

Iranian nation 'backbone' of Islamic Establishment: *Professor*

Diplomacy, military prowess align perfectly

INTERVIEW

From the early hours of Friday, June 13, 2025, to the morning of Tuesday, June 24, 2025, one of the most significant chapters in the book of Iran's history was turned. Over these 12 days of military aggression by the Zionist regime and the United States against Iran's borders, we witnessed a resounding defense by both the government and the people. This blatant act of aggression against Iran, which took place in the midst of negotiations with the United States and under the pretext of a political report from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), not only dealt a blow to diplomacy but also called into question the credibility of many international institutions and advocates of established norms.

In an interview with Irna, Jalal Dehghani Firoozabadi, a university professor and international relations analyst, shed light on this military incursion, its consequences, and the outlook for Iran's foreign relations.



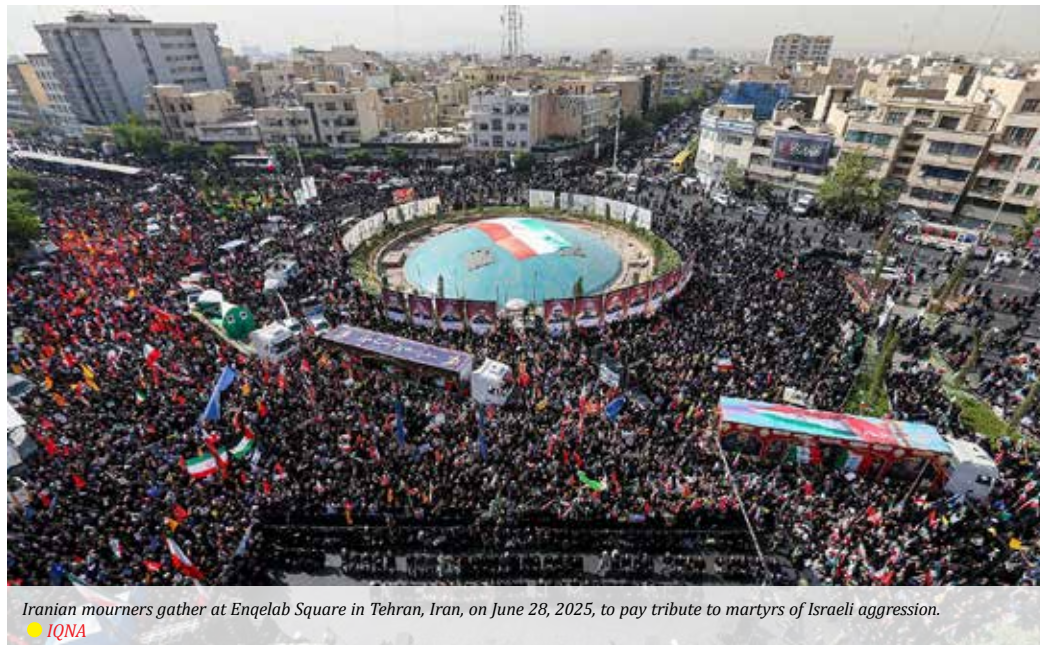
Jalal Dehghani Firoozabadi

The Israeli regime's military aggression against the Islamic Republic of Iran was recently brought to a halt. Regardless of whether this unilateral cease-fire will hold, did the Israeli cabinet achieve the objectives it had in mind?

DEHGHANI FIROOZABADI: First and foremost, I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to the brave armed forces and the resilient people of Iran, and to pay tribute to the noble and dignified Iranian nation and our courageous fighters. Perhaps Israel, and especially its criminal prime minister, did not openly spell out their true objectives. Nevertheless, both Israel and the United States have repeatedly stated their intention to wipe out Iran's nuclear capabilities. At times, they have also spoken of reining in Iran's missile power. Yet, as previously anticipated and raised by some, three major operational goals can be identified: first, to eliminate Iran's nuclear capabilities; second, to restrict or destroy Iran's missile power; and third, to reduce or eliminate Iran's regional presence.

However, there were also broader political aims at play. In his first interview after the conflict broke out, Netanyahu addressed the Iranian people, declaring that Israel is not at war with Iranians and just wants to set them free. Such statements and slogans speak volumes about their underlying intention: regime change in the Islamic Republic of Iran. How did they hope to achieve this? By stirring up chaos, unrest, and disorder. Their analysis was that the Iranian people were dissatisfied and weary, and that the Islamic Republic had lost its popular support. They believed that if an air strike took place, the ground forces would rise up from within the people themselves. I can say with confidence that their most important goal — beyond damaging Iran's nuclear, missile, and regional capabilities — was to undermine the Islamic Republic's defensive strength. But their main political objective, regime change, was found to be out of reach. They did not even fully achieve their other declared goals.

In my view, Iran's nuclear capabilities have not been destroyed either. Even now, there is debate within the United States as to whether this military strike on nuclear facilities actually wiped out Iran's nuclear potential. Physical equipment and facilities may have been damaged, but the indigenous knowledge, technology, and expertise are still there and, in my opinion, have not been lost. So, it can be said that the Zionist regime's attacks on Iran, while inflicting losses — especially with the martyrdom of our beloved compatriots and the damage caused — fell short of their main objectives. I say this not just as an Iranian, but as an outside observer: They did not



Iranian mourners gather at Enqelab Square in Tehran, Iran, on June 28, 2025, to pay tribute to martyrs of Israeli aggression.

