

Analyzing the First Iran–Israel War (June 2025): Causes, Consequences, and Future Scenarios

On June 13, 2025, Israel struck Iran's nuclear sites and killed top commanders, turning a long cold war into open conflict. Nine days later, the United States bombed Fordow, Natanz and Isfahan. After the June 24 ceasefire, Iran's nuclear program is halted, but what comes next: new escalation, a real truce or regime change?

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June 26, 2025

Two weeks ago, Israel and Iran entered into open military confrontation. During the conflict, Israel and the United States launched large-scale strikes on Iran's nuclear and military facilities. For many years, the tensions between the two countries resembled a "Cold War." But on June 13, 2025, this standoff escalated into direct armed conflict.

For the first time in its history, Israel carried out such a large-scale preemptive attack against Iran, driven by the belief that Iran's nuclear program poses an existential threat. It is already clear that this operation has had — and will continue to have — significant consequences for both regional security in the Middle East and global politics.

Israel's Objectives in the War Against Iran

Israel's main strategic goal in its conflict with Iran is to prevent the Islamic Republic from acquiring nuclear weapons. Such a development is seen as a direct and unacceptable threat to the national security of the Jewish state. For decades, Israeli leaders have warned against the dangers of a nuclear-armed Iran. They have worked to raise awareness among allies, delivered numerous speeches at the UN General Assembly, and repeatedly urged the international community to take strong action. Meanwhile, Tehran has continued to openly call for Israel's destruction and has supported anti-Israeli militant groups across the Middle East. For Israel, stopping Iran's nuclear ambitions has long been seen as a matter of national survival.

In addition, Iran has steadily built up a network of armed proxy groups — including Hezbollah in Lebanon, Palestinian factions, Shia militias in Iraq, the Houthis in Yemen, and others —

to increase pressure on Israel through terrorism and armed threats. In recent years, Israel's actions have aimed to disrupt these efforts. Even before the outbreak of open war, the IDF conducted a series of operations targeting Iranian forces and their allies. These missions were intended to weaken Iran's regional influence and strengthen Israel's security along its borders.

Another key objective for Israel is to ensure national security and protect its population. The recent war in Gaza and past conflicts with Hezbollah have convinced both the Israeli public and leadership that, in a hostile environment, Israel cannot afford to weaken its strategic position. This belief was further reinforced after pro-Iranian forces launched a series of painful attacks — most notably the unprecedented and brutal assault by Hamas on October 7, 2023. As a result, a clear consensus has emerged in Israeli society: “Enemies who openly call for Israel's destruction must not be allowed to obtain the means to carry out that threat.”

In this context, the operation against Iran is also viewed by Israel as an act of preemptive self-defense — aimed at protecting its citizens from a potential nuclear strike or other large-scale attacks by Iran and its allies.

Reasons for Israel's Preemptive Strike Against Iran

Military Necessity

From a military standpoint, Israel justifies its actions primarily by invoking its right to self-defense against aggression. According to an official statement by the IDF, the decision to launch the strike was made after intelligence revealed that Iran's nuclear program had passed the so-called “point of no return” — meaning Iran would soon be able to build a nuclear bomb.

The Israeli intelligence report noted that Iran had stockpiled several hundred kilograms of enriched uranium. It also pointed to the construction of new underground fortified facilities, allegedly intended to secretly enrich the material to weapons-grade levels. In addition, Iran was reportedly accelerating work on the components of a nuclear warhead. All of this was taking place while Tehran continued to participate in international negotiations over its nuclear program — effectively deceiving the global community, which, according to Israel, largely turned a blind eye.

Given these circumstances, the Israeli government concluded that any further delay would be dangerous. If it didn't act immediately, it might be too late tomorrow.

International Law

From the standpoint of international law, Israel frames its strike as an act of anticipatory self-defense. Jerusalem points out that Article 51 of the UN Charter explicitly guarantees a state's right to self-defense in the event of armed attack. Israel argues that a nuclear-armed authoritarian regime led by religious extremists who openly call for its destruction constitutes a clear and imminent threat of such an attack.

At the UN Security Council, Israeli diplomats stated: "There is no greater threat to peace and security than a nuclear Iran — a country that actively funds terrorism and engages in subversive activity worldwide." Israel therefore presented its military operation as a preemptive strike under the "inherent right of self-defense" — a sovereign right of any state to protect its existence.

However, this position is far from universally accepted. Many countries consider Israel's strike an illegal use of force that violates Iran's sovereignty. Some UN representatives argued that the IDF's actions breached international law and the UN Charter, since Iran had not yet launched a direct armed attack on Israel at the time of the strike. This allowed Iran to submit a formal protest to the UN Security Council, demanding that Israel be condemned and its attack recognized as a threat to global security.

Nonetheless, Israeli diplomacy has actively defended its position — primarily by stressing that all efforts to compel Iran to honor its nuclear nonproliferation obligations had completely failed. This, Israel argues, is undeniable: Iran has consistently rejected agreements or quickly violated those it signed.

By June 2025, it had become clear to many that Iran would never abandon its nuclear ambitions. As a result, a direct military strike was seen — regrettably — as the only remaining option after all others had been exhausted.

