

Staying alert: A new strategic phase in the Israel-Iran confrontation

written by Dr. Yossi Mansharof | 14.07.2025

Iran emerged battered and humiliated from the recent “12 Day War,” as it is referred to in Tehran, after suffering a blow that included the elimination of many of its senior security officials, leading nuclear scientists, as well as attacks on nuclear facilities, security centers, regime symbols, and repression hubs.

Nevertheless, Iran also has a sense of achievement, due to the damage its missile strikes inflicted on Israel, and its success in maintaining functional continuity during the war. Tehran claims its main achievement is the preservation of the Islamic regime, based on the assumption that this was Israel’s primary goal by waging the war.

Since the war ended, Iran’s media has focused on two main issues. First, regarding the potential renewal of nuclear negotiations with the US, Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian is facing criticism from both conservative and radical-conservative factions. This stems from his desire to resume talks on the condition that Tehran receives guarantees from Washington that it will not be attacked again by the US, and from the implicit trust he still places in US President Donald Trump.

Second, in response to voices within Iran claiming that Tehran emerged victorious and therefore has no need to attack Israel, the radical-conservative daily *Vatan-e Emrooz* reported on Sunday that senior Iranian political and security officials are “seriously considering” launching a preemptive strike against Israel.

Growing anxiety in Tehran

The paper explained that this consideration comes in light of threats made by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Defense Minister Israel Katz to take enforcement action if Iran renews efforts to develop nuclear weapons or expands its ballistic missile program. In addition, with reports of US arms shipments to Israel since the war ended, the daily assessed that another Israeli strike is likely.

It therefore called on the Iranian regime to prepare for a preemptive attack “a day, a few hours, or even just one hour” before a potential Zionist strike, if Iranian security leaders conclude that such an attack is imminent. To prepare

Iranian public opinion for this scenario, the daily argued that such a move could decisively end the issue of attacks on Iran and serve as a basis for long-term deterrence.

Meanwhile, signs of growing anxiety are evident in Tehran, due both to the consequences of the war and to threats from France, Britain, and Germany to support the reactivation of the UN Security Council's snapback sanctions mechanism against Iran in mid-October 2025. Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi stated in an interview with French media (July 10) that, in Tehran's view, the reactivation of snapback sanctions would be equivalent to a military attack.

In parallel, Mehdi Mohammadi – a strategic adviser to Iranian Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, and a former member of Iran's nuclear negotiation team between 2007 and 2013 – posted on Instagram (July 12) a story showing a simulated nuclear strike on Israel.

After the controversial post began attracting headlines and widespread attention, Mohammadi deleted it within minutes, explaining that it had been posted by his page administrator. He clarified that, in his view, a nuclear weapon would enhance Iran's deterrence capabilities.

The beginning of a new phase

Israel and Iran stand on the threshold of a new phase in their strategic confrontation. Israel has demonstrated both its determination to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons and its advanced capabilities to support that policy.

Iran, for its part, remains suspicious, vengeful, and alert, as reflected in its senior officials' statements. It is important to note that after the war ended, Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi announced on June 26 that Tehran had not agreed to a ceasefire, but only to halting attacks against Israel, and only if Israel did the same. This increases the likelihood of an Iranian miscalculation, and as a result, the possibility of a surprise missile strike on Israel.

Israel's main challenge in this new phase is to combine heightened intelligence alertness with strategic coordination with the US, in order to block any Iranian attempts to obtain nuclear weapons, and to prevent a miscalculation that could trigger renewed war. Concurrently, Israel must reach the most accurate possible assessment of the damage inflicted on Iran's nuclear program so it can plan its next steps accordingly.

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