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President Masoud Pezeshkian (right on the screen) remotely opens a railway linking Ardabil to Mianeh in northwestern Iran on June 9, 2026. IMNA



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## Iran's response to Israeli strike on Beirut aimed to upend cost-free pressure strategy

By Delaram Ahmadi  
Staff writer

### INTERVIEW EXCLUSIVE

In the latest exchange of fire between Iran and Israel, the United States sought to distance itself from the confrontation and even appeared to play the role of a mediator. International affairs expert



Abbas Aslani argues in an interview with Iran Daily that this does not reflect a serious rift between the two allies. Rather, he believes Washington is trying to keep pressure on the Islamic Republic and the Axis of Resistance in place while keeping tensions below a certain threshold and avoiding the full costs of escalation. According to Aslani, Iran's recent strike in response to Israel's attack on Beirut was intended to disrupt that equation.

**IRAN DAILY: Should Washington's recent approach be seen as evidence of a genuine rift between the United States and Israel?**

**ASLANI:** It appears that, strategically and in terms of their overall approach toward Iran, there is no serious disagreement between them. However, given that the Americans currently seem unwilling to see a region-wide war reignite, they have sought to continue exerting pressure on Iran in the political, economic, and even military spheres while ensuring that tensions and hostilities do not rise beyond a certain level. If we look at the recent developments in the Strait of Hormuz and the exchanges of fire between Iran and the United States, we can see that the level of confrontation remained limited and carefully contained. The Israelis were also trying to continue their attacks against Lebanon within that same framework while pursuing the shared US-Israeli objective of weakening Iran and the Axis of Resistance. Iran's recent action against Is-

rael was aimed at halting that cycle and disrupting that trajectory. Had the United States become directly involved, there was a possibility that tensions could have escalated further. That is why Washington tried to signal that it either opposed Israel's actions or was not fully informed of them, to prevent the resumption of a broader regional war. But this does not necessarily mean the United States disagrees with Israel's policies toward Iran or even Lebanon. In fact, if Washington had genuinely opposed Israel's actions, it could have prevented Israeli attacks on Lebanon or even Israeli responses against Iran. It is worth recalling the 12-day war of June 2025. In the lead-up to that conflict, media reports suggested that Prime Minister Netanyahu and President Trump disagreed over attacking Iran. Yet shortly afterward, Israel launched its attack, and the United States joined in. Later, American media reported that the US administration itself had encouraged coverage portraying the two countries as being

at odds.

In reality, the United States wanted to maintain pressure on the Islamic Republic and the Axis of Resistance without paying a cost. Iran, however, sought to alter that equation and reshape their calculations by demonstrating that continuing the current policy could impose costs on them. If Israel intends to continue its attacks on Lebanon, it should naturally expect to bear the consequences and costs, and the United States is not immune from that process either.

In addition, the United States and Israel were attempting to separate Lebanon from the broader framework of Iran-US negotiations so they could exert pressure on Lebanon independently, whether through military strikes or political pressure. Iran's recent action was intended to stop that effort. It was also aimed at reinforcing the unity of the various fronts and arenas within the Axis of Resistance.

**Israel's strike on Beirut's**

**southern suburbs came just as a message from a Pakistani mediator had reached Tehran and some US officials were speaking about progress toward an agreement. Can this attack be viewed as a deliberate attempt to derail diplomacy, or was Israel simply acting in line with its own security considerations?**

I think it was a combination of both. We have consistently seen that any effort to establish diplomatic engagement or reach an agreement between Iran and the United States has faced disruptive intervention from Israel. This time was no exception. Part of their effort is naturally aimed at creating leverage for the United States so that Washington can extract greater concessions from Iran. But first and foremost, they seek to prevent such an agreement from taking shape. Israel generally favors the continuation of conflict and believes that, among regional actors, it stands to gain the most from a prolonged state of confrontation. This time, as negotiations con-

tinued and mediation efforts regained momentum, Israel intensified its attacks in Lebanon, fully aware of Iran's stated red lines and sensitivities, to disrupt the diplomatic process. At the same time, they were also pursuing their own security objectives by seeking to further weaken the Axis of Resistance and Hezbollah, thereby expanding their freedom of action in Lebanon.

**Given the deep-rooted differences between Iran and Israel over regional issues, is a durable agreement between Iran and the United States fundamentally achievable?**

One of the factors that has consistently cast a shadow over efforts to reach an understanding between Iran and the United States has been Israeli interference. Particularly in the current period, Israel has played a significant role in shaping the direction of US policy in the region, making the path toward an agreement considerably more complicated.

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