Domestic Politics

Domestic political factors also played a role. Israeli society, shaken by attacks from radical groups and a prolonged war against terrorism, now views external threats very differently. Following the Hamas assault on October 7, 2023, and the war with Hezbollah along the northern border, public demand has grown significantly for decisive action to eliminate all external dangers — including the threat from Iran.

Riding this wave of public support, the Netanyahu government declared that it could no longer rely on Iran's promises and was ready to act decisively. Israel's permanent representative to the UN, speaking at the General Assembly in New York, stated: "Jerusalem can no longer remain passive and will neutralize the existential threat posed by Iran to the Jewish state on its own."

Course of the Iran–Israel War: June 13–24, 2025

The Start of Operation “A Nation Like a Lion”

Israel’s preemptive strike on Iran came unexpectedly in the early hours of Friday, June 13. Around 3:30 a.m. Israeli time, the first explosions were heard in Tehran, catching Iran completely off guard. Israel deployed its full range of capabilities. The attacks were carried out by F-35 stealth aircraft supported by drones. Additionally, cruise missiles were launched from submarines in the Arabian Sea.

Initial targets included air defense positions, ballistic missile stockpiles, elements of Iran’s nuclear program (such as uranium enrichment facilities and research reactors), command centers of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), and the locations of top Iranian military commanders and nuclear scientists. The primary objective on the first day was to neutralize Iran’s air defense systems. Using intelligence and likely cyberattacks, Israel disabled several radar and command networks. This allowed its air force to strike even well-protected targets with minimal resistance.

In the opening hours of the operation, several high-ranking IRGC commanders and top nuclear scientists were killed in precision strikes. In the following days, Israeli forces eliminated newly appointed replacements as soon as they took over. As a result, Iran suffered severe losses among the leadership of both its military and nuclear programs. This reflects Israel’s “decapitation” strategy — previously used against terrorist groups — now applied on a national scale against a state’s entire military infrastructure.

Once Israel had achieved air superiority, it expanded the scope of its strikes. IRGC bases and other military installations were heavily bombarded. Israeli aircraft destroyed dozens of weapons depots, convoys, and military headquarters, along with the officers and generals stationed there. Iran’s Russian-made air defense systems proved ineffective against Israel’s advanced aircraft.

Iran’s Response Actions

Roughly a day after Israel’s strike, Tehran recovered from the initial shock and began to respond. At first, Iran resorted to asymmetric tactics, launching hundreds of Shahed kamikaze drones at Israel. However, the attack had little effect. Israel’s air defense systems — long tested against rockets and drones from Gaza and Lebanon — intercepted the vast majority of drones before they reached Israeli territory. The Iron Dome and the longer-range David’s Sling systems proved highly effective, with only a few drones managing to get through without causing serious damage.

Later, Iran launched massive missile attacks. While most ballistic missiles were intercepted, some did break through, causing significant damage — including the destruction of buildings

and civilian casualties. According to official Israeli reports, dozens of people were killed and around a thousand injured in Iranian missile strikes during the war.

One of the most serious incidents was a direct hit on Soroka Medical Center in Be'er Sheva. Israeli officials told the UN that Iran had deliberately targeted a civilian hospital in an attempt to cause maximum harm to the population and spread panic. Tehran denied this, claiming it had aimed at a military facility located near the hospital.

Proxy Forces Activity

Iran also activated its allied groups across the region in an effort to open additional fronts against Israel. On the very first day of the conflict, the Houthi rebels in Yemen launched a missile toward Eilat, but it was intercepted over the Red Sea by a U.S. Navy vessel long before reaching Israeli territory.

There was also some activity by Shia militias in Iraq, though they did not take any major action. Hezbollah in Lebanon — Iran's most powerful and longstanding proxy — showed notable restraint from the beginning of the conflict. Its leadership limited itself to public statements and made a point of distancing the group from the war. This likely reflects the fact that Hezbollah is still weakened after last year's war with Israel and is not eager to engage in another conflict.

Interim Results

At this stage, it is clear that Israel has achieved significant military success. According to U.S. analysts, "Iran has never looked this weak" following the Israeli assault. Hundreds of strategic sites across Iran were either destroyed or severely damaged, including key facilities of its nuclear program. Iran's missile and drone capabilities, as well as its launcher infrastructure, have been substantially depleted by Israeli strikes.

Although Tehran did manage to carry out several retaliatory attacks, none of them caused any real military or strategic damage to Israel. Only civilians were affected. Notably, despite brief and limited U.S. involvement, the conflict remained geographically contained. Israel successfully kept it as a bilateral confrontation and prevented a broader regional war.

Still, even after the ceasefire, tensions between Israel and Iran remain extremely high. Any spark could trigger renewed escalation. There is a persistent risk that Tehran may eventually try to activate its proxy forces to open new fronts against Israel — in southern Lebanon, Gaza, Iraq, Syria, or Yemen.

Nevertheless, for now, it seems that despite its aggressive rhetoric, Iran's leadership is showing a degree of caution and appears reluctant to prolong this particular round of confrontation. This may, in part, be due to fears over the survival of the regime itself.

The Role of the USA in the Iran–Israel Conflict

U.S. Position on Iran's Nuclear Program

The United States, as Israel's key ally, played a significant role in the war.

At the outset of the conflict, the U.S. adopted a cautious stance. President Donald Trump publicly urged Israel to show restraint and continue diplomatic talks with Iran. Just one day before the attack, he stated, “I don't want to say that a strike [on Iran] is inevitable...”

