Feirahi theorist of a democratic reading of jurisprudence: *Professor*
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Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian (7th-R top row) and Iranian medalists at the 2026 International Science Olympiads pose for a family photo during a ceremony in Tehran, Iran, on November 17, 2026.
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Prospects of full-scale war with Iran recede as chances of medium-term de-escalation rise

By Delaram Ahmadi
Staff writer

INTERVIEW EXCLUSIVE

The administration of Donald Trump appears to have shifted its stance on a potential war with Iran following his party's defeat in the US midterm elections. In recent days, several US officials, including Trump himself, have voiced positions suggesting that military confrontation with Iran may not be necessary in the first place.



Omid Khazani

In an interview with Iran Daily, international affairs analyst Omid Khazani said the failure of the assumptions underpinning previous US military campaigns against Iran had reduced the likelihood of a full-scale war, while increasing the prospects of de-escalation in the medium term.

IRAN DAILY: To what extent can the shift in the US officials' tone be attributed to domestic considerations and developments in the United States, including the election results, and how much should it be viewed in the context of regional countries' concerns and pressure over the potential spread of the conflict?

KHAZANI: The war that began on February 28 last year was based on several assumptions. The first was that extensive aerial bombardment, along with the assassination of Iran's senior military commanders, its Supreme Leader and other influential officials, would lead to the collapse of the country's governing system. That did not happen. The second assumption was that a massive air campaign would completely destroy Iran's missile cities, as well as its offensive and defensive capabilities, thereby paving the way for a possible ground invasion if necessary. This assumption also proved wrong. The failure of these assumptions, which underpinned the broader military campaign, has made the option of a full-scale war less likely.

Another factor is the position of Iran's southern neighbors. Before February 28, they were either supportive of or at least neutral toward a large-scale military attack on Iran. But after witnessing Iran's fierce resistance, and seeing their own territories come under extensive Iranian attacks, their economies severely disrupted and their oil exports affected, they changed their stance. This has made launching another war considerably more difficult.

Logistical constraints are another factor that complicate the prospect of a new war. US bases have, for the most part, been put out of action, creating serious logistical challenges for any large-scale military campaign against Iran. This makes sanctions a more viable alternative to a new war.

Another factor making a new war more difficult for Washington is the Republican Party's heavy losses in the midterm elections, including the loss of both the House of Representatives and the Senate. It will be extremely difficult to sustain a war with no clear endgame and no tangible gains for the United States. Such a conflict would neither bring about a change in Iran's governing system nor destroy its missile cities or eliminate its nuclear capabilities. It would ultimately leave Washington with more casualties and exacerbate the energy crisis.

Therefore, the current situation appears to be serving primarily as a means of strengthening Washington's bargaining position in negotiations with Iran.

How should JD Vance's exclusion from the negotiation process be interpreted? Could this signal differences within the Trump administration over how to deal with Iran?

Yes, this can certainly be seen as a sign of deepening divisions within the White House and the Republican Party. We know that JD Vance's camp has favored a compromise, while the factions represented by Pete Hegseth, Marco Rubio and the CIA director have been the hawkish voices in the White House. They held the upper hand on February 28 and derailed the negotiations.

Vance openly blamed supporters of war with Iran for the failure. It was clear that divisions within the Republican Party had intensified. As we move forward, Vance will probably become increasingly critical, particularly because he is almost certain to be one of the Republican Party's presidential candidates in the election two years from now. He therefore wants to distance himself from the disastrous consequences of a war between Iran and the United States.

Vance himself is also not particularly keen on being part of the negotiating team unless he sees a prospect of a favorable outcome for himself.

These internal party dynamics will certainly have an impact on how events unfold over the next two years.

How does the upcoming trilateral meeting between the United States, Russia and China, and the developments surrounding it, relate to the Iran issue and Washington's approach toward the country?

For countries, national interests come first. China is certainly seeking energy security. A war between Iran and the United States, as well as threats to energy security in the Persian Gulf, would be detrimental to China in both the medium and long term. Russia, meanwhile, is seeking certain concessions from Trump so that he can help bring the Ukraine war to a favorable conclusion during the remaining two years of his presidency. Iran is a different card for each of these two countries. Ultimately, both have placed greater importance on Iran, and this has made them more determined to strengthen their strategic ties with Tehran and help facilitate a resolution to the crisis.

China now has a stronger incentive to engage in the Iran-US crisis and the wider Persian Gulf crisis. Although this incentive has grown, the Chinese still have doubts about Trump's intentions and continue to act cautiously. Nevertheless, they will certainly convey Iran's views to the United States. Since Trump is looking for an exit strategy, China can help him in this regard.

Russia can also play a facilitating role. The meetings between Iranian officials and President Vladimir Putin, particularly the meeting involving Iran's secretary of the Supreme National Security Council, could help convey Tehran's positions to Washington through Russia and China, both of which are partners of Iran. In this regard, China and Russia have greater leverage than the Persian Gulf Arab states.

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