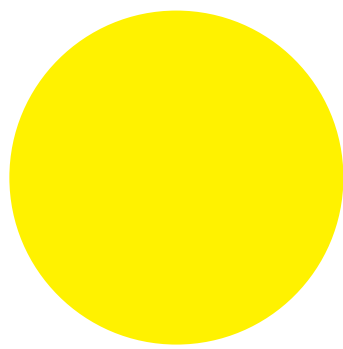


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## Will Trump fall for Netanyahu's trap?

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.



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# ‘Very dangerous for everyone’ if US enters Iran-Israel war: *Araghchi*

## Washington used nuclear talks as ‘cover’ for Tel Aviv’s aggression

### International Desk

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said on Saturday it would be “very, very dangerous for everyone” if the United States becomes actively involved in the Israel’s aggression against Iran. The Iranian foreign minister made the remarks on the sidelines of a meeting of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in Turkish city of Istanbul, which was held to discuss the regime’s aggression against Iran. During the past week, Iran has launched missile and drone strikes on Israel after the regime attacked Iran in an unprovoked act of aggression overnight on June 13. According to Iran’s Health Ministry, more than 400 people including several top Iranian military officials have been killed in the regime’s strikes. The attacks have also injured more than 3,000 others. US President Donald Trump has said he will decide within two weeks on whether



Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi attends the 51st Meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in Istanbul, Turkey on June 21, 2025.  
● AA

the US military will get directly involved in the conflict. Araghchi said that Iran’s attacks on Israel’s targets in the occupied territories are the country’s “legitimate right” to defend itself against the regime’s aggression. Turkish President Recep Tayyip said on Saturday that, “We are optimistic that Iran will win. Israel attacked Iran during the negotiations (be-

tween Tehran and Washington)”. He also denounced the international community’s inaction over the Israel’s aggression. The strikes on Iran came two days before a sixth round of nuclear negotiations between Tehran and Washington had been scheduled to take place in Oman. In an interview with NBC on Friday, Araghchi said the US was not genuinely interested in diplomacy and had mere-

ly used talks as a “cover” for the Israel’s aggression against Iran. The Iranian top diplomat said that Iran is uncertain whether it can trust the US in diplomatic talks after the Israeli aggression. “So they had perhaps this plan in their mind, and they just needed negotiations perhaps to cover it up,” he said. “We don’t know how we can trust them anymore.

What they did was, in fact, a betrayal to diplomacy.” During the interview, which was conducted in Geneva after he held talks with European top diplomats, Araghchi dismissed the idea of negotiations as long as Israel continues its attacks on Iran. The foreign minister also said Iran would not give up uranium enrichment as the US President Donald Trump has demanded, pointing out he had made that clear to US envoy in nuclear talks Steve Witkoff. In Geneva, Araghchi held talks with the foreign ministers of France, Germany and Britain as well as the European Union’s foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas. “Iran is ready to consider diplomacy if the aggression stops and the aggressor is held accountable for its crimes. In this regard, we made it clear that Iran’s capabilities, including its missile capabilities, are non-negotiable,” the foreign minister told the European officials.

### International Desk

Iran’s sports community strongly condemned Israel’s unprovoked, cruel attacks on Iranian soil in a gathering in front of the United Nations Office in Tehran, calling for the expulsion of Israeli athletes from international sporting events. Presidents of various Iranian sports federations as well as recognized athletes attending the gathering were weighed down by grief and anger at the martyrdom of a number of their beloved compatriots and team members by the Zionist regime.

the warmongering behavior of this regime,” the former world champion judoka added. Mehdi Taj, the president of the Football Federation of Iran, described it as “shameful” that countries who witness Israel’s targeting of Iran’s civilians, including women, children, and athletes, in their sleep turn a blind eye and fail to condemn them. He also announced that the upcoming Asian Women’s Football Championship was postponed by the AFC at the behest of Iran. The President of the Basketball Federation of Iran Javad Davari noted that



Iranian athletes and sports officials gather in front of the United Nations Office in Tehran, Iran, on June 21, 2025, to condemn the crimes of Israel against their nation.  
● MEHR

## Day 9: Iran’s drone-missile strikes target Israeli sites

### Shipping giant halts Haifa operations

### International Desk

Iran’s Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) announced on Saturday that it had launched its eighteenth round of retaliatory strikes targeting military and operational support centres in the occupied territories and Ben Gurion Airport with a large swarm of suicide and combat drones (Shahed-136) and precision-guided missiles. “In the early hours of today,” the IRGC said, “several squadrons of Shahed-136 drones continuously carried out missions over the skies of the occupied territories, Israeli defence

systems failed to intercept them and the Zionists, as usual, were forced to flee to shelters.” The statement confirmed that six of ten missiles launched struck their intended targets. The IRGC also vowed that “combined missile-drone operations will continue relentlessly and purposefully against Israel.” The announcement came amid reports that global shipping giant Maersk had ceased operations at the port of Haifa in response to Iran’s retaliatory strikes, though the Danish firm added that it had “not experienced any further disruption in its planned regional activities.”