Nevertheless, Israel decided to act unilaterally, effectively presenting the U.S. with a fait accompli. Still, some behind-the-scenes coordination likely occurred. There are indications that Israel informed Washington shortly before the operation began.

For example, Marco Rubio posted on X (formerly Twitter), “Israel has notified us that it considers such action essential for its self-defense.” However, the exact level of coordination remains unclear. The U.S. emphasized that it had no role in planning or executing the initial strikes.

It seems likely that Washington gave its tacit approval. This is indirectly supported by later comments from Israeli officials noting that “success would not have been possible without American leadership.”

During the first week of the war, the U.S. position shifted from cautious neutrality to strong support for Israel. President Trump affirmed Israel's right to self-defense. Just a day after the first strike, the Pentagon deployed additional forces to the region. Major carrier strike groups were moved closer to Iran's coast. The U.S. also strengthened Israel's missile defense by accelerating deliveries of interceptors for both the Israeli Arrow system and America's THAAD system.

At the same time, Washington sent a clear warning to Tehran through diplomatic channels: any attack on American forces or civilians would result in direct retaliatory strikes.

Diplomatic Shield

While the U.S. limited its involvement on the battlefield to logistical and military support, it immediately assumed the role of Israel's active “diplomatic shield” on the international stage. In particular, at the United Nations Security Council, the U.S. delegation blocked all resolutions condemning Israel's strike on Iran.

On June 20, the U.S. representative stated at a Security Council meeting:

“Iran itself is a source of instability and terror in the Middle East. For years, it has chanted slogans like ‘Death to America’ and ‘Wipe Israel off the map,’ and has armed the Houthis to attack global maritime trade routes. But enough is enough. Our patience has run out.” With this statement, the U.S.

made it clear that it stands firmly alongside Israel in countering Iran's aggressive ambitions.

Participation in the War

As the conflict progressed, the United States eventually became directly involved in military operations. The turning point came when Israeli airstrikes failed to destroy Iran's most heavily fortified underground nuclear sites — particularly the Fordow facility, built deep within the mountains. This raised the risk that, despite the damage, Iran might still be able to produce weapons-grade nuclear material using surviving centrifuges.

Adding to the escalation, Tehran announced its intention to withdraw from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) — a move considered an unprecedented challenge to the global nuclear order. In response, the Trump administration decided to deploy America's unique military capabilities — namely, the GBU-57 Massive Ordnance Penetrator (MOP), which Israel does not possess — to finish the job of destroying Iran's underground facilities.

Nine days after Israel launched its initial strike, the U.S. joined the war. American aircraft carried out a series of airstrikes on three key Iranian nuclear sites: the Fordow and Natanz enrichment facilities, and the Isfahan Nuclear Technology Center. Washington reported that all U.S. aircraft completed their missions and exited Iranian airspace without losses.

Following the strikes, President Trump addressed the nation, declaring that “U.S. forces have completely destroyed three nuclear facilities” and warning that “if the Iranian regime does not immediately seek peace, further strikes will follow,” aimed at the total elimination of Iran's nuclear capabilities.

These actions dramatically shifted the course of the war and disrupted Iran's strategic calculations. Tehran saw that Washington's resolve had hardened, marking a major shift in the balance of power in the Middle East — clearly to Iran's disadvantage.

Naturally, Iran denounced the U.S. intervention as a “flagrant violation of international law.” Iranian officials accused Washington, a permanent member of the UN Security Council, of breaching both the UN Charter and the NPT by attacking facilities under IAEA supervision.

For Israel, however, direct American involvement was a major strategic boost. First, it amplified the impact of Israel's own strikes — achieving what Israel could not do alone: destroying deeply buried nuclear targets. Second, it sent a powerful political message. The U.S. had clearly taken Israel's side, warning Iran and its allies that continuing the war would only lead to a stronger coalition against them.

Disagreements with Israel

At the same time, it is important to acknowledge a degree of tension between Jerusalem and Washington. Israel's unilateral decision to launch a surprise strike on Iran — despite President Trump's cautious stance — sparked heated debate in the U.S. Critics in Congress accused the president of allowing himself to be drawn into a new war without the approval of the legislature. This criticism reflected fears that the U.S. might become entangled in a prolonged conflict in the Middle East.

Nevertheless, in the short term, U.S. policy remains firmly aligned with supporting Israel and pressuring Iran to surrender its nuclear ambitions. Military coordination between the two allies is now ongoing. A joint planning center has been established, allowing Israel and the U.S. to share all upcoming targets and strategies.

Within NATO and the G7, the U.S. has raised the issue of strengthening missile defenses along the southern flank and protecting maritime routes, in case Iran attempts to block the Strait of Hormuz.

Thus, the U.S. role in the conflict has evolved — from indirect approval to full military involvement. For Israel, this development is generally beneficial, though it does come with the potential risk of losing some autonomy in making key strategic decisions.

The Situation in Iran Following the Start of the Israeli Attack

Political Consequences

Israel's strikes inflicted not only military but also significant political damage on Iran. The Iranian public was deeply shaken by the sudden war, the scale of the Israeli assault, and its effectiveness.

For years, Iranian propaganda had claimed that the so-called “Zionist entity” would never dare attack the great and powerful Iran. But reality turned out quite different. Explosions in central Tehran, and strikes on Isfahan and Qom, stunned the population. In the first hours after the attack, panic and confusion spread among Iranians. People didn't know if more strikes were coming, where to flee, or whether the air defense system was functioning.

