Tehran warns against 'malicious campaign' to justify attacks on infrastructure



A damaged bridge that was hit by a US strike is pictured along the road connecting Roudan and Bandar Abbas in southern Iran on July 18, 2026.
ISNA

International Desk

Iran on Tuesday strongly condemned recent reports by American media outlets concerning its dams and alleged Iran's dirty bomb plans as part of a "malicious campaign" aimed at justifying further strikes against the country, warning that any renewed aggression would be met "unforgettable response".
Iran's reaction came in response to a recent report published by The New York Times titled, "War May Answer Longtime Riddle of Iranian Dams Built for No Clear Reason."
The report claimed that environmentalists long questioned the extensive network of dams and water transfer projects across Iran, particularly in regions lacking apparent agricultural or civilian need.
Following US and Israeli airstrikes on concealed Iranian missile sites, the newspaper cited analysts who concluded that some of these water projects might have been developed to support the country's military infrastructure.
CNN also in a report claimed that new US intelligence indicates that Iran is developing plans to target senior Trump administration officials by detonating a so-called dirty bomb or a chemical weapon in Washington, DC.
Iran's Foreign Ministry's spokesman Esmaeil Baqaei in a post of X said that the baseless allegations seeking to link Iran's dams to missile bases constitute yet another example of a malicious campaign to manufacture propaganda and security pretexts aimed at justifying attacks on a country's vital infrastructure.
"Portraying the geographical proximity of civilian infrastructure to military facilities as grounds for designating it a legitimate military target is neither a credible argument nor a substantiated claim. Rather, it is a sinister fallacy intended to legitimize attacks against civilian infrastructure and normalize grave violations of international humanitarian law" Baqaei said.

Alleged dirty bomb plan

"Those who initiated the aggression against Iran are now seeking to lay the media groundwork for their sinister designs by manufacturing and disseminating baseless allegations, including the recent claims published by The New York Times and the fabricated media narrative surrounding an alleged "dirty bomb" propagated by CNN. Step by step, they are attempting to manufacture a veneer of legitimacy for further aggression and atrocities" Baqaei added.
The Foreign Ministry's official underlined that Iran knows well how to respond to any act of aggression and ensure that it is met with an "unforgettable response".
US President Donald Trump said that US authorities take "very seriously" any possible threat to Washington.
"If there is (such a threat), they will pay a price the likes of which no other country has ever paid before."
Iranian Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf also reacted to The New York Times's report, saying that Tehran will consider any dam, port, or power plant near US or Israeli military bases a "dual-use" military targets.

'We'll apply your logic'

"Prepping the next round on civilian infra, their 'experts' tell NYT: 'dams near Iran's missile sites are dual-use,'" Qalibaf said in a post on X. "Cool. New rule: Any dam, port, or power plant near a US or Israeli base is dual-use. We'll apply your logic consistently and even-handedly," he wrote.
The US and Israeli war of aggression against Iran began on February 28, with immediate strikes on civilian facilities in the country's southern provinces.
In the following weeks, the US and Israel expanded their target list to include broader civilian and energy infrastructure.
Extensive strikes damaged or destroyed several seaports and commercial airports, including Tehran's Mehrabad International Airport.
During a consecutive series of night attacks, US forces struck multiple bridges and regional airports as the military pushed further into Iranian territory.

Araghchi: Iran pursuing diplomacy while remaining resolute in defending its sovereignty

International Desk

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi outlined Tehran's diplomatic initiative to end the US-imposed war during a meeting with Sultan Haitham bin Tariq Al Said of Oman, stressing that Iran has always been serious about pursuing diplomacy while remaining resolute in defending its territorial integrity and national interests.
Araghchi briefed the Omani ruler on the latest developments, including Iran's diplomatic proposal to bring the war to an end, and expressed appreciation for Oman's mediation efforts. The two sides also discussed the latest regional developments, particularly the growing insecurity and heightened tensions stemming from the US acts of aggression against Iran. Reaffirming Tehran's longstanding policy of promoting trust and cooperation among regional countries, Araghchi underscored the importance of concerted efforts by countries across the region to advance their shared interests and safeguard collective regional security. For his part, Oman's sultan welcomed Iran's responsible approach toward regional peace and stability, and called for continued consultations among regional countries to manage the current critical situation and prevent tensions from escalating further. Araghchi also held a separate meeting with his Omani counterpart, Badr al-Busaidi, to discuss bilateral relations and regional developments, emphasizing the need for stronger cooperation among regional countries to safeguard their shared interests and maintain peace and stability in the region.
In a post on X following the meeting, Al-Busaidi described the talks as constructive, saying the two sides reviewed the steady course of Oman-Iran relations and practical ways to deepen cooperation.
"We also exchanged views on the latest diplomatic efforts underway to address regional challenges, and reaffirmed the importance of continued dialogue and consultation in support of de-escalation and peaceful solutions," he added.
Oman's Foreign Ministry said the diplomatic efforts were aimed at expanding areas of mutual understanding among the parties concerned and preventing the crisis from widening, along with its repercussions.
Oman has long served as the intermediary between Washington and Tehran. In the months leading up to the US-Israeli aggression against Iran early this year, Muscat was the primary venue for indirect US-Iran negotiations. Oman News Agency also said on Tuesday Iran and Oman's foreign ministers discussed "safeguarding" shipping and diplomatic options to contain tensions, months into Tehran's blockade of the vital Strait of Hormuz sparked by the US aggression.



Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi (4th L) holds talks with Sultan Haitham bin Tariq Al Said of Oman in Muscat, Oman, on November 17, 2026.
IRNA

IRGC drones target US military radar at Bahrain airbase

International Desk

Bahrain was targeted by a third Iranian drone attack in five days on Tuesday, with Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) describing the operation as a response to continued violations of Iranian airspace by American military drones.
"In response to the continued violations of the airspace of the Islamic Republic by drones operated by the aggressor US military, and following the IRGC's successful air defense and electronic warfare operations to intercept, destroy, and capture MQ-series and MQM-170 drones, the IRGC's combat drones precisely targeted a radar system belonging to US forces at Sheikh Isa Airbase in Bahrain early this morning," the IRGC said in a statement on Tuesday.
The IRGC once again stressed that continued violations of the country's airspace and the use of regional military bases and facilities for hostile actions against Iran would not go unanswered. "The commanders of the US aggressor military will bear responsibility for the consequences of such actions."
The announcement followed an IRGC statement on Friday that its Aerospace Force had destroyed a US military early-warning radar in Bahrain in a precision strike.
Bahrain's Armed Forces claimed on Tuesday that they confronted, intercepted, and destroyed a number of Iranian aerial attacks before they could achieve their objectives.
Bahrain, which hosts the US navy's Fifth Fleet, was heavily targeted earlier in the war that started with US-Israeli strikes on Iran in February. It had been peaceful for weeks until Iranian drone attacks on Friday and Sunday.
The latest attack came as the US moved the USS Theodore Roosevelt into the region, bringing the number of American carrier strike groups in the region to three.
Qatar on Tuesday called for restraint following the Iranian attack on Bahrain, warning that the "escalation" in the Persian Gulf posed an "extremely serious" threat to the chances of reaching an agreement to end the war.
"We call on all parties to exercise restraint during this period and to avoid any escalation that could undermine negotiation efforts," Qatari Foreign Ministry spokesman Majed Al Ansari said at a press briefing in Doha.

Prospects of full-scale ...

Given these developments, how do you assess the outlook for Iran-US relations? Have the prospects for de-escalation and a diplomatic agreement improved, or should the possibility of military confrontation still be taken seriously?

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The prospect of a full-scale war has diminished in light of the changing assumptions and realities on the ground. However, the possibility of war has not disappeared entirely. The risk of renewed conflict remains because maintaining the current situation does not amount to lasting peace. It is merely a temporary cessation of hostilities.
Iran will certainly not tolerate being subjected to a sweeping blockade over the medium to long term. After January 4 or 5, it will undoubtedly step up its actions and adopt a more confrontational approach to breaking the blockade. It will also seek to raise the risks and costs of such a move for the United States. Within the United States, there are two opposing camps. On one side is the pro-peace faction, which, with an eye on the next presidential election, is seeking to restore the Republican Party's lost credibility. On the other side are major shareholders in US arms manufacturers who would not mind taking another shot at war, even if only in the short term, and trying out the option of using tactical nuclear weapons.

Therefore, amid the current uncertainty, either side could succeed in changing Trump's mind. The prospect of a full-scale war has become considerably lower, but the possibility of a short-term conflict remains.

At the same time, when two sides have been locked in years of tensions and eventually engage in a major war, but neither manages to secure a decisive victory, the prospects for a gradual reduction in tensions become stronger. If neither side can achieve a clear-cut victory, and various parameters continue to shift, the likelihood of de-escalation increases. Ultimately, the two sides may prefer to adhere to a limited agreement, even an imperfect one, rather than return to a full-scale war.
Iran's southern neighbors are also reassessing their calculations regarding Iran and increasingly recognizing that it would be better to coexist peacefully with their powerful neighbor. They will certainly lobby in this direction as peace brokers.
Russia and China, too, have reassessed Iran's importance and will undoubtedly step up their lobbying efforts.



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Cartoonist

CARTOON

