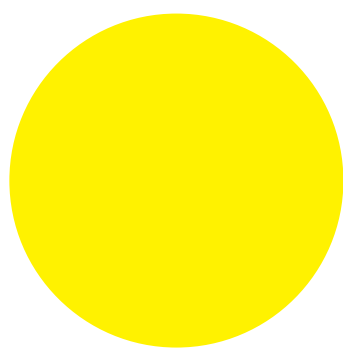


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President Masoud Pezeshkian (2nd R) speaks at a meeting with senior Judiciary officials in Tehran, Iran on July 20, 2026.

Iran's ground superiority leaves US operation little chance of success

By Delaram Ahmadi
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INTERVIEW EXCLUSIVE

In recent days, as US operations against infrastructure in southern Iran have intensified, speculation has grown over the possibility of Washington entering the ground-war phase and attempting to seize parts of Iranian territory, including Kharg Island. But whether such an operation is even feasible — and whether it would deliver the desired gains for Washington — remains an open question. There are also concerns that heavy US military casualties could trigger domestic opposition. In an interview with Iran Daily, international



affairs analyst Emad Abshenas said the United States might use mercenary forces in such an operation, but that its chances of success would be

"very, very low" because of Iran's superiority in ground operations and its familiarity with the region's geography.

IRAN DAILY: What operational and strategic objectives are behind US attacks on Iran's bridges, roads and other transport infrastructure? Is the primary goal to disrupt the movement of troops and equipment, or could these strikes also be part of preparations for a possible ground operation?

ABSHENAS: The United States could have several objectives in doing this. One could be to send Iran the message that "I can commit any war crime I want, and no international body will even criticize me; I do not abide by any international law, and there is nothing you can do about it."

Another possible objective could be to separate the areas connected by those bridges from Iran's coastal regions in a way that would prepare the ground for a ground operation. But the prospect of a ground operation is highly unlikely because the cost to the United States would be extremely high, particularly

in terms of potential casualties. Nevertheless, there have been rumors that the Americans might want to send in some terrorists who have acted as US proxies in Iraq, Syria, Libya, Yemen and other countries as advanced forces, so that they would be the ones killed if there were casualties. Alternatively, US forces could put troops on the ground and then hand the area over to their mercenaries.

The third objective could be for the Americans to say that they can drive up the cost of confronting the United States for Iran and strike areas whose reconstruction would be extremely costly.

Some analyses suggest that if the conflict continues, the United States may seek to seize strategic locations in southern Iran, including some islands. Given that an invading force would be unfamiliar with the geography of this country, does the United States have the capability to carry out such an operation and, if it were to seize territory, to hold on to it?

According to the figures that have emerged, the Americans have suffered

around 35 fatalities over the past week or two, although they deny this and have officially acknowledged only two deaths. This is while they have not even launched a ground operation yet. If they decide to launch a ground operation, they know that Iran has the advantage at this stage. The question of launching a ground attack and putting troops ashore is one thing; holding the ground is another. Iran would then be able to kill a much larger number of American soldiers, and the cost for the US government would go through the roof.

That is why the expectation is that they may try to use mercenaries whom they have employed in various places. In fact, it can be said that the chances of success are either nonexistent or extremely low. The Iranians, after all, will not sit back and do nothing. But the deaths of these mercenaries do not matter to the United States because they are worthless to Washington. Trump simply wants to be able to strike a pose in front of the cameras before the election and claim that he has achieved something. That is what matters to him.

If the United States attempted to seize territory, how intense would Iran's response be, and what costs and consequences would such an operation have for the United States and the region? To what extent could such an operation help reopen the Strait of Hormuz or ensure the security of shipping there? In my view, attempting to seize territory here would be outright suicide for them. The assumption is that they will not be able to seize any part of Iranian territory because Iran will not leave a single one of them alive.

They have tried to put troops on the ground before. They deployed forces in Isfahan and claimed that the operation was carried out to rescue a pilot. But the reality was that they were after uranium, because you do not send 158 aircrafts to rescue a single pilot. In the end, they failed. Over the past week alone, naval forces have also tried several times to approach Iran's islands from the sea and come ashore, but they faced fierce resistance from Iran's armed forces.