Unlike in Israel, Iran has no missile warning system, no air raid sirens, and no bomb shelters. The government had never seriously considered protecting civilians. As a result, many Iranians were outraged that — despite decades of military spending and boasts about readiness — there had been no sirens, no shelters, and no evacuation plans.

On social media, Iranians sarcastically noted that the ayatollahs' regime had spent more time “waging war on its own women” — a reference to the crackdown on women refusing to wear the hijab — than preparing for an actual external enemy.

Public opinion in Iran became deeply divided. On one side were regime loyalists who “rallied around the flag.” The government staged mandatory rallies condemning “Zionist aggression,” where state propagandists called on the public to resist and blamed Israel and the U.S. for Iran’s suffering.

On the other side, a large segment of the population criticized the regime harshly. Even before the war, Iran had a simmering protest movement, despite brutal repression — as seen in the mass women’s rights protests of 2022. The war exposed deep vulnerabilities in the regime, and many opposition-minded Iranians grew bolder in questioning: how did the government allow such a failure? Why is Iran isolated and friendless on the global stage?

As a result, the ayatollahs’ regime found itself on the defensive — not just militarily, but domestically. From the very first days of the war, authorities restricted internet access to prevent protest coordination and the spread of unofficial information. They also issued warnings that any public expressions of support for the strikes would be punished.

According to some reports, many opposition-aligned Iranians privately or online expressed satisfaction that the regime was “finally getting what it deserved.”

Economic Problems

The economic consequences of the war were no less dramatic for Iran. Within just a week of the conflict’s outbreak, the country faced a fuel crisis. The domestic gasoline market began to experience shortages, as some oil refining facilities were either damaged by Israeli strikes or shut down for safety reasons. Long lines formed at gas stations. Oil exports nearly ceased. Foreign tankers began avoiding Iranian ports, as their insurance companies refused to cover the risks of wartime activity.

The Iranian currency, the *rial* — already depreciating for years — collapsed even further. Prices for food and basic goods surged sharply. This threatens to cause serious food insecurity for large segments of the population.

Military Losses

Confirmed Iranian military losses were substantial, with UN reports citing several hundred fatalities among armed forces and security personnel, and numbers continuing to rise as more data becomes public. Independent analysts suggest even higher figures, considering deaths at bunkers and classified facilities.

Key regime figures were also eliminated, including IRGC generals, a deputy secretary of the Supreme National Security Council overseeing the nuclear program, and senior scientists from the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran. These losses are irreplaceable

in the short term, especially under conditions of international blockade, as experienced leaders managing complex projects are extremely difficult to substitute.

Nuclear Program

Iran's nuclear program, as a result of the Israeli operation, was, if not rolled back, then at least completely halted at the present moment. The facilities in Natanz and Isfahan have been completely disabled. The Fordow plant is either seriously damaged or also fully destroyed — let's wait for more precise reports from Mossad.

Iran, of course, claims that the damage at all sites is minimal and that personnel and nuclear materials were supposedly evacuated in advance. However, according to consolidated assessments by international experts, Iran has nonetheless lost its former ability to achieve a breakthrough in nuclear technology, which it was approaching in early June 2025. In simpler terms, the Iranians will no longer be able to assemble a nuclear bomb.

The IAEA also confirms that all of Iran's key nuclear sites have suffered severe damage, although the issue of the location of some nuclear materials remains unresolved. Iran, unsurprisingly, continues to publicly assert that its program was always purely peaceful and that the Israeli strikes now only strengthen its resolve to continue it in the future.

Vision of the Future

Against the backdrop of recent events, one does not need to be a prophet to realize that intense debates are currently taking place within the circle of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Iran's Supreme Leader, regarding the country's next steps. Judging by the latest reports, the political bloc now leans toward a more restrained approach — namely, the need to buy time in order to preserve the political regime. It seems Iran may try to secure the support of countries traditionally sympathetic to it — such as China and Russia — to increase diplomatic pressure on Israel and portray itself to the global community as a “victim.”

At the same time, to maintain its image domestically, the ayatollahs will likely craft a narrative of unyielding Islamic resistance supposedly “prepared to defend its sovereignty to the end.”

At this point, it is safe to say that Iran is experiencing arguably the most difficult period in its modern history. The economy is crippled, military capabilities are partially destroyed, the population is frightened and deeply disappointed in the supreme leadership. The regime still maintains control over the situation through increased repression, but its authority among the people has clearly been shaken. Many Iranians are now openly expressing a desire for regime change for the first time.

However, we also see that such statements have not yet translated into action. Apparently, Iranians are still not ready to fight for freedom at the cost of great bloodshed. Still, no one

knows how long these current trends will persist. It is clear to everyone that Iran has already entered a state of deep instability and profound upheaval, where each new day has the potential to radically upend the entire situation.

Impact of the Iran-Israel War on the Region

The outbreak of open war between Israel and Iran has greatly alarmed the entire Middle East. The reactions of key regional players have been quite complex.

On the official level, most countries formally condemned the escalation. However, behind the scenes, the situation is far less straightforward. Nearly all influential players are, of course, pursuing their own interests, which often intertwine in strange and unexpected ways. Let us briefly examine the main ones.

