongside the US. This would somehow dilute or restrict Iran's near-bomb-ready nuclear colossus.

But of course, Iranian dictator Ayatollah Khamenei defiantly has rejected this idea, for ideological reasons. "National independence means that the Iranian nation stands on its own feet; it means not waiting for a green or red light from others," he declared.

Iran's resolve to forge its own path without foreign interference "defines its sovereignty," he said. "We can" is a revolutionary principle taught by Imam

Khomeini, he bellowed. He proceeded to call US proposals rude, insolent, arrogant, destructive, and “deviating from the motivations and sacrifices rooted in our people’s faith.”

Khamenei ranted on about Zionist “crimes,” with the usual formulas about Israel as a cancer in the Middle East that must and will be eliminated by Iran, and he insisted that Iran is developing all means to do so. “By definite divine decree, the Zionist regime is collapsing. God willing, the day [of its demise] is not far off.”

In short, no pragmatic deal offered by the US to Iran nor any further Western sanctions against it are going to knock the Islamic Republic off its radical path, even if it bends a bit to mollify Trump for a bit. Ingrained ideological commitment for the long-term trumps short term accommodations to Trump.

The algorithm by which America and Israel’s adversaries operate is attrition; long wars of attrition, informed by an ethos of sacrifice and eschatological visions of zealous, crushing victory.

AFTER OCTOBER 7, all Israeli leaders and most of the Israeli public recognize this; that the set of rules by which the worst actors in the Middle East operate are ideological, attritional, genocidal; not accommodational or transactional.

For example, Israelis understand that beyond whatever temporary accords might unfortunately be necessary to obtain the release of a few more Israeli hostages held criminally and viciously by Hamas, there are no long-term accommodations with Hamas. It must be rooted out from Gaza, Judea, and Samaria – and this means a decade (or more) of bloody warfare at varying degrees of intensity.

It means “managing the conflict” through the determined use of force in a proactive, preemptive, and persistent manner. It means no establishment of any runaway, radical, revolutionary Palestinian states.

And if there are any accommodations and reconciliations in the broader region to be had, they run through the Abraham Accords prism which purposefully and smartly sidelined the Palestinian issue.

(This is also why it is so nonsensical of France, Saudi Arabia, and others to resuscitate delusions of Palestinian statehood, specifically now. This is a recipe for devastating disappointment and escalated conflict. And of course, for the

isolation of Israel – which may be the point of the whole French-Saudi exercise.)

Similarly, Israelis understand that beyond whatever interim accords might be possible with the new Al-Jolani regime in Syria and the Aoun government in Lebanon, the IDF itself must and will continue to regularly interdict threats to Israel over the borders with these countries. Israel will not sit back for a decade or two, merely gathering intelligence on emerging threats until the threat reaches monstrous proportions (as Israel unfortunately did versus Hezbollah).

The same goes for Judea and Samaria. Nobody is under the illusion that any Palestinian “authority” can or will counteract the build-up of Iranian backed Islamic terrorist armies in these areas – which directly threaten Jerusalem and central Israel. Only the IDF can and will; thus, the full-scale Israeli military operations in places like Jenin, Tulkarm, and Nablus to resolutely rout out such threats. This is likely to be a permanent feature of Israeli policy. President Macron should take note.

The same goes for Iran. The IAEA is warning that Iran already has enriched enough uranium at near-bomb-ready levels for 6-8 nuclear bombs, and that its advanced centrifuges could do so many times over within three months’ time. Thus, Israelis know that complete dismantling or military destruction of this apparatus (as well as Iran’s ballistic missile empire) is necessary soon.

Half or cosmetic measures based on “trust” that purport to put the Iranian nuclear juggernaut to bed are insufficient. Especially if they ignore the missile threat and Iran’s other hegemonic incursions across the region. Any such boondoggle of an American accord with Iran will force to Israel to act against Tehran on its own.

THE ENEMY wars of attrition against Israel, like the drawn-out and purposefully never-ending negotiations for hostage release, have an additional, central purpose. This is the ripping to shreds of Israeli society from within – the exacerbation of political and religious-social divisions; the exhaustion of Israeli citizens and fighters; and the sapping of a will to fight on.

