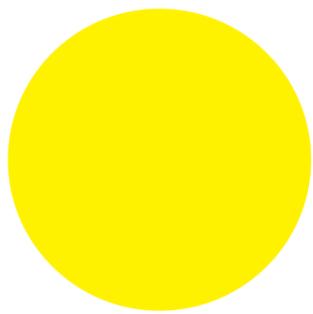


Tehran demands evidence as Trump claims 32,000 riot deaths

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President Masoud Pezeshkian (back row, 4th R) poses for a group photo with Iranian Paralympics medalists during a ceremony in Tehran, Iran on February 21, 2026.

A president of contradictions who seeks peace through war

EDITORIAL

A massive military buildup in the Middle East has pushed the United States to the brink of a full-scale war with Iran. The stated aim is to force Iran to dismantle its nuclear program, a demand Tehran has so far refused, arguing that as a signatory to the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) it is entitled to enrich uranium.

A report by The Wall Street Journal suggests President Donald Trump may opt for an initial limited strike on Iran, targeting several military

and government sites to strong-arm Iran into yielding to the kind of deal he has in mind.

First, such a course has already been tried and failed. During Israeli strikes on Iran in June, the US bombed three Iranian nuclear facilities. Since then, Trump has repeatedly bragged that "Operation Midnight Hammer" took out Iran's nuclear program entirely. Eight months have passed since that attack, yet the deal the US sought has not been clinched.

Why, then, would the United States double down on a path that has al-

ready been tested unless it harbors goals beyond dismantling Iran's nuclear program, namely unilateral action without a UN mandate to topple a sovereign state in breach of international law?

Moreover, if Trump maintains that Iran's nuclear program has been destroyed, what justification remains for another attack to coerce Tehran into giving up a program he claims no longer exists?

Trump has once again shown that a second-term US president, especially a Republican with far-right inclinations, can prove highly dan-

gerous on the international stage. Since 2016 and throughout his 2024 campaign, Trump has trumpeted a pledge to end "endless wars." Yet he has now sent the largest US military deployment to the Middle East since 2003, gearing up for another conflict, a useless war over an issue that could readily be settled through diplomacy. As Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi has said, a deal between Tehran and Washington is within reach if both sides show a measure of "creativity and flexibility."

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