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even achieve their minimum goals, apart from the aforementioned harm they inflicted on the country.

America's entry into the conflict and the bombing of Fordow can be analyzed from two perspectives. Some believe it was simply to appease Netanyahu, while others argue that the US entered the war with the clear aim of wiping out Iran's nuclear industry. What is your take on the White House's involvement?

These two views are not necessarily at odds with each other. In other words, Trump and the United States want to win, both the war and the peace. This means there was an overarching plan in place, undoubtedly drawn up before the Muscat negotiations began, and the US was in the loop. In my opinion, without US logistical, military, equipment, and weapons support, Israel simply would not have had the capacity to carry out offensive operations or mount an effective defense. We saw Trump repeatedly boast that they have the best weapons and that the Israelis certainly use them efficiently. In recent days, Trump has also frequently used the pronoun "we" in his remarks, making it clear he saw himself as a partner in these operations — which, in my view, he truly was.

In fact, the entire Western world and NATO got drawn into this affair. One could say we have just experienced a second sacred defense against the world. The Iranian nation showed, just as during Saddam Hussein's attack — when all the powers of East and West threw their weight behind the enemy — that today, too, NATO and Western European countries stand squarely behind Israel. Could it be any clearer than when the German Chancellor says, "This is the dirty work Israel is doing for all of us"? That says it all.

Therefore, it can be concluded that the Americans were indirect-

ly involved from the outset. When they sensed they could score some points from this military aggression, they jumped in directly. Whether this analysis is accurate, or whether there is precise information to back it up, I cannot say; However, some believe that what America did was more a show of force than a strategically significant move as nothing decisive was actually accomplished — especially given the lingering doubts about whether the Fordow facility was truly destroyed.

Was the US able to achieve its stated goal of destroying Iran's nuclear facilities?

There are serious doubts swirling around this issue, and the hot topic in the US right now is that Iran's nuclear facilities have not yet been destroyed. This is something that has really gotten under Trump's skin, prompting him to declare that the facilities have been "completely destroyed" and that such reports are false. On the one hand, Trump is eager to show off his military might — the same bravado he always puts on display — and on the other, he wants to claim, "I was the one who said Iran should never get nuclear weapons, and I was the one who stripped Iran of its nuclear capabilities and wiped out its facilities." He kept bringing this up both during negotiations and throughout the conflict. Now, he's putting on more of a peacemaker act, trying to paint himself as the region's savior and even praising Iran. His remarks clearly play into the theater of war. Essentially, he's trying to cash in on the "war card" to build up his military credentials, while at the same time casting himself as the man of peace, the one who brokered a cease-fire. Both sides of this coin are present in his behavior; He wants to make it look like the peace and cease-fire were all thanks to him. In my view, it shouldn't go unmen-

tioned that Trump's pressure on Netanyahu and other Israeli leaders was not without effect, and this pressure pushed them to call off their operations. Part of the story, however, is that Israel really couldn't keep up with Iran's counterattacks and was forced to bring Trump into the picture for support. Trump, for his part, said that if he was to be the one to end things, his word should be heeded.

A major question making the rounds in public opinion is whether the American president's behavior is rooted in his personality or if it's simply a tactic to push his own agenda — especially since just a few days ago, he considered regime change in Iran likely, and soon after started thanking Iran.

When it comes to assessing the reasons behind the president's contradictory behavior — whether it stems from his personality or is a tactic to further his aims — both aspects are at play. From a personality perspective, everyone has by now caught on to Trump's psychology; He is a narcissist who sees himself as exceptional. Even

during election campaigns, he shared a picture of himself with the words: "He's on a mission from God." However, part of this behavior is also deliberate and calculated, meaning it's part of his game — even in negotiations. He leans on a strategy of ambiguity and confusion, making it so the other side can't quite figure out where he stands. Some have even said that his diplomacy is essentially a diplomacy of deception.

In defending the country, the military is one pillar and diplomacy is another, and these two must move forward in tandem. We kept our military readiness at its peak, and it cannot be said that because we were negotiating, we were not prepared militarily. That's simply not the case. Israel carried on with its strategy of confusion and ambiguity during the imposed war, hoping to bog down the other side, but in my view, it failed. The Islamic Republic of Iran, except for the initial surprise on the first day, quickly regrouped and rebuilt its strength, and the adversaries didn't achieve their goals — nor have they now.

The American approach to negotiations and operations, especially under Trump, hinges on maximalism — he sets the bar extremely high so the other side will settle for less. For example, Netanyahu floated the idea of regime change on the first day, but that fell flat. Trump, however, never said it outright. Even after the attack, J.D. Vance, Trump's vice president, announced, "We are not at war with Iran at all. We are at war with Iran's nuclear program. We don't want a regime change." So, in Trump's view, he puts forward a maximalist goal so the other side will settle for less — in other words, he "shoots for the moon so they'll settle for the stars." Thus, this behavior is both a matter of personality and a negotiation and operational tactic, especially for Trump.

As of this interview, the war has come to a halt, and indirect negotiations between Iran and the US are ongoing. Can any analysis be offered at this stage? Has this

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US President Donald Trump (l) holds up his fist while staring blankly forward with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at his side at the White House in Washington on April 7, 2025.

● BRENDAN SMIALOWSKI/AFP

