

For these reasons, I don't see a prospect for interaction between Iran and the US. We need to consider that due to the upcoming elections, the US is focused on the presidential elections in a few weeks, and it does not want a major crisis to occur in the foreign policy sphere that would have significant and direct impacts on US interests, in a way that would require direct US intervention, either extensive or limited. In any case, the US wants to be in the loop of Israel's plans and not be caught off guard.

In fact, Washington wants the achievements Israel has made so far in countering Iran's allies to be preserved and, at the same time, it prefers that nothing happens that Iran gets extensively involved in the conflict. Let's not forget that it was last spring that there was talk of an unwritten understanding between Iran and the US for a prisoner exchange, the release of frozen Iranian assets, and a reduction in tensions between the two countries, including avoiding attacks by Iran's allies on US interests and US non-interference in Iran's secret oil exports.

If Mr. [Masoud] Pezeshkian had been elected as president last spring and had raised the slogan of improving relations with the West, we would have been facing a different situation. However, after Hamas's operations last fall and the start of the war in Gaza, we are

facing different realities in the region, including attacks by Iran's allies on US interests, which, after the killing of US personnel and extensive US attacks on the positions of Iran's allied groups in Iraq, were resumed as part of the previous understanding between Tehran and Washington.

As a result, from last spring to the present, we have moved from a space where interaction between Iran and the US was underway and there was a sense that Tehran and Washington were inclined to reduce tensions, to a space where tensions are increasing every day and there is no clear prospect for interaction between the two sides.

Resolving Iran-US issues after Gaza War

Ahmad Dastmalchian

To stop the current conflicts in the Middle East, the most effective step the Americans should take is to stop Israel's countless crimes in the region. The whole world is united in condemning Israel's actions in the region, considering them to be against international and humanitarian laws and norms. There is no doubt that the focal point of the current crisis in the Middle East is the Israeli war in Gaza and, more recently, Lebanon.

Currently, there are two perspectives on the role of the US in the current

elections, Washington will be more active in containing tensions and crisis in the Middle East and will enter into negotiations and dialogue.

Of course, there is another perspective that some observers and analysts believe that Israel is, in fact, carrying out US orders, and what Israel is doing in the Middle East is advancing US desires and plans in the region. I do not entirely agree with this perspective. In my opinion, there is no basis or will for direct confrontation from the US.

Based on the US approach to managing and containing the crisis, the US intends to take a high-risk approach to confronting Iran, and as long as the US does not have such an intention, Iran also does not have an inclination to engage in such a confrontation. Such a confrontation is possible only if the crisis in the region completely gets out of control, and in that case, the situation will change, and it is unclear what situation the Middle East will face. But as long as crisis management is implemented by both sides, there is no reason for direct confrontation between Iran and the US in the region.

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US President Joe Biden (R) meets with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at the White House in Washington on July 25, 2024.
● ANDREW HARNIK/
GETTY IMAGES



Both sides (Iran and the US) are currently trying to change their red lines and draw new ones.

situation in the Middle East. Some analysts and observers believe that the US and Iran are trying to manage the crisis. From this perspective, it seems that there is a shared understanding between Iran and the US, which, unlike Netanyahu, who wants to expand the crisis to save his own political fate, Tehran and Washington do not have an inclination to expand the conflict due to their own interests. Of course, Iran and the US have different motivations. Iran has its own reasons and motivations, and the US has its own. Direct and indirect talks between Iran and the US to prevent the escalation of tensions in the region began during the presidency of the late President Ebrahim Raisi.

In my opinion, now is a good opportunity to create a connection between Tehran and Washington and prevent the situation from getting out of control. If a widespread war breaks out in the region, it will not only put Iran's interests at risk, but also those of the US. Given the predicted dire situation ahead, it is essential for the US to take the initiative and engage in constructive dialogue with effective parties in the region. Although the US is currently on the eve of elections and the government is heavily focused on domestic affairs, I believe that after the

the region, considering them to be against international and humanitarian laws and norms. There is no doubt that the focal point of the current crisis in the Middle East is the Israeli war in Gaza and, more recently, Lebanon.

