

Territory before politics: Why Trump cannot neutralize Hezbollah

By Wesam Bahrani

TEHRAN – During Lebanese President Joseph Aoun's White House meeting with his U.S. counterpart, Trump again publicly promoted the idea of Syrian forces confronting Hezbollah.

Where the Israeli Occupation Forces (IOF) failed to achieve their objectives in southern Lebanon, Trump said Syria's self-proclaimed President Ahmed al-Sharee "would like to come in and do something with Hezbollah."

"He has been fighting Hezbollah for a long time. I think it would be very effective," Trump added. Aoun did not address the U.S. proposal of Syrian militants entering Lebanon to the media, nor did he say anything to Trump. ► Page 5

The world must not permit US, Israel to undermine ICC

TEHRAN – The International Criminal Court (ICC) was established by the Rome Statute, a multilateral treaty adopted on 17 July 1998 in Rome, Italy. The Rome Statute entered into force on 1 July 2002, after 60 countries ratified it, and the court officially began operating on that date.

The ICC, headquartered in The Hague, was established for several key reasons:

To end impunity for the gravest international crimes. The ICC was created to prosecute individuals—not states—responsible for the most serious crimes of concern to the international community. ► Page 5

Iran has 'not an Iota of trust' in its adversaries, army chief says

TEHRAN – Iran's Army Commander-in-Chief Maj. Gen. Amir Hatami said Tehran has "not even an Iota of Trust" in its adversaries, accusing them of pursuing both military and psychological campaigns against Iran while insisting the country's armed forces remain fully prepared for future threats.

Hatami made the remarks during an inspection of Army grounds, air defense and air force units in the central province of Isfahan, where he assessed operational readiness and addressed military commanders. ► Page 3

DOE chief to spotlight environmental consequences of war at UN climate conference

TEHRAN – Shina Ansari, the Head of the Department of Environment, has announced that the country's primary focus at the 31st United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP31) will be to highlight the environmental impacts of war and call for greater international accountability.

Speaking at a press conference held on Iran's participation in COP31, Ansari said that the annual UN Climate Change Conference is one of the world's most significant environmental forums and provides a valuable platform for the Islamic Republic of Iran to present its perspectives, capacities, and concerns to the international community, ISNA reported.

She emphasized that Iran will submit documented and evidence-based reports detailing the environmental, infrastructural, and public health impacts resulting from military aggression. "These findings will be presented to the international community to raise awareness and prompt appropriate international action." ► Page 7



The mother of a Minab schoolchild holds the remains of her child during a reburial ceremony, July 22, 2026.

140 days after the horrific massacre of students in Minab 34 Mothers Lay Their Children's Remains to Rest Again

The Minab school reburials lay bare the grim reality of the US aggression and Washington's utter disregard for innocent Iranian lives

TEHRAN – In a solemn display of grief and defiance, the streets of Minab in southern Iran were draped in mourning on Wednesday as residents gathered to pay their final respects to the young victims of the tragic February 28 US missile strike on the Shajareh Tayyebbeh Elementary School.

Nearly five months after the devastating attack that claimed 168 lives—the majority of them young schoolchildren—the community assembled to bury newly identified remains, even as international scrutiny mounts over Washington's refusal to provide a transparent accounting of the tragedy.

The emotional ceremony in Minab, Hormozgan Province, marked the culmination of months of painful recovery and DNA testing efforts. A funeral procession moved toward the city's Martyrs' Cemetery, carrying the remains of children whose lives were cut short.

According to provincial officials, 68 body fragments belonging to 34 students were recently identified through precise DNA testing. Among them were the remains of young Amirali Kamali, whose family had waited nearly five months for confirmation.

"Where am I supposed to look for my son?" asked the father of 7-year-old Makan Nasiri in an interview earlier this year, his eyes filled with tears.

Makan, a first-grader, remains the only victim whose remains have not been recovered. Mojtaba Qahramani, head of Hormozgan's judiciary, told Fars news agency that specialized search operations at the school site revealed no trace of the child, as the direct impact occurred precisely where he was standing. An empty grave has been

prepared for Makan, while his personal belongings—including a bloodstained sweater and a single sneaker—are preserved in a glass display case at a nearby mosque.

Religious rites and jurisprudence: Honoring the deceased

The recovery and identification process required careful navigation of Islamic traditions to ensure the victims were laid to rest with full dignity.