Arab States of the Persian Gulf

The Arab states of the Persian Gulf (Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Qatar, and others) are traditional adversaries of Iran and potentially its next targets after Israel. Therefore, their reaction to the outbreak of war was notably restrained.

Formally, nearly all of them condemned the Israeli strike, releasing foreign ministry statements using rhetoric about the inadmissibility of escalation and the violation of a foreign state's sovereignty. Saudi Arabia and the UAE expressed "deep concern" and urged all parties to exercise restraint. Qatar spoke of "serious consequences" and warned that further escalation could have catastrophic regional and international repercussions. Oman, which previously served as a mediator in U.S.-Iran negotiations, strongly condemned the strikes on Iran (especially the American ones) as undermining its mediation efforts. Kuwait, currently chairing the Gulf Cooperation Council, emphasized the importance of respecting sovereignty and called for securing international maritime routes and oil infrastructure, clearly fearing attacks on its tankers.

However, behind closed doors, the position of these Arab states is less clear-cut. In private discussions in Riyadh and Abu Dhabi, there was barely concealed relief, as the Israeli strikes significantly reduced the threat posed by a potentially nuclear-armed Iran. Therefore, their public condemnations were little more than a formality driven by fear of Iranian retaliation. This is evident in the fact that the statements came only from foreign ministries and not from the states' top leaders.

Some Gulf countries likely even covertly aided Israel. For example, there is speculation that Saudi and Qatari air defense systems shared data with Israel to help intercept Iranian drones. Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, who had previously opposed a strike on Iran—likely fearing a retaliatory strike on Saudi Arabia—made no public statement after

the U.S. attack, and the kingdom's air defense was placed on high alert. The Saudis also offered to host additional American missile defense systems to protect oil facilities on their territory.

Jordan

Jordan, which has a peace treaty with Israel, also adopted a cautious stance and was quick to distance itself from the operation against Iran, stating that it allegedly did not allow Israel to use its airspace for the strike.

Israel has not officially commented on the flight routes of its aircraft, but they most likely took a detour.

Later, Jordanian air defenses shot down several Iranian drones flying over Jordanian territory in an attempt to bypass Israel's missile defense system.

Thus, Amman effectively repeated its position from the exchange of strikes between Israel and Iran in April 2024, which was that Jordan does not allow either side of the conflict to drag it into war and defends its airspace against any violators, making no distinction between them.

Egypt

Egypt, for its part, issued a more extensive critique of the Israeli operation, calling it an "unjustified and dangerous escalation."

However, it's important to understand that Cairo, in fact, doesn't really care about Iran itself. What matters most to Egypt is maintaining its image as a defender of Arab solidarity — especially after the negative perception of Israel's actions in the Gaza Strip.

In reality, Egypt has no interest in seeing Iran gain strength in the Middle East, where Cairo itself aspires to regional leadership.

Thus, its statement is little more than a nod to diplomatic convention and a message crafted for domestic consumption.

Lebanon

Lebanon's position is more complicated. On one hand, Beirut condemned Israel's attack on Iran as "aggression against the Muslim people," but on the other hand, Lebanon has only recently emerged from a devastating 14-month war between Hezbollah and Israel that left the country deeply scarred.

The Lebanese army and government still do not fully control Hezbollah, but after severe losses in that war, the group's influence in Lebanon has significantly weakened. Many inside the country now blame Hezbollah for dragging Lebanon into conflict with Israel for Iran's sake — especially since Iran ultimately failed to come to its aid.

Hezbollah now faces a difficult dilemma. Formally, it is expected to retaliate in defense of its Iranian allies. However, its fighters still remember how Iran abandoned them not long ago. Moreover, Hezbollah's resources are now severely depleted, and Lebanese society is deeply

opposed to another war with Israel.

Turkey

In Turkey — a regional rival to both Israel and Iran — antisemitic sentiments unfortunately prevailed. Ankara condemned the IDF strikes on Iran and voiced concern about the escalating conflict. Turkey's representative at the UN emphasized the threat to the region's energy security. President Erdoğan held talks with Tehran and Moscow, offering to mediate. However, trust in Turkey is limited on both sides: Israel remembers Erdoğan's many antisemitic remarks, and Iran views Turkey as a key competitor for regional influence.

Ankara doesn't consider either Iran or Israel a direct enemy, but views their military conflict as a threat to its own interests, as it undermines regional stability.

The war also disrupts Turkey's plans for regional integration and affects many of its infrastructure projects that span across the Middle East.

Therefore, Turkey maintains diplomatic caution and is primarily preparing for the consequences of the war — including by tightening border controls and bracing for a possible wave of refugees. In this sense, Ankara would support a normalization of Iran-Israel relations, but not on terms that would strengthen Israel — as Turkey fears the dominance of an Israeli–Saudi–American bloc in the event of Iran's total collapse.

Global Consequences of the Iran-Israel War

From its very outset, the war between Israel and Iran became a matter of global security. It triggered a swift and intense response from all major countries and international institutions.

Russia

Russia, which formally supports Iran as a partner in the “anti-Western” camp, adopted a wait-and-see approach. Like many Arab countries, Moscow condemned the Israeli strike, emphasizing that “attacks on sovereign territory, regardless of their justification, grossly violate the UN Charter.”