Both the US and its Western allies agree that the Gaza war must end, the path for humanitarian aid to the people of Gaza must be opened, and a ceasefire must be established. Almost all world leaders, not just Muslim countries, but Western countries and even the US, constantly emphasize the need for a ceasefire in Gaza as a prerequisite for stopping the conflict, at least in word. The focal point of the current crisis in the Middle East is the Gaza war.

If the countries of the region, Iran, and the US, in cooperation with other countries of the world, can tame Netanyahu through interaction and cooperation and stop the continuation of this war, I believe that other issues between us and the US can be reviewed in a negotiating process and resolved in the same way that was done previously in the framework of the JCPOA, within the framework of national interests.

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An opportunity that Netanyahu should be denied



● REUTERS



By Mostafa Shirmohamadi
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OPINION

A few hours after the inauguration of Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian on July 30, Ismail Haniyeh, the head of Hamas' political bureau, who had traveled to the Iranian capital to attend the ceremony, was assassinated at his residence in northern Tehran in the wee hours of the day.

No one expected such a shocking incident to happen in the early days of Pezeshkian in office – a reformist president, who had won Iran's July election with a campaign promise to lift US sanctions on Iran through negotiations and improve relations with other countries.

The finger was pointed at Israel, which had long been involved in killing Palestinian and Lebanese resistance leaders. It is no secret that Israel stood to gain the most from Haniyeh's murder, although the regime did not claim responsibility.

Israel's warmongering Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu could have ordered the assassination of Haniyeh in another country, such as his permanent residence in Qatar or Turkey, but his choice of Tehran and the timing which came shortly after Pezeshkian's swearing-in appeared to be deliberate.

Less than two months after Haniyeh's assassination, another targeted killing took place; this time in Lebanon's capital Beirut.

While Netanyahu was addressing the UN General Assembly in New York on Friday, Israeli warplanes bombed buildings where Hezbollah Secretary-General Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah and several other leaders of the movement, as well as a senior commander of Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps, had come together for a meeting. The massive bombardment leveled the buildings, killing Nasrallah and others.

The assassination of Nasrallah, who is seen as the most prominent leader of the Middle Eastern resistance movement against Israeli occupation, came hot on the heels of the talks Pezeshkian and his Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi held with leaders and foreign ministers of the parties to the 2015 nuclear deal, known as the JCPOA, on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly meeting to set the stage for the resumption of negotiations to resuscitate the tattered agreement and lift hefty sanctions on Iran.

Over the years, Netanyahu had done his utmost to hinder an agreement between the Islamic Republic and the West on the Iranian nuclear program and demonized Iran's peaceful nuclear work by falsely claiming that the country was just a few days away from making an atomic bomb. Netanyahu failed to achieve his goal during the term of former US president Barack Obama, but his successor, Donald Trump, fulfilled his dreams by walking out of the JCPOA

in 2018 and imposing "toughest ever" sanctions on Iran.

It is not hard to imagine how much Netanyahu is terrified of Pezeshkian's possible efforts to resume nuclear talks and seek détente with the European Union, and, to some extent, the United States.

It appears that Netanyahu dealt his first blow to Pezeshkian's government by killing Haniyeh in Tehran and delivered a second one to potential efforts to ease tensions by assassinating Nasrallah.

Political factions in Iran that are opposed to negotiations on the nuclear issue have come out again, shouting that Iran should not engage in any direct or indirect talks with the US, as it is the main supporter of the Israeli regime and its terrorist actions. It stands out a mile that the Pezeshkian administration should not fall for such provocations as this is a trap set by Netanyahu to nip in the bud any potential diplomatic efforts to ease tensions between Iran and the West. The Israeli premier has a long history of torpedoing any such rapprochement.

The assassination of Nasrallah, Haniyeh and others has hurt the feelings of millions of Muslim and non-Muslim supporters of the Resistance Front. However, while reserving the right to hit back at Israel over its heinous crimes and avenge the resistance leaders, Iran should act shrewdly and steer clear of walking into Netanyahu's trap of closing the gate to diplomacy on the nuclear standoff.

By carrying out such assassinations in recent months, Netanyahu aimed to kill two birds with one stone, as the saying goes. He has already achieved his first goal by liquidating a number of top leaders and commanders of the Resistance Front, but he should not be given the chance to attain his second goal, that is to sabotage Iran's foreign policy.