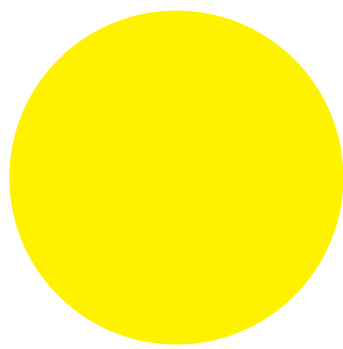


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2 >



Iran Daily

Vol. 7861 • Sunday, June 22 2025 • Tir 01, 1404 • Dhu al-Hijjah 26, 1446 • 100,000 rials • 2 pages



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2 >



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2 >

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi (2nd L, first row) poses with his counterparts for a family photo during the 51st session of the Council of Foreign Ministers of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in Istanbul, Turkey on June 21, 2025.

• AFP

Will Trump fall for Netanyahu’s trap?

By Mohammad Bayat
Middle East affairs analyst

OPINION
EXCLUSIVE

On June 13, Israel launched a preemptive strike on Iran, setting off a fresh war in the region. In military doctrine, a preemptive strike like this means the aggressor lays out the battlefield on its own terms, trying to anticipate the enemy’s next moves, bank on the element of surprise, and land a blow big enough to shape the outcome from the start. That’s exactly the mindset Israel brought to the table when it lit the fuse. On day one of the war (June 13), it carried out a series of targeted assassinations against senior Iranian military commanders and nuclear scientists. It also struck key defense and nuclear assets, hoping to throw

the Iranian command structure off balance, sow panic among the public, and cripple Iran’s ability to fight back, both offensively and defensively. And yet, despite the loss of major figures like General Mohammad Bagheri, General Hossein Salami, General Amir Ali Hajizadeh, and General Gholam Ali Rashid, Iran’s armed forces have managed to bounce back. They’ve tapped into their vast missile and drone infrastructure, hitting strategic targets deep inside the occupied territories, including Tel Aviv, the occupied al-Quds, Haifa, and beyond. What we’re witnessing now is a classic military standoff. On one side, Israel is leaning on its advanced air force and internal collaborators in Iran. On the other, the Islamic Republic is hitting back with precision, using hypersonic missiles and

next-gen drones to wage an entirely different kind of fight. The game-changer? Netanyahu’s entire strategy of keeping Iran in check is falling apart. After Iran launched the first and second waves of its True Promise operations, the Israeli side assumed it had figured out the rhythm of Iranian retaliation. They thought their missile defense systems could handle whatever came their way, whether in waves or in smaller strikes. But that assumption has gone up in smoke. This latest war has turned the occupied territories into sitting ducks. Iranian projectiles are pounding critical infrastructure, including refineries, Israeli air force hangars, and the offices of top intelligence agencies like Mossad. Despite Israel’s attempts to black out the media, footage of these missile strikes is trickling out online and going

viral across social media. So why is Israel so desperate to drag the US into this war? It’s simple: the psychological breakdown inside the occupied territories is real. Civilians are panicking. They’ve never seen a war like this. Sure, groups like Hezbollah, Hamas, and Ansarullah have inflicted damage on Israel in recent years, but nothing comes close to the precision and intensity of Iran’s current missile and drone attacks. It’s a whole new game. Take the Fattah missile, for example. These warheads are slipping right past Israeli and US-backed air defenses and slamming into their targets with devastating impact. No wonder Netanyahu is facing outrage at home. He’s failed to shield civilians or even lay out a plan to rebuild what’s been destroyed. Now comes the million-dollar question: will the US step in or

stay out? That decision could reshape the entire outcome of the war. From day one, since the October 7 Hamas attack, Netanyahu has been angling to drag America into yet another Middle East war. He’s been working both the Biden and Trump administrations, hoping someone, anyone, will take the bait. And if we trace things back to April 2024, when Israel bombed Iran’s consulate building in Damascus, this whole push to pull America in starts to make a lot more sense. Netanyahu wants a direct US-Iran war. He’s been laying the groundwork for months. But before Washington signs on to anything, it needs to ask some hard questions. What happens to the 40,000 US troops stationed around Iran if war breaks out? What’s the plan for keeping global en-

ergy routes open, especially through the Strait of Hormuz and Bab el-Mandeb? Can the US economy even handle oil prices shooting past \$200 a barrel? These are questions Trump’s national security team and Pentagon brass need to throw on the table, fast. Because if Trump decides to cozy up to Netanyahu, the blowback could be severe, not just for the US, but for the future of the Republican Party. If Trump wants to play a role in this crisis, the smart move is to step in as a mediator, rein in Israel’s recklessness, and set the stage for fresh nuclear talks. That’s the only way to bring balance back to the region. Otherwise, the Middle East is heading toward an all-out, long-haul war, one that could choke off every last drop of oil trying to leave it.