Ata Navaki, Director General of the Hormozgan Foundation of Martyrs and Veterans Affairs, stated that following consultations with members of the provincial Security Council and the families of the victims, it was decided—with the families' explicit consent—that some of the newly recovered remains would be reunited with the victims' bodies. ► Page 3



Protesters in Manila denounce US war on Iran, Label Marco Rubio a 'war criminal'

TEHRAN — Public anger over Washington's aggressive foreign policy erupted on the streets of Manila on Wednesday, as anti-war demonstrators rallied outside the venue of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Foreign Ministers' Meeting to protest the presence of Secretary of State Marco Rubio and denounce US military operations against Iran.

Carrying placards reading "War criminals not welcome" and "Ban Trump! Ban Rubio!", activists gathered in the Philippine capital to voice sharp opposition to Washington's military actions in the Middle East and its expanding strategic footprint in the Indo-Pacific. ► Page 2

Iran expands retaliatory campaign against Satanic enemy

TEHRAN – Iran has significantly expanded its retaliatory military campaign against US forces across West Asia, announcing a series of missile and drone strikes against American military facilities in Bahrain, Jordan and Kuwait while senior military officials added the country has recovered from the initial US offensive launched on Feb. 28 and rebuilt its operational capabilities.

The latest operations, carried out under Operation Nasr-2, mark one of Iran's broadest waves of attacks since the conflict began and underscore 'a transition from strategic defense to sustained offensive operations.' ► Page 2

Under fire on Capitol Hill: Hegseth faces bipartisan scrutiny over Iran war

TEHRAN – US Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth came under intense bipartisan scrutiny during a contentious Senate Appropriations Committee hearing as lawmakers challenged the Trump administration's strategy in the war against Iran, questioned the rapidly escalating financial and human costs of the conflict, and demanded greater transparency over the Pentagon's long-term objectives.

Appearing alongside Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Dan Caine and Agriculture Secretary Brooke Rollins, Hegseth defended President Donald Trump's emergency supplemental funding request, arguing that additional resources were essential to sustain military operations and replenish US weapons stockpiles. ► Page 2

Minab Awakening Lullabies intl. festival to be held in response to US-Israeli atrocities

TEHRAN- The first International Minab Awakening Lullabies Festival is scheduled to take place in the near future.

Organized by the Islamic Culture and Relations Organization (ICRO), under the secretariat of Maziar Rezakhani, the event aims to mobilize a global artistic response to the atrocities committed by the US and the Zionist regime in Minab.

The festival has recently issued a worldwide call to mothers across all nations to record and share lullabies dedicated to the children of Minab, transforming a universal symbol of maternal love into a cry for justice and remembrance.

The festival secretary Maziar Rezakhani stated that the American-Zionist crime perpetrated on the first day of Ramadan War in Minab sparked grief and indignation among free people globally, Honaronline reported on Tuesday. ► Page 8

Regional Arab states unwilling to fully follow US: Chinese scholar



► Page 3

140 days after the horrific massacre of students in Minab 34 mothers lay their children's remains to rest again

From Page 1 ▶ Navaki noted that four bodies, despite having sustained severe damage, contained relatively intact remains and were buried separately in designated locations at the Martyrs' Cemetery. Regarding the remaining identified body fragments, it was agreed that they would be interred at a suitable location within the cemetery in a dignified ceremony befitting their sacrifice.

Islamic law places immense emphasis on preserving the dignity and sanctity of the deceased, and the exhumation or disturbance of graves is generally prohibited. Across major schools of Islamic jurisprudence, however, exceptions are recognized in cases of necessity or overriding public interest, such as the recovery of newly discovered human remains, the identification of victims, the protection of legal rights, or the completion of a proper burial. In such circumstances, exhumation is undertaken not to violate the sanctity of the grave, but to fulfill the religious obligation to ensure the deceased are treated with full dignity.

In the Minab case, authorities explained that graves were reopened after the remains of over two dozen students, missing since the February 28 attack, were recovered and identified. The exhumation was carried out strictly to allow these newly recovered remains to be buried alongside their classmates already interred in the same grave. According to Islamic jurisprudence, this action falls within recognized exceptions because its sole purpose is to complete the burial and ensure all identified remains receive a prop-



er and dignified burial in accordance with sacred traditions.

US shirks responsibility for its crimes

The US attack on Shajareh Tayyebah Elementary School has drawn broad international condemnation. The United Nations Human Rights Office emphasized the right of families to know the truth.

“The families of the little girls who were killed are entitled to the truth of how this happened,” stated UN Human Rights Office spokesperson Ravina Shamdasani.

