

Repercussions of Israel's Attack on Iran

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If there was any doubt about what has changed in the global arena, Israel's comprehensive attack on Iran has probably put it to rest. Hard power has proven that it is here to stay. While our world has been in turmoil for a long time, and efforts to bring peace or at least a ceasefire have been feeble, Israel's attack on Iran has only fueled the fire.

We have witnessed the failure of rules to be enforced in the international arena, the ineffectiveness of multilateral organizations such as the UN, and the inability of formations such as the G20, G7, or BRICS to achieve significant success. These are not new developments. What is new is that the US has now joined them.

With Donald Trump's re-election as US president, developments on the global stage have become even more turbulent. Trump has managed to influence everyone with his statements and decisions on both domestic and foreign policy.

Approximately five months after taking office, Trump turned the US's well-known foreign policy upside down with his statements on Canada, Greenland, and the Panama Canal on his first day in office. Although it cannot be said that the US was always a peace-loving country, for the first time it used threatening language towards its allies and neighbors. It also attacked the European Union and even claimed that the EU was established to oppose the US. Later, it announced that it would impose tariffs on most of the world. This was retracted and then put back, causing uncertainty. However, the US took specific measures against China.

Meanwhile, President Trump took a pro-Russia stance in the Ukraine-Russia war and criticized Ukraine's policies. Even though he recently criticized Russian President Putin, he exempted Russia from customs tariffs, rationalizing the previously imposed sanctions. Although he tried to mediate between the two countries, he did not act very enthusiastically and did not take the necessary steps to force Russia to negotiate seriously. He only managed to reach an agreement on rare earths located in Ukraine.

In the Middle East, as expected, he continued to support Israel and suggested that Gaza could be evacuated and turned into a tourist paradise. During his first official visit to Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and the UAE, he emphasized trade and investment issues.

While calling for an end to conflicts in both Europe and the Middle East, he held surprise talks with Iran. He conducted negotiations based on the fundamental principle that Iran should not possess nuclear weapons and demanded that Israel refrain from attacking Iran.

The US's primary target is China. It wants to focus on this and views conflicts in other regions as obstacles. While no longer attaching the same importance to NATO, it wants European countries to stand on their own two feet. It does not see Russia as a major threat to itself.

However, when the US talks with Iran dragged on without a result, Israel saw this as an opportunity and attacked on June 13. A Friday no less. Israel also used the decision taken the day before by the International Atomic Energy Agency.

In this decision, it was stated that despite repeated calls by the IAEA Board of Governors and numerous opportunities offered, Iran failed to cooperate fully with the Agency as required by the Safeguards Agreement. Furthermore, it was pointed out that since 2019, Iran had failed to fulfill its obligation to cooperate fully and in a timely manner with the IAEA on unreported nuclear material and activities in many locations, and, most importantly, it found that the Agency was not able to verify that there had been no diversion of nuclear material required to be safeguarded under the Agreement to nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices;

In other words, Iran was allegedly lacking transparency.

Iran claims this was a biased decision and has given Israel an excuse to act. Israel had for months explained that as it weakened Iran's defenses it also did not want this window of opportunity to close. Although the US had claimed that it does not endorse Israel's attack, the fact that it withdrew some of its personnel from the region a few days in advance and announced that an attack was possible shows that the US did not make much of an effort to prevent it, although talks between US and Iranian representatives on nuclear issues were ongoing.

Furthermore, President Trump's praise of the attacks and his statement that there would be more to come, coupled with his call for constructive behavior by Tehran at the US-Iran talks scheduled for this weekend in Oman, are mockery at best. As expected, the talks were canceled, and Iran launched a counterattack. The region is now ripe for further turmoil. In addition to the US, France and Germany also announced their support for Israel.

In short, the message being sent is that we, the Western countries, can have nuclear weapons, but others, especially Iran, cannot. India, Pakistan, and North Korea were

not supposed to have these weapons either, but this could not be prevented. Israel has long made it clear that it views Iran's use of Hamas, Hezbollah, and the Houthis to attack it as a vital threat and will do everything in its power to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons. We also see that the various statements made by Iranian officials claiming they do not seek nuclear weapons are not being taken seriously.

Israel had essentially gained an advantage in terms of security after the destruction it wrought in the region following Hamas' attacks two years ago. It had crushed Hamas and Hezbollah, President Assad fled Syria, and the country had become divided, leaving Iran as the only power capable of posing a threat to Israel. However, Iran's conventional military power is limited. The only unknown factor was nuclear weapons. Even though Iran still had a long way to go in terms of technical and technological issues, such as developing a nuclear weapon and its delivery, Israel attacked. I was surprised that amongst the many reasons for the attack, almost no one pointed out that the main reason for this was Prime Minister Netanyahu's desire to remain in power until the next elections, to portray himself as a hero, and to extend his rule.

Ultimately, the US cannot leave the region. However, President Trump has a weak point. That is his desire to avoid shedding American blood at all costs. That is why the agreement to withdraw from Afghanistan was made during his first term. He is also slowly withdrawing from Iraq and Syria. US attacks on the Houthis were made from ships with no troops on the ground. The irony is that he is willing to send American soldiers to oppose his own citizens.

While all this is happening, China is watching events closely. China's main goal is to take over Taiwan. It is clear that this cannot be achieved peacefully. However, there are two obstacles preventing China from doing so. The first is Russia's failure in Ukraine, i.e., the fact that a major power can be stopped by a much weaker opponent. The second is the uncertainty surrounding the United States' intentions. Will the United States go to war for Taiwan, or does it no longer consider it as important as before? These questions remain unanswered. The decision taken during the Biden administration to shift chip production from Taiwan to the United States may be a sign that Taiwan is no longer seen as vital to Washington's interests as it once was. Failing to defend Taiwan would damage the reputation of the United States.

In short, every country needs to muster power if it wants to deter aggression. No one comes to anyone's aid. International organizations are toothless, issuing nothing but condemnations. In this uncertain and ambiguous era, it is essential to keep lines of communication open and keep existing alliances as sturdy as possible.