Enemies been warned, Armed Forces been mandated

Commander-in-chief settles battlefield-politics debate: *Expert*



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INTERVIEW

The recent meeting between senior commanders of Iran's Armed Forces and Ayatollah Seyyed Mojtaba Khamenei, the Commander-in-Chief and Leader of the Islamic Revolution, took place amid fast-changing regional military and security developments and the experience of recent wars, which have ushered the Islamic Republic's calculations regarding deterrence and defense into a new phase.
The Leader's emphasis on prudent combat readiness, an immediate and effective response to every level and type of threat without geographical restrictions, and the updating of the target database to encompass the tangible and intangible assets of the US and the Zionist regime constituted some of the most important themes of the meeting.
The Commander-in-Chief also stated explicitly that, should the enemies resume military or terrorist attacks, it would be Iran's Armed Forces and the Iranian nation that determine the time and conditions for their termination. This position, alongside the emphasis on strengthening indigenous defense doctrines and tactics, may indicate the consolidation of a new approach in the country's military strategy.



Shadab Asgari

IRAN DAILY: What significance does the recent meeting between senior commanders of Iran's Armed Forces and the Commander-in-Chief, and the message released following it, hold at the present juncture? The message appears to contain points that differ from previous positions.

ASGARI: The message released following the meeting between Iran's Commander-in-Chief Ayatollah Seyyed Mojtaba Khamenei and senior Armed Forces commanders, in my view, had two extremely important dimensions. The first was issuing a final warning to the hegemonic powers and Western powers. During the 12-Day War and the Ramadan War, they came to understand that when the Islamic Republic of Iran announces a position, it remains committed to it and possesses the capability to operationalize it as well.

For example, when the martyred Leader stated that this would be a regional war, we witnessed in practice that, only two hours after the war began, its scope expanded to the regional level. Therefore, the Islamic Republic's statements and warnings cannot be regarded as political positions and propaganda. The enemies know that they must take every single word and position expressed by Iran into account.

In my view, a significant part of the Commander-in-Chief's recent message conveys precisely this meaning: if the enemies undertake military or terrorist action, they must expect the consequences. This message is, in effect, a final warning.

The message emphasizes an immediate response to threats without geographical restrictions. How does this differ from Iran's previous approach?

In the past, the Islamic Republic of Iran took certain considerations into account in its military responses. For example, the primary focus was on the enemy's military bases and installations, while Iran largely refrained from targeting economic assets and infrastructure serving public welfare and services.

However, these considerations now appear to be changing. When a facility or infrastructure is used by the enemy to support military operations, it can no longer be regarded merely as a civilian installation outside the parameters of conflict. In fact, the Commander-in-Chief has made it clear through this message that the scope of Iran's response will not be confined exclusively to military targets and that any asset or capability serving as an instrument of threats against Iran may be incorporated into deterrence calculations.



Iranian missiles are displayed next to a banner with a picture of Iran's Leader Ayatollah Seyyed Mojtaba Khamenei (C) and assassinated senior military commanders and security figures, in Tehran, Iran, on September 27, 2026.
MAJID ASGARIPOUR/WANA

What has prompted Iran to extend the geographical scope of its response beyond the region? Does this mean an expansion of the conflict to encompass more countries?

We must take into account the realities of recent wars. Neither during the 12-Day War nor during the Ramadan War were we confronting only the United States and the Zionist regime. Other countries also participated in these operations, either directly or indirectly.

For instance, American aircraft flying from various bases toward the operational theater required aerial refueling. Tanker aircraft took off from countries such as Bulgaria and refueled them along their routes. Had such cooperation not existed, some of these operations would not have been feasible.

Countries such as Britain, Bulgaria, Hungary, and Italy also played various roles in supporting these operations. Even the presence of military personnel from certain European countries and their participation in logistical support and the transportation of equipment and wounded personnel demonstrated the broader dimensions of this cooperation.

Therefore, when a country participates in facilitating the preparations for an attack against Iran, its role cannot be disregarded. Of course, this does not mean that every country hosting an American military base will necessarily become an Iranian target. For example, Turkey or Pakistan may host an American military presence, but this alone does not signify their participation in operations against Iran. The principal criterion is the nature of the cooperation and the role each country plays in threatening the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Iranian women carry rifles as they stand during a massive civilian-military march called "The 313,000-Member Exercise of Iran's Jan-Fadayan" (lit. Life-Sacrificers of Iran), in Tehran on September 18, 2026.
VAHID SALEMI/AP



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But does extending the scope of the response to these countries not increase the risk of Iran confronting several fronts simultaneously? Is such an approach manageable from a military and strategic standpoint?

In my view, we must distinguish between direct military confrontation with a country and the endangerment of that country's interests. When Iran speaks of responding to those participating in aggression, this does not necessarily imply entering into a conventional, direct war with all of them.

Sometimes, a limited action can impose extremely substantial economic and security costs on a country. For example, suppose a missile strikes a prominent building in a regional country. Only one building may appear to have sustained damage, but the repercussions for investment, tourism, and economic confidence could be extensive.

Following such an incident, would investors still visit that country with the same degree of confidence? Would tourists still regard it as a safe recreational destination? Thus, a limited action can sometimes inflict extremely substantial economic and reputational damage.

Consequently, threatening the interests of countries participating in aggression does not necessarily mean directly attacking their territory. Rather, it may also entail disrupting their economic, commercial, and security interests. This, in itself, can serve as a deterrent and discourage countries with limited involvement in operations from continuing their cooperation with the United States.

The Leader's recent statement emphasized the inclusion of all types of the enemy's tangible and intangible assets in the target database. What significance does this hold, given Iran's changing approach toward infrastructure?

Western countries, and the United States in particular, generally design their wars around several principal tenets. First, the war must be as short and swift as possible. Second, primary reliance is placed on air power and missiles. Third, by inflicting devastating strikes, they seek to create conditions in which, even if the target country's military is not entirely destroyed, its population is subjected to pressure and desperation and ultimately