Meanwhile, on the ninth day of hostilities, Iran’s Defence Ministry spokesman Reza Talaei Nik stated that the ministry would continue to provide “comprehensive and effective support” to the military and civilians in both defensive and punitive operations against the “criminal Zionist regime.” He condemned Israeli attacks on civilian infrastructure as “war crimes under international law and basic human rights,” citing assaults on homes, children, and hospitals. In a related development, Iran’s Emergency Services chief Jafar Miadfar told state news agency IRNA that 14

emergency workers had been wounded as Israeli forces attacked ambulances and medical centres in various region. “Three aid facilities and eight ambulances belonging to the Emergency Department have sustained significant damage,” he said.

### UN raps Israeli aggression

A separate statement from United Nations Special Rapporteurs strongly condemned Israel’s recent military onslaught as a “clear violation of fundamental principles of international law” and “an unlawful act of aggression.” The UN

statement emphasised that the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, including under claims of anticipatory self-defense, is prohibited. Since June 13, Israeli strikes on Iran have killed more than 400 people, Iran’s Health Ministry said in an updated toll on Saturday. “As of this morning, Israeli attacks have claimed the lives of over 400 defenseless Iranians and left 3,056 others wounded by missiles and drones,” Health Ministry spokesman Hossein Kermanpour said in apost on X.

More than 20 Iranian athletes have been killed since the attacks began on June 13. However, such events are considered routine for the child-killing regime. Arash Miresmaeili, who serves as the president of the Iranian Judo Federation, read a statement, appealing to the International Olympic Committee (IOC), global sports federations, and all related organizations to “put on hold the Zionist regime’s membership in sporting events in recognition of their humanitarian and ethical responsibilities”. “We also call on the United Nations, Security Council, Human Rights Council, and other international bodies to step up without delay in condemning these aggressions and to take concrete measures to clamp down on

if Iran were to commit “one-thousandth of Israel’s crimes,” the suspension of the country from sports events would be the least of what the international community would do. The names of several of Iran’s national champions have been listed as victims of Israel’s brutal attacks on residential buildings so far. The death of Matin Safaeian, a sixteen-year-old member of Iran’s national skate team, has garnered special attention due to how soon such a talent was unjustly snuffed. The Iranian national champions Helena Gholami (Karate), Vahid Khosroddad (Kickboxing), and Ruhollah Salek, Ali Baqernia, and Reza Bahrami (Boxing), among others, have also been killed in Israeli air strikes.

## Iran files complaint to UN over IAEA chief's lack of impartiality

### International Desk

Iran on Friday lodged a formal complaint with the United Nations against the head of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) regarding the organization’s inaction toward Israel’s violations of international treaties during its aggression on the Islamic Republic. In a letter to UN chief Antonio Guterres and the president of the Security Council, Iranian Ambassador to the world body Amir Saeid Ira-

vani complained about Rafael Grossi’s approach towards Iran’s nuclear activities. Iravani described Grossi’s remarks before the Israeli onslaught on Iran as “a clear and serious violation of the principle of impartiality” incumbent upon the responsibilities of his position. The letter emphasized the legal significance of Grossi’s reaction to Israel’s explicit threats against Iran’s nuclear facilities on June 9, which “merely referred to Israel’s alleged ‘concerns’ that sup-

posedly needed to be addressed.” “Such remarks are entirely incompatible and inconsistent with the duties and legal obligations stipulated in the Statute of the International Atomic Energy Agency,” Iravani said. The Iranian envoy added that Grossi’s conduct in the wake of Israeli strikes “clearly and consistently demonstrated an inability to adhere to the requirements of impartiality, objectivity, and professionalism” by

the IAEA chief. “This conduct... practically amounts to complicity through failure to act regarding aggressive acts and is unprecedented in the agency’s history.” The letter came after Israel’s attacks on several nuclear sites in Iran. Beyond nuclear facilities and military command centers targeted by Israel since June 13, as many as 10 Iranian nuclear scientists were also killed in the regime’s attacks.

Mohammad Ali Rajabi  
Cartoonist