However, despite its rhetoric, Russia took no concrete actions to support Iran. Firstly, it is clear that the Russian leadership is currently preoccupied with the war in Ukraine and therefore lacks the resources, reserves, or desire to open a second front in the Middle East. Secondly, Putin's Russia would certainly not dare openly enter into conflict against Israel and the U.S.

Moreover, cynically as it may sound, Russia even benefits to some extent from the problems of its close ally, since rising oil prices increase its export revenues.

There was some controversy over a provocative statement by Russian Security Council Deputy Chairman Dmitry Medvedev, who suggested that some countries might supply Iran with

nuclear weapons in response to Israeli strikes. It was implied that Russia was among those countries. However, in my view, this is not a real plan but rather marginal demagoguery reflecting Moscow's frustration at its inability to take meaningful action.

In the long term, I believe Moscow may even seek to capitalize on Iran's weakening to increase its influence in Tehran. In particular, I do not rule out that Moscow may increase arms supplies to Iran. For us, this changes little, as we have repeatedly seen that the quality of Russian weaponry does not pose a significant threat to Israeli defense systems. In exchange, Russia will likely gain additional economic cooperation concessions from Iran.

China

China reacted publicly much like Russia. The Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs condemned the U.S. strikes on Iran's nuclear sites as violations of the UN Charter and international law. Beijing also expressed concern over the escalation and called on Israel to cease fire. This reaction was expected, as diplomatically, China traditionally upholds the principles of sovereignty and non-interference.

In reality, however, China — as the largest importer of oil from the Middle East — fears a prolonged conflict in the region, which could destabilize the global energy market. Although the rise in oil prices caused by the war was moderate and later subsided, Beijing remains worried about the potential closure of the Strait of Hormuz. Such a development would inevitably disrupt supplies and impact the Chinese economy.

Therefore, China is not eager for an Iranian victory at any cost. If the situation worsens, Beijing might equally support harsh measures against either side in the conflict, as long as it ensures the stability of its own supplies. Nevertheless, based on China's diplomatic principles, it is expected that Beijing will publicly promote the idea of peaceful resolution if similar efforts on other platforms fail.

Europe

Europe was predictably divided in its response to the Iran crisis. On one hand, the so-called “big European three” (France, Germany, and the UK) have invested years in diplomatic efforts to resolve the Iranian nuclear issue. The last round of negotiations began in 2015 — almost a decade ago. From this perspective, Israel's military strike on Iran directly contradicts the European doctrine of resolving this conflict through diplomacy. On the other hand, Europeans share concerns about the prospect of Iran acquiring a nuclear bomb and have repeatedly expressed behind-the-scenes that this must never be allowed.

Officially, France and Germany expressed disappointment at the failure of diplomatic efforts. The French Foreign Ministry voiced “deep concern,” and the German Chancellor called on Iran to urgently return to nuclear talks with the U.S. — essentially urging Iran to make concessions it

has historically refused. However, behind the seemingly toothless and benign official European approach lies a significant unofficial component, which is much more resolute. For example, private messages from the Germans indicate a clear understanding of Israel's motives and support for the strike.

Italy expressed hope that with "Iran's nuclear capability severely damaged," there is now cause to expect de-escalation and a return to the negotiating table. The British response stands out for its greater straightforwardness. The UK Prime Minister condemned Iran and supported the U.S., stating that "Iran's nuclear program is a serious threat to international security, and therefore Iran must never get the bomb, and the U.S. has taken all necessary actions to mitigate this threat." Thus, the UK effectively endorsed the U.S. strikes, while continuing to call on Iran to negotiate.

Within the EU, there are also some disagreements. More pro-Russian or neutral countries (such as Serbia and Hungary) expressed concern over the unilateral actions of Israel and the U.S. Nonetheless, the European community as a whole shows strong unity in its unofficial support for Israel.

United Nations

UN Secretary-General António Guterres was among the first to call for an end to the escalation, describing the situation between Israel and Iran as uncontrollable. He also emphasized the need for diplomacy and for the IAEA to be allowed access to Iran's nuclear facilities.

The UN Security Council held emergency meetings but failed to pass a resolution due to disagreements among permanent members.

China stated that Israel's actions undermine Iran's sovereignty and called for de-escalation. Iran accused Israel of aggression, citing Article 39 of the UN Charter, and reminded that Israel supposedly possesses nuclear weapons but is not a member of the NPT. The Israeli representative responded strongly, calling Iran a "wolf in sheep's clothing" and accusing it of genocidal policies, developing an aggressive nuclear weapons program, lying to the IAEA, and threatening Europe and the U.S. Israel also promised that the operation would continue until the nuclear program was fully dismantled.

UN specialized bodies also expressed concern. The Human Rights Council condemned the strikes that caused civilian casualties and risked environmental disaster. The IAEA stated that it is monitoring the situation and warned of severe consequences from the attacks on nuclear sites. The IAEA Director-General also expressed concern that the attack on Iranian reactors could cause major radioactive contamination and urged Israel to refrain from continuing the war.

Global Energy and Economy

After the war began, oil prices jumped 10–15%, and gas prices rose 5–7%. Even gold, which seemingly has no direct connection to Iran, became more expensive. However, the predicted market panic did not occur because the price increase was lower than expected and then stopped altogether. This is primarily explained by large fuel reserves held by Saudi Arabia and the U.S. For example, Trump emphasized that the increased energy independence of the U.S. from the Middle East allowed Washington to act more decisively.