Alas, this enemy strategy is highly effective. Israel is indeed increasingly drained and divided (not to mention highly taxed and exasperated with the country’s leadership); although not crushingly so.

I am certain, as detailed above, that most Israelis understand the long-term ideological and civilizational nature of the battles ahead and are girding themselves for them. This, irrespective of what political changes may be wrought by an Israeli election campaign over the next year and regardless of what mistakes of accommodation/surrender might be made in the coming weeks by Western leaders.

Israelis have every reason to believe that the State of Israel can successfully reset the regional strategic architecture in positive directions - as it did once through the Abraham Accords; as it has in going a long way toward crushing Hamas and Hezbollah (which also sped forward collapse of the Russian- and Iranian-backed Assad regime in Syria); as it has in stripping Iran of its air defenses, and more.

The question is: How does one advance a deeper, more mature, more resilient, and more patient appreciation of threats and responsibilities in the Middle East among Western leaders? How does one assist them in growing a spine and backing Israel along its long path toward security and prosperity?

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## **When Trump's ego meets Khamenei's tenacity**

written by David M. Weinberg | 05.06.2025

This third installment of my trilogy on Iran examines the minimum threshold for an American nuclear deal with the Islamic Republic, and American and Israeli options in the likely case that such a deal is not achievable.

In previous weeks, we reviewed the treacherous Iranian record (its overarching revolutionary ambitions to dominate the region, its proxy wars, and nuclear and missile programs), and President Donald Trump's strategic worldview.

I argued that Trump's plans for winning in the global struggle against China and his hope for a reset in relations with Russia depend on proving his mettle in confrontation with Iran.

I furthermore argued that if Trump's threats against Iran amount to no more than another Obama-style soft deal that kicks the Iranian nuclear can down the road – then Trump's presidency will be over, at least in international affairs. He will never be the “transformational” president with “historic” achievements that he so explicitly wants to be.

The key to getting a “good deal” with Iran is to differentiate between arms control and nuclear disarmament. President Barack Obama settled for arms control in 2015, restricting Iran's nuclear program but leaving it intact, legitimized, and primed to accelerate as soon as temporary restrictions expired. And he freed tens of billions of dollars of frozen funds to fuel Iran's military march forward.

Obama aimed low and ultimately paved the way for Iran's emergence as a nuclear threshold state.

South Africa, by contrast, initiated nuclear disarmament in 1990, as Libya did after the US invasion of Iraq in 2003. This path leaves no enrichment and weaponization infrastructure hanging around for the regime to change its mind.

That is exactly what Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu told Trump this week: Libya is the model. US National Security Advisor Mike Walz specified that Iran must “hand over and give up” all elements of its nuclear program, including missiles, weaponization, and uranium enrichment.

In Trump's shorthand: “Supervise, check it, inspect it, and then blow it up or just make sure that there [are] no more nuclear facilities.” Last week he said that he is pursuing a deal “that would be just as good as if you won militarily.”

Three experts from the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies (FDD) in Washington DC this week laid out in detail what such a win would be, what complete disarmament must entail. It means “full, permanent, and verifiable dismantlement, export, or in-place destruction” of Iran's uranium and plutonium production assets; “anytime, anywhere” inspections; and an end to nuclear weapons R&D.

It also means termination of Iran's ballistic missile, cruise missile, and drone arsenals; an end to Iran's illicit nuclear and missile imports and exports; and especially to its nuclear, missile, and arms agreements with Russia, China, and North Korea. And oh yeah, also an end to Tehran's longtime support for Hamas, Hezbollah, the Houthis, and other proxy forces.

All this would require super-invasive American or International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) monitoring of Iran's bank accounts, uranium mines, mills, ore processing facilities, military and missile bases, ports and airfields, along with total destruction of Iran's underground bunkers for nuclear activities and weapons storage.

IN MY VIEW, the likelihood that Iranian leader Ayatollah Khamenei will agree to anything remotely resembling such a dismantlement of Iranian power, such an evisceration of Iranian sovereignty and supremacy - is nil.

