

President urges unity, praises women's role in national development

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Iran's strengths, weaknesses in 12-day war with Israel

By Hossein Alaei
Former IRGC Navy commander

OPINION

During the 12-day war, Israel targeted the core components of Iran's national power—namely, its defense capabilities, nuclear infrastructure, and scientific assets. The war began with the assassinations of senior Iranian military commanders and nuclear scientists.

Israel has long relied on assassination as its primary method for neutralizing opponents and adversaries. It has developed the world's largest assassination apparatus and remains the only regime where targeted killings are a routine policy tool. Over the years, thousands of innocent individuals in Palestine and other countries have been assassinated by Israeli operatives. Israel possesses advanced equipment and vast experience in executing various forms of assassination and mass killing. While all Israeli prime ministers have been criminals, terrorists, and murderers, Benjamin Netanyahu stands as the most vile, ruthless terrorist in the world—the blood-thirstiest creature on earth. From its inception, the Zionist regime has functioned as a fundamentally terrorist entity. Its officials have derived gratification from murder and bloodshed.

Israel has utilized the latest technologies and the most advanced intelligence-gathering tools to plan and carry out operations—ranging from assassinations to direct strikes on Iran's nuclear sites, air defense systems, missile bases, and even civilian targets, including Evin Prison, residential neighborhoods, and hospitals. These attacks were carried out with intelligence support from the CIA and NATO networks.

One of Iran's key vulnerabilities, in retrospect, was the lack of preparedness within its own intelligence and security services to counter such a large-scale and constantly active Israeli intelligence apparatus—namely, Mossad, Israeli military intelligence, and other aligned spy agencies.

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Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian (R) addresses Oil Minister Mohsen Paknejad (2nd R) and his deputies during a visit to the Oil Ministry in the capital Tehran on July 13, 2025.
● president.ir

Potential changes in Russia's Mideast diplomacy after Bogdanov's departure

By Tahmina Abdul Vase
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OPINION EXCLUSIVE

Mikhail Bogdanov's resignation from his position as Russia's deputy foreign minister and special envoy to the Middle East and Africa marks a pivotal moment in Russian foreign policy. As one of the key architects of Russia's strategy in the region, his departure introduces uncertainty regarding how Russia will pursue its interests in the Middle East moving forward.

With over 50 years of diplomatic service, Bogdanov played a major role in establishing and strengthening Russia's relationships with key regional players, including Syria, Iran, and the Gulf States. His efforts to advance

Russia's interests, through military-political alliances or economic cooperation, helped position Russia as a central actor in regional conflicts and political processes. Bogdanov was one of the primary figures regional leaders turned to; his authority and experience not only served as the basis for decision-making but also as a symbol of stability in Russian policy.

What will change after his departure?

Bogdanov possessed a unique ability to forge personal connections and build trusted relationships with leaders from Arab countries, Iran, and other key players. He was the individual with whom open and direct negotiations were possible. His departure may make it more difficult to maintain these trusted relationships, especially amidst the ongoing instability in the region. His re-

placement may be a diplomat with a different approach, and their influence will depend on whether they can establish the same level of trust Bogdanov had built.

Russia will undoubtedly remain an active player in the Middle East, but its strategy may undergo changes. Bogdanov was a strong proponent of a multipolar approach, countering Western influence, and maximizing Russia's presence through diplomatic channels, military alliances, and involvement in peace processes. In his absence, this trajectory will likely continue, but with a potential shift in focus—perhaps towards increased economic cooperation with certain regional countries or a deepening of relations with China and India, which could also affect how Russia's foreign policy is perceived in the Middle East.

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