Nevertheless, the threat of a prolonged conflict continues to cause concern, as about 20% of the world's oil and liquefied natural gas passes through the Strait of Hormuz. Therefore, any potential Iranian attempt to block it would obviously lead to a sharp rise in prices, inflation, and a blow to the entire global economy.

Global Non-Proliferation Regime

The war in Iran also called into question the effectiveness of international agreements on the nuclear non-proliferation regime. Voices in Iran rose again, urging withdrawal from the NPT. They argued that if a country has been attacked despite formally not possessing nuclear weapons, then why adhere to the treaty at all?

Following this, France explicitly warned Iran that it would view any manipulations with the NPT as a deliberate strike against the non-proliferation regime, as this could trigger a chain reaction. Other countries might then also consider acquiring nuclear weapons, since there are no real guarantees of protection.

For example, Algeria rhetorically asked at a UN Security Council meeting: “If the presence of IAEA inspectors did not protect Iran’s nuclear facilities from attack, does that not mean that the entire non-proliferation system worldwide is ineffective?”

Indeed, this precedent worries many today. It appears that a nuclear state (Israel) has bombed the facilities of a non-nuclear state party to the NPT (Iran) with impunity—doing so on the grounds that international inspections cannot be trusted. This could seriously demotivate other countries from adhering to the non-proliferation treaty.

As a consequence, the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) has already called the actions of the US, following its joining of the Israeli attack on Iran, “senseless and reckless.” ICAN also emphasized that “military strikes are not the best way to resolve the nuclear weapons issue, especially when US intelligence supposedly believes that Iran was not as close to developing a nuclear bomb as Netanyahu claimed.”

Domestic Political Changes in Several Countries

The Iran-Israel war turned out to be such a resonant event that it even provoked noticeable domestic political consequences in various countries.

For example, in the United States, this conflict has already become the subject of intense disputes. While the Republican Trump administration positions itself as a decisive fighter against external threats, the Democrats accuse it of illegally bypassing Congressional decisions, particularly the “War Powers Act.” Protests against the war have taken place in several US cities, although support for Israel in American society remains fairly strong.

In Europe, opinions are also not unanimous. Left-wing forces traditionally criticize Israel and the US, demanding a peaceful resolution to the issue, while right-wing populists, on the contrary, support the use of military force. For example, in France, Marine Le Pen stated that “Iran received the expected response.”

In Muslim countries, anti-American and anti-Israeli protests are naturally occurring, especially in countries where society strongly sympathizes with Iran. This primarily includes Iraq, Pakistan, partially Turkey, and others. This, of course, complicates the position of the governments of these countries, as they are forced to balance between the interests of both external and internal actors.

Future Development Scenarios

Even despite the ceasefire agreed upon yesterday, we can see that the situation around Iran remains highly dynamic. Therefore, many of us continue to rightly ask what will happen next and what we should prepare for. Let's consider three of the most likely scenarios for the development of the situation around Iran, from my point of view.

Scenario 1: Further escalation of the conflict

If Iran decides to break the ceasefire and retaliate against Israel and the USA for the damages suffered during this war, it will most likely try to take some of the following actions.

- *Attacks on the USA and its allies.* For example, Iran may try to strike US bases again in the Gulf Arab countries, as well as in Syria or Iraq. Such a move could trigger a military response from the USA and its allies. Although Tehran currently avoids direct conflict with the USA, the risk of miscalculations and reckless actions by the ayatollah regime remains. Let's not forget that we are dealing with a junta of religious fanatics whose sole goal is to reach paradise. Therefore, anything can be expected from them.
- *Strikes on GCC countries.* Attacks on the oil infrastructure of the Gulf Arab states are also possible, such as Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, or the UAE. On one hand, this could shock global energy markets. On the other hand, it would immediately lead to Iran's international isolation

and unite not only the alliance of the most influential Arab countries but also China and a significant part of Europe against it.

- *Attempt to block the Strait of Hormuz.* Additionally, Iran could theoretically mine or militarily block the Strait of Hormuz by attacking tankers passing through it. However, such a move would provoke strong global condemnation and could lead to an international military operation, possibly even with support from China. Therefore, in my opinion, this scenario is highly unlikely.

- *Mobilization of proxy forces.* It should not be underestimated that Iran might try to revive its network of proxy forces in the Middle East. For example, it could reactivate Hezbollah, the Houthis, and Shiite militias in Syria and Iraq. However, it is clear that such a new front could be quickly and harshly suppressed by Israel alone, even without US assistance.

Thus, this scenario, regardless of its components, will inevitably lead to another regional war in the Middle East. Globally, it will cause an energy crisis, with oil prices rising above \$100 or even \$150 per barrel, inflation, and market downturns. The world will once again be politically divided. The UN will be paralyzed for some time. The antagonism between what we conventionally call the West and the East will intensify.

There is also a risk of nuclear blackmail—if the Iranian regime, for example, nears collapse and Russia ends up transferring its nuclear weapons to Iran. In my view, this scenario is extremely dangerous and destructive but also the least likely.

Scenario 2: Real ceasefire and de-escalation

In this scenario, Iran, having exhausted its options, agrees to engage in genuine nuclear negotiations through some intermediaries — for example, Oman, Qatar, China, or others. In this case, Israel and the US may drop all claims against Iran if it chooses peaceful coexistence with Israel in exchange for maintaining power in the hands of the ayatollah regime.