I think it more likely that Israeli Attorney General Gali Baharav-Miara and General Security Service Director Ronen Bar will vote for Netanyahu in the next Israeli election than Ali Hosseini Khamenei bowing nicely before Trump and presiding over disembowelment of the Islamic Revolution.

Remember: Tehran has spent four decades and hundreds of billions of dollars developing its military power and regional ascendancy, accompanied by considerable suffering ("sacrifice") of the Iranian people to this end. All this, based on deep ideological-religious conviction, on a dark eschatological vision that involves genocide against Israel and West and downright destruction of enemy civilization.

So, it is much more likely that in this weekend's talks, Iran will do what it does best: - delay, offer reversible concessions, and deflect US power. Previous American administrations have even rewarded Iran with sanctions relief simply for staying at the negotiating table! As FDD director Mark Dubowitz notes, Iran is a master at rope-a-doping American presidents.

The difference - for Trump, Netanyahu, and the West - is that this time, there is no time. Iran is minutes or months away from unveiling its first nuclear bomb.

According to a biennial report published Tuesday by international nuclear watchdogs IAEA and NEA, known as the Red Book, Iran's uranium reserves are



much larger than previously estimated, and it is set to increase production of uranium ore from 21 to 71 tons this year. No country in the world has enriched uranium to 60 percent, as Iran has, without building nuclear weapons – so Iran's intentions are clear.

THIS LEAVES the Trump Administration with three choices. The first option is to capitulate; to cut a weak, watered-down, wishy-washy deal with Iran that pretends to check Iranian nuclear and other power while vapidly claiming that it is a "HUGE" victory for Washington.

You have to wonder who will prevail: Trump's ego or Khamenei's tenacity?

I would like to believe that Trump will not fall into this hole, but given his unpredictable nature, self-regard as the greatest global dealmaker, and oft-expressed desire to be recognized as world class peacemaker – this cannot be ruled out.

Israel must do everything in its power to prevent such an American collapse. Selling out to Iran would be ghastlier than bowing to Russia (regarding Ukraine), and far more devastating to Israel's security.

Trump's second option is to bomb Iran to kingdom come – not only its military and oil facilities but also regime loci of power. This would be an attempt to eliminate Iran's military threat for decades, to strip Iran of the economic ability to swiftly rebuild its military, and to decapitate the current leadership and hopefully effect regime change.

Trump's third option is to let Israel do the job or at least start the job of destroying Iran's frontline nuclear and missile bases, with Washington kicking-in with auxiliary offensive and defensive moves to back-up Israel and demonstrate to Tehran that its hegemonic gig is up.

If and when Iran is stupid enough to make good on its threats to retaliate by lashing-out at Israel, at US troops and facilities in the Arabian Gulf, and at American allies in the region – Trump will have no choice but unleash America's military might against Iran too.

In this scenario, nasty wags assuredly will accuse Israel of "dragging" the US into war but so be it. In the absence of Iranian nuclear capitulation to the US, there

will be no choice. I think this to be the most responsible and most likely scenario.

After all, twice over the past year Iran assaulted Israel with ballistic missiles, and Iran holds deep responsibility for the 2023 Hamas and 2024 Hezbollah assaults on Israel too. Israelis have learned the hard way to take seriously Iran's further genocidal threats.

According to the text of the Passover Haggadah read in Jewish homes this weekend, "in every generation enemies arise seeking the elimination of the Jewish People" (*bechol dor vador omdim aleinu lechaloteinu*), "but G-d gives the National of Israel strength to overcome, survive, and thrive" (*veHakadosh Baruch Hu matzileinu miyadam*). It surely will be so in the impending mega-confrontation with Iran, too.

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# Israel's High Court just shattered the international courts' false Gaza narrative

written by Arsen Ostrovsky | 05.06.2025

The truth matters. The law matters. And what Israel's Supreme Court just showed is that even in the fog of war, when politics runs hot and justice often runs cold, there is still room for reasoned, moral and lawful adjudication.

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# **Hit the Houthis but eviscerate Tehran**

written by David M. Weinberg | 05.06.2025

An American-Israeli strike on Iran's nuclear bomb facilities and missile bases is essential; the linchpin of a necessary regional reset; the fulcrum for ameliorating most flashpoints in the region.