

As expected, Netanyahu back demanding more war with Iran



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OPINION

NBC News reports that Netanyahu's key ask in his upcoming Dec 29 meeting with Trump is to convince the US to join Israel in restarting the war with Iran. As I wrote in August in FP, Israel was poised to resume the conflict since it didn't achieve its key objectives during its first attack. The significant impact of Iran's missile strikes compelled Israel to seek a cease-fire after only nine days — a stark contrast to the months and even years it previously took to pressure Israel into cease-fires with Hamas and Hezbollah.

The June war resulted in mutual deterrence, a situation Iran can accept, but one that is intolerable for Netanyahu and his legacy. Ultimately, the conflict was neither a victory for Israel nor for Iran. It is precisely this balance of terror that prompts Israel to seek a new round. Israel's military doctrine does not allow for any of its regional foes to deter it or challenge its military dominance. Iran's missile program currently does exactly that. According to NBC News, Israel's messaging is no longer focused on the nuclear program but rather on Iran's ballistic missile program.

And this is precisely why Trump must say no to Netanyahu because Israel's objective is not security in the conventional sense, but rather absolute dominance. Israel insists on having total security and freedom to maneuver, while denying its neighbors any minimum level of certainty and forcing the region into a state of complete insecurity.

Consider the case of Lebanon. US policy aims to build up the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) to a level where they can disarm Hezbollah, yet deliberately prevents the LAF from reaching a capacity that could allow Lebanon to defend itself or deter against Israeli aggression. This policy is maintained even as Israel engages in daily bombings of Lebanon. Consequently, Israel's demands on the US will be unending. After the nuclear program was bombed, the focus — and the demands on America — shifted to Iran's missile program. If that program is destroyed, which is a major "if," the attention will then shift to some other Iranian capability.

Don't be surprised if the New York Times at some point runs an affirmative story on how kitchen knives in Iran are seen as an existential threat by the Israeli security establishment. Panic-stricken pundits on mainstream networks will then inevitably pose the question: "Will



America tolerate Iran operating secret cutlery factories?"

Israel's military doctrine demands endless war. Not to achieve security, but to exercise dominance.

Yet, Israel cannot sustain any of these wars without endless support from the US. American taxpayers covered \$21.7 billion of Israel's military budget in 2024. In June of this year, the US consumed (wasted?) 25% of its THAAD missile interceptors to defend Israel in an unnecessary war that Netanyahu had chosen to start.

Israel is free to choose its own security doctrine. But the president of the United States, particularly one who professes America First, cannot sacrifice America's national security and the well-being of the American people for the sake of megalomaniac Israeli dreams of a "Greater Israel" empire.

Particularly since Trump's National Security Strategy de-emphasized the importance of the Middle East, noting that "America's historic reason for focusing on the Middle East will recede." Trump acquiesced to Israel's demand

to bomb the nuclear site, and now, six months later, Netanyahu is back with war plans against Iranian missiles. If Trump caves to Netanyahu once more, the Israeli Prime Minister will be back in another six months with another war plan for Americans to give their blood and tax dollars to.

This will go on endlessly until Trump decides to end it. He should end it on December 29.

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The illustration shows Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu over a picture of the Iranian flag and a homegrown Iranian missile being launched.

● TV7 ISRAEL NEWS



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Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu (C) visits the scene where an Iranian ballistic missile hit and caused massive damage at the Weizmann Institute in Rehovot, on June 20, 2025.

● ITAI RON/POOL

Key trends set to shape Middle East in 2026



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ANALYSIS

With the new year less than two weeks away, a range of geopolitical and security trends demand close attention. From the potential resumption of war between Israel and Iran to evolving dynamics in multiple hotspots, a host of unresolved variables is poised to shape the Middle East's trajectory in 2026.

In the new year, Israel will seek to further ascend as an unchallenged hegemonic force in the Middle East. How Tel Aviv goes about confronting the Islamic Republic, including what remains of the "Axis of Resistance," and deploys its hard

power to shape realities on the ground in post-Assad Syria, will impact the region in significant ways.

Israel and Iran: fragile truce

A key development to monitor is the US-brokered cease-fire between Israel and Iran, which brought an end to the 12-day war of June 2025.

While the truce has largely held over the past six months, concerns persist that it could unravel in the months ahead. Notably, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is set to meet US President Donald Trump in Florida on December 29, where he is expected to press for a resumption of hostilities.

The perceived Iranian nuclear threat has largely receded from the core of Israeli and American neo-conservative argu-

ments for striking Iran, with attention now focused almost entirely on Tehran's missile capabilities.

On December 22, Israel's Military Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Eyal Zamir reportedly told US Central Command head Admiral Brad Cooper that Tel Aviv is deeply concerned about a recent alleged missile exercise conducted by the Islamic Revolution's Guards Corps, insisting that it could mask preparations for a surprise attack.

Describing this truce as "incredibly weak," Dr. Hussein Ibish, a senior scholar, told The New Arab (TNA) that "the Israelis are itching to resume their bombing campaign against Iran, and they may attempt to do that quite soon, perhaps in the first half of 2026."

The mood inside Israel and the public's

overall attitude toward Iran are important. Dr. Thomas Juneau, a professor at the University of Ottawa's Graduate School of Public and International Affairs, believes that Netanyahu's cabinet will be under "pressure from inside Israel in 2026 to exploit this window of opportunity to weaken Iran" following the 12-day war, which enabled Israel to inflict massive damage inside Iran. The crucial question is whether the White House will acquiesce to Netanyahu's push to reignite the conflict. Yet, as Dr. Juneau observes, Trump's "highly unpredictable" disposition makes it exceedingly difficult to anticipate whether he will rein in or embolden the Israeli leadership regarding Iran.

Dr. Gökhan Erel, the Persian Gulf Studies Coordinator at ORSAM (an Ankara-based

think tank), emphasised the critical role of Washington in bringing Israel and Iran into a cease-fire that at least paused the 12-day war.

Yet, he also stressed how the fundamental drivers of hostility between Tel Aviv and Tehran remain in play, which should leave observers nervous about the conflict resuming next year.

"Even though the cease-fire 'continues' after six to seven months, the root causes of the Israel-Iran tension do not seem simple enough to be resolved by US military and political intervention," he told TNA.

"Therefore, it can be argued that the US cease-fire has frozen this conflict...but not completely resolved it, and that this conflict will continue economically, politically, and perhaps militarily [throughout] 2026."