The ceasefire may also be informal. Iran stops all aggressive actions, while Israel and the US reduce their military pressure accordingly, until Iran resumes escalation. By the way, this type of ceasefire was already tested by Israel in 2024 during the war with Hezbollah, and that experience can be applied to Iran as well.

Only in the case of Iran should the monitoring mechanism for the ceasefire also include:

- *Resumption of IAEA inspections.*
- *Technical consultations* on key nuclear program issues (and possibly beyond) mediated by the UN or Oman.

Ultimately, the complete halt of Iran's aggressive ambitions would prevent further escalation in the region. In this case, a large-scale diplomatic campaign could be launched. For example,

the US and its allies, including Israel, would require Iran to accept the traditional basic conditions of the nuclear non-proliferation process:

- *Renunciation of uranium enrichment;*
- *Dismantling of nuclear infrastructure;*
- *Reduction in the number of missiles;*
- *Renunciation of support for proxy forces.*

Obviously, Iran is unlikely to agree to all these conditions voluntarily in their current form. Nevertheless, simply discussing them would open the way to reaching some compromise. Although any such ceasefire would undoubtedly be fragile and temporary, it would still offer a chance to avoid full-scale war in the future and at least begin seeking a more stable solution.

Scenario 3: Change of political regime in Iran.

Another delayed outcome of the Iran-Israel war that ended yesterday, with a non-zero probability, is the internal transformation or even complete overthrow of the ayatollah regime in Iran as a result of the crisis triggered by the war. However, given the current circumstances, I believe it is more likely to be a gradual decline and internal degradation of Iran's ruling elite rather than a sudden revolution. Possible developments in this scenario include the following.

- *Struggle for regime survival.* The ayatollahs may retain control over the capital, Tehran, but gradually lose it in peripheral regions where various separatist movements — Kurds, Balochis, Arabs, Azerbaijanis, and others — are becoming more active. At least, unrest has already been reported in Sistan and Baluchistan. Additionally, local uprisings could receive external support if they show potential for success.
- *Prolonged crisis.* In addition, Iran may simply descend into a prolonged period of domestic political instability, often marked by partial loss of control over certain elements of the power structure, economic chaos, weakening local authority, and so on.
- *Coup d'état.* A straightforward coup cannot be ruled out. In this case, moderate forces within the regime (for example, the IRGC) might remove the ayatollahs from power and offer the West a deal: “giving up the nuclear program in exchange for personal security guarantees or sanctions relief.” Such elite splits often lead to internal coups and, consequently, changes in previous political and international approaches.

One way or another, if the regime falls for any reason, two scenarios are possible.

- *Soft transition.* This scenario is possible if the new leadership in Iran agrees to abandon the nuclear program and cease support for proxy forces. In this case, Iran would become part of a new world order and could restore ties with the West. This is, of course, a very optimistic but likely unlikely scenario.

- *Chaos*. The most obvious alternative to the first option is chaos and disorganization caused by civil war. In this case, the regime collapses completely, triggering dramatic power struggles. Iran becomes a battleground for various internal forces. Civil war breaks out. Refugee flows scatter in different directions. There is a risk of nuclear materials hidden somewhere leaking.

In this scenario, I believe an external intervention by international peacekeeping forces under the UN's auspices could even occur, similar to what happened in Sudan's Darfur or Western Sahara. However, in my opinion, the threat of a regime change in Iran remains extremely low for now. Although the ayatollah regime is under enormous pressure, it is holding on quite successfully. Ultimately, I believe everything will depend on the Iranian elites. For example, if the military decides that Khamenei has led the country into a dead end, then, theoretically, it could shift its support to an alternative center of power. But the problem is that, at least for now, no such alternative center of power exists in Iran.

Summary and Conclusions

Although we are likely still in the midst of a large-scale Iran-Israel confrontation despite the ceasefire reached, it is already clear that the armed conflict between the two countries in June 2025 will mark a significant turning point, after which the entire security system in the Middle East will undergo a fundamental transformation. At the very least, Iran will no longer be the same. It will either change significantly or weaken greatly, becoming an even more isolated state but without its former ambitions.

Israel, having first survived a devastating war with Hamas in the Gaza Strip and Hezbollah in Lebanon, then conducted a series of successful operations supporting the Druze in Syria and fighting the Houthis in Yemen, and finally dealt a powerful blow to Iran, will emerge from this nearly two-year cycle of wars as an even more influential regional leader.

Thus, the modern Middle East has undoubtedly entered a new phase of its history. Israel, having finally eliminated the existential threat from Iran, will play a much more active role in this region. Most likely, in the near future, we will see new steps toward expanding and strengthening its integration with Arab neighbors — especially economically, as the Gulf Arab countries would like.

However, for this to happen, Israel will also need to show significant diplomatic flexibility and not just rest on the laurels of yesterday's victory... But that is a topic for another conversation.

ABOUT

I am Sergey Konyashin, a former Russian diplomat. I spent nearly a dozen years in the Russian Foreign Ministry, with postings in Yemen (2010–2013), Sudan (2014–2018) and Algeria (2019–2021), and left Russia in 2022, after Putin's invasion of Ukraine.

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