

Triumph of diplomacy product of **timely** decision-making

INTERVIEW EXCLUSIVE

Following the 40-day war, and the violation of the memorandum of understanding by the United States, indications of escalating regional tensions have emerged in recent days; a trend that has strengthened the possibility that confrontations between Iran and the United States, particularly in southern Iran and the Strait of Hormuz, may enter a broader phase.

In such an atmosphere, two approaches have, more than before, become prominent in political and expert circles. One perspective holds that Iran should, by relying upon its operational capacities, consolidate its achievements and, through increasing pressure upon the opposing side, create the conditions necessary for securing its rights and interests. Conversely, another perspective maintains that, under present circumstances, priority should be accorded to transforming operational achievements into political and diplomatic outcomes, and likewise to preventing the imposition of further costs arising from the continuation of tensions and confrontations. Within this framework, Mohammad Reza Dehshiri, dean of the Faculty of International Relations of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in an exclusive interview with Iran Newspaper, emphasizing that "the field and diplomacy are two sides of the same coin," stressed that success in foreign policy is realized when harmony and synergy exist among operational, diplomatic, media, and public-opinion capacities. He likewise underscored the importance of the temporal element in diplomacy, stating that the proper management of time in negotiations plays a decisive role in capitalizing upon operational achievements, and that any delay or rashness may affect those achievements.

Mohammad Reza Dehshiri



An Iranian man carrying flatbreads walks past an anti-US mural featuring Iran-US talks, next to the former US embassy in Tehran on February 26, 2026.
● AFP

IRAN: With the commencement of the 40-day war, and the establishment of a ceasefire, as well as the tensions that emerged following the violation of commitments and understandings by the United States, it became evident that today the field and military power have become the most important instruments in determining equations. This is despite the fact that Iran, in the course of recent military tensions, has succeeded in creating a deterrent and costly balance for the United States in the region. What is your assessment of these conditions?

DEHSHIRI: In my view, the field and diplomacy exist not in opposition, but in interaction and synergy with one another. The field is the support of diplomacy, and diplomacy transforms the achievements of the field into political achievements. In other words, that which is attained in the operational arena may, in the process of negotiations, become political capital.

Naturally, following the second imposed war, two additional dimensions have been added to this equation: one is the media, and the other is the street. From this perspective, it may be stated

that we are confronted with a quadrilateral phenomenon, in which the field, diplomacy, the media, and public opinion perform complementary and interwoven roles, and the success of each depends, to a considerable extent, upon coordination with the remaining dimensions. Within this context, the issue of narrative construction possesses particular significance. It is essential that greater consultation, coordination, and cooperation emerge among various institutions and actors in this sphere, so that contradictory and inconsistent narratives are not transmitted to the opposing side. The emphasis of the Leader upon unity and cohesion among all forces pertains precisely to this matter.

Consequently, just as coordination must exist in the spheres of the field and diplomacy, coherence and synergy are likewise indispensable in the realm of declared policy and narrative construction. Such coherence may contribute to the formation of an effective, integrated, and

persuasive narrative, and prevent divergences in narratives from disrupting the process of deriving political and diplomatic benefits from operational achievements.

Given recent developments, it appears that the course of confrontations has changed in comparison with the 40-day war, and that tensions are gradually and systematically increasing. Does this indicate a transformation in the pattern of warfare and a movement by the parties toward a managed war of attrition, or could it constitute a prelude to the emergence of a new comprehensive war? What is your analysis of present conditions? Under current circumstances, both parties have arrived at the conclusion that the complete elimination or destruction of the opposing side is not possible. This reality is among the most important factors influencing their behavior. In other words, the United States has concluded that achieving objectives such as changing the political system or partitioning Iran is not feasible, while, on the other hand, Iran is likewise not pursuing the complete destruction of the United States.



Experience has demonstrated that the United States has thus far undertaken no effective measure for implementing its previous commitments, and this issue has rendered Iran's level of confidence in Washington's conduct extremely limited. From this perspective, the utilization of diplomacy under current circumstances rests less upon optimism regarding the behavior of the opposing side, and more upon the objective of preventing further costs and damages, transforming operational achievements into political achievements, and elucidating the Islamic Republic of Iran's narrative concerning developments.

Under such circumstances, that which acquires paramount significance is the imposition of one's will upon the opposing side. For instance, regarding the Strait of Hormuz, Iran's objective is to preserve and exercise effective control over this strategic passageway, whereas the United States endeavors to prevent the consolidation of such control. From this perspective, the present process may be analyzed within the framework of a "war of wills"; a war in which each side endeavors to advance its demands by increasing the costs imposed upon the other.

Iran has performed more successfully in this process because, on the one hand, it benefits from its geopolitical advantages and geographical position, and on the other hand, it possesses the necessary legitimacy for defending its interests. Likewise, the employment of asymmetric warfare tactics has provided Iran with the possibility of imposing costs and generating pressure upon the opposing side.

The important point is that we are confronted with a hybrid war; a war that is not confined solely to the military sphere. Media, economic, political, social, intelligence, and cyber dimensions all influence the course of developments simultaneously, and each forms part of the equation. Accordingly, both sides endeavor to realize their objectives through the utilization of this entire assemblage of instruments. Nevertheless, the principal distinction between the approaches of Iran and the United States is that the United States, because of time constraints and domestic and international considerations, prefers that this confrontation be resolved as swiftly as possible; by contrast, Iran has endeavored, through managing and rendering the issue more challenging, to impose greater costs upon the opposing side, and thereby strengthen its position in this contest of wills.

At the present juncture, si-

multaneously with operational developments, we are also witnessing increased diplomatic activity, and it appears that active diplomacy is preparing the ground for a new round of negotiations. In your opinion, is Iran, at this stage, merely utilizing operational pressures to alter American behavior, or is the principal strategy the simultaneous utilization of the capacities of the field and diplomacy? Which approach may prove more effective?

The Islamic Republic of Iran has never abandoned the negotiating table and diplomacy. That which we have witnessed throughout previous years is that the United States has repeatedly violated its commitments and understandings, and has refrained from implementing them. Therefore, Iran's presence in the diplomatic arena signifies the preservation of a responsible approach and an emphasis upon resolving issues through political channels.

While simultaneously utilizing operational capacities, Iran also endeavors to convey the message that it continues to regard diplomacy as one of the principal avenues for pursuing and securing national interests. In reality, war and diplomacy are two sides of the same coin, and both serve the purpose of securing national interests. Active participation in the diplomatic arena is pursued with the objective of preventing the imposition of further costs upon the country, reducing potential damages, and deriving political benefits from existing achievements.

Naturally, this does not signify trust in the opposing side. Experience has demonstrated that the United States has thus far undertaken no effective measure for implementing its previous commitments, and this issue has rendered Iran's level of confidence in Washington's conduct extremely limited.

From this perspective, the utilization of diplomacy under



US Vice President JD Vance gives a thumbs up sign as he boards Air Force Two after attending talks on Iran in Islamabad, Pakistan, on April 12, 2026.
● JACQUELYN MARTIN/AP