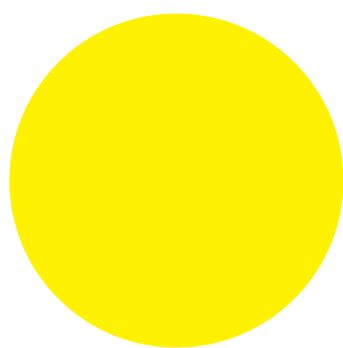


Iran's reprisals
reshape West
Asia security
structure:
Araghchi



Armed Forces escalate retaliatory campaign against US regional bases

CENTCOM: Two soldiers killed in Iranian strikes on Jordan

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Pezeshkian calls for integrated management across oil, gas sectors

'Flare gas recovery as a technical, economic necessity'

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President Masoud Pezeshkian (2nd L) holds a meeting with senior Oil Ministry officials in Tehran, Iran on July 19, 2026, as Oil Minister Mohsen Paknejad (L) looks on.

Joint chamber: Tajikistan could become Iran's trade hub in Central Asia

By Sadeq Dehqan
Staff writer

INTERVIEW

Tajikistan could serve as Iran's trade hub in Central Asia as disruptions to southern maritime routes increase the country's strategic importance, the vice chairman of the Iran-Tajikistan Joint Chamber of Commerce said. Kazem Shirdel told Iran Daily that Iran should redirect more of its trade through northern road and rail corridors as disruptions to southern maritime routes and the declining commercial role of the United Arab Emirates reshape regional logistics.

The United States restored its naval blockade on Iran's southern ports after a pause of several weeks to prevent the Islamic Republic's oil exports and trade. Iran has remained on a war footing since a US-Israeli coalition launched attacks on the country in late February.

The blockade, first imposed in mid-April to pressure Iran into a peace deal to end the war, covers the Sea of Oman and the Indian Ocean.

Iran is redirecting cargo and logistics operations to northern ports as well as ports in Pakistan, India and Oman after activities at the United Arab Emirates' Jebel Ali port stopped under wartime conditions. Shirdel said the trade routes already existed but would be expanded. One of the main corridors runs from China through Kazakhstan and then Uzbekistan or Tajikistan before entering Iran through the Sarakhs border crossing, he said. "While part of the cargo could also be transferred across the Caspian Sea to Iran's northern ports."

He added that the necessary infrastructure would be developed in coordination with relevant authorities to make greater use of the corridor for trade with Russia and other Central Asian countries.

The official said Tajikistan should not be viewed solely as an export market, but also as a gateway to neighboring countries, including Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and other Central Asian states, citing the two countries' shared language and cultural ties.

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US war on infrastructure would end once costs outweigh gains

By Delaram Ahmadi
Staff writer

INTERVIEW EXCLUSIVE

As fighting in the Strait of Hormuz has intensified, the United States has now begun targeting some of Iran's infrastructure, while Tehran has threatened to retaliate in countries hosting US bases. These developments have heightened concerns about the risk of the war expanding in both intensity and scope, with no clear indication of how far these exchanges of fire could go. Speaking to Iran Daily, Mehdi Paknia, an expert on US affairs, said that infrastructure warfare is inherently a costly and cumulative form of conflict, and that this phase is likely to end when it is concluded that continuing to strike creates more instability, economic costs and regional risks than gains.



Mehdi Paknia

likely to end when it is concluded that continuing to strike creates more instability, economic costs and regional risks than gains.

Given the recent US attacks on bridges, roads and other vital infrastructure in Iran, can it be said that the conflict has entered a phase of "infrastructure warfare"? What is the main objective behind the US targeting of infrastructure, and how does this phase differ from conventional military attacks?

Yes, the available evidence suggests that the conflict between Iran and the US has entered a phase of "infrastructure warfare." The difference between this phase and conventional military attacks is that the objective is no longer limited to destroying direct combat capabilities. Rather, it is about disrupting Iran's capacity to maintain operational control, provide logistical support and manage vital territorial and maritime hubs.

Within this framework, Chabahar is of particular importance, because the port is not merely a commercial hub. It is Iran's only oceanic port and a link connecting the country to the Gulf of Oman, Afghanistan, Central Asia and transit corridors. Knocking out its coastal radars, communications tow-

ers, maritime control systems and access routes does not necessarily mean occupying the port. The aim could instead be to leave Chabahar under Iranian ownership while preventing Iran from independently controlling the surrounding area.

The same logic applies to Kharg Island and oil export terminals. Here, the more likely approach would be to apply pressure through a naval blockade, threats to insurance and shipping, limited disruption to loading operations and the severing of Kharg's connection with the mainland, rather than launching a direct and destructive attack. The primary objective is not necessarily to destroy Iran's oil, but to create a situation in which Iran has oil but cannot export it safely or at normal capacity. Therefore, at this stage, the US appears to be seeking not so much a broad occupation as the "operational detachment of the south" and the erosion of Iran's ability to control its coastline, islands, exports and the Strait of Hormuz.

What considerations and red lines would Iran face in choosing potential

targets in response to US attacks on its infrastructure? What locations could become potential targets, and which countries would it refrain from targeting?

Iran faces a classic but highly sensitive dilemma in responding: on the one hand, it must preserve its deterrence and show that attacks on its infrastructure will not come without a cost; on the other, it must avoid allowing the war to spiral out of control.

For that reason, Tehran would likely first consider targets directly linked to the US presence, operational support for the attacks, or regional energy and maritime security. The Strait of Hormuz, maritime routes, support bases and infrastructure serving operations against Iran would be of particular importance in this regard. If pressure on Chabahar, Kharg or the islands intensifies, Iran would probably respond by focusing in turn on maritime and energy hubs, because these areas would have the fastest impact on Washington's calculations and the regional market.

But Tehran's main red line is to avoid, as far as possible, directly targeting

countries that have not yet openly entered the war. In particular, regarding the UAE and some southern Persian Gulf states, Iran understands that a direct attack on their ports, airports, power plants or critical infrastructure could turn them from indirect supporters into direct parties to the war.

Therefore, as long as the role of these actors remains limited to intelligence, logistics or facilitation, Tehran will probably exercise restraint. But if their involvement moves from support to overt operational intervention — for example, over the issue of the islands or control of maritime routes — that restraint could give way to a direct response.

How long can this exchange of fire on infrastructure continue? What factors could lead the conclusion of this phase of the conflict?

This phase will continue until both sides still believe they can gain greater concessions by wearing the other side down. But infrastructure warfare is inherently a costly and cumulative form of conflict.

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