Investigations and prominent coverage by international outlets, including CNN and Sky News, have underscored the severity of the strike, detailing the devastating human toll and highlighting growing questions surrounding the US military's targeting decisions. Despite widespread media exposure and satellite imagery confirming the presence of Tomahawk missile debris at the school site, Washington has faced severe criticism for attempting to evade responsibility.

Regional Arab states unwilling to fully follow US: Chinese scholar Jianwei Han says the US wants to maintain hegemony in the Mideast through Israel

By Sahar Dadjoo

TEHRAN - Jianwei Han, an associate professor at the Middle East Studies Institute of Shanghai International Studies University, believes Iran has shown extraordinary resilience against U.S. military pressure, and that the current confrontation marks a watershed moment reshaping the Middle East's strategic landscape.

In an interview with the Tehran Times, she discusses the widening gap between U.S. and Israeli objectives, the sustainability of (Persian) Gulf states' neutrality, the economic fallout from the Strait of Hormuz blockade, and the prospects and limits of China-Iran cooperation under sanctions.

The following is the full text of the interview:

American officials argued that military pressure would weaken Iran. Based on recent developments, has that strategy worked, or has Iran proved more resilient than expected?

I don't think the U.S. assessment is correct. I believe Iran has demonstrated extraordinary resilience in its war against the United States, evident in various aspects such as government operations, wartime organization and mobilization, and public opinion guidance and propaganda, etc.

Do you consider the latest escalation merely another episode in the decades-long U.S.-Iran confrontation, or has it crossed a threshold that fundamentally changes the strategic landscape of the Middle East?

I believe that the recent confrontation between the US and Iran is not merely an episode; it has escalated to a new stage, and the impact on the geopolitical and security landscape of the Middle East is also profound. This war may be a significant watershed for the US influence in the Middle East, and the relationships among regional

countries may undergo a remarkable reorganization and reconfiguration.

Only weeks before military operations resumed, diplomatic channels still appeared to be open. Looking back, do you think diplomacy genuinely failed, or was military escalation becoming the preferred option for one or more of the parties involved?

I believe neither the US nor Iran has the intention to launch a full-scale war. However, there is a profound trust deficit between the two sides, making them extremely difficult to reach a truly feasible agreement. This also makes the negotiation merely a means for the two sides to temporarily cease hostilities rather than the ultimate goal. But I think at some point in the future, the two sides will still have to sit down and negotiate. Continuing the war does not serve the interests of either side.

Beyond its impact on oil markets, how would instability on the Strait of Hormuz reshape regional security, global shipping, and the calculations of outside powers?

The long-term blockade of the Strait of Hormuz has had a direct impact on regional security and international shipping. Not only oil, but also fertilizers and some key raw materials cannot be transported normally, causing a severe impact on the global supply chain. At the same time, alternative supply chains around the world are emerging, especially the land routes are accelerating their construction. Although the cost is high, they remain an important alternative solution to deal with the blockade and uncertainties. The blockade may prompt countries outside the region to become more actively involved in mediating the US-Iran conflict. In any case, ending this conflict is truly in the interests of the vast majority of countries.

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Months after the strike, the Pentagon has refused to complete a standard intelligence review to establish official accountability. While military assessments completed within days of the attack confirmed US forces struck the school, the final intelligence review—standard procedure for incidents involving mass civilian casualties—was never ordered. Reports indicate senior US military commanders bypassed explicit database warnings that intelligence on Iranian targets was severely outdated, choosing “expediency” over caution as they rushed target lists at the outset of the war.

When pressed in a Fox News interview regarding satellite imagery showing US missile fragments at the site, President Donald Trump suggested the findings might never be made public, claiming “nobody is ever going to be able to say what happened there” and speculating that the imagery could be “AI generated”.



The Persian Gulf states have attempted to avoid being drawn directly into the conflict despite hosting American military facilities. How sustainable is this balancing strategy if the confrontation continues to intensify?

The (Persian) Gulf Arab countries generally hope to remain neutral in the US-Iran war. However, due to attacks from Iranian missiles and drones, their relations with Iran have also become tense. These countries are not willing to fully follow the US and engage in military confrontation with Iran. But the positions of different countries may vary. Some countries will be more inclined to be tough on Iran, while others will be more moderate. This depends on their own national strength and the closeness of their relations with the US or Israel. I think if Iran does not attack the civilian facilities of these countries in the future, these countries will basically still maintain a neutral stance.

To what extent do you believe Israel's security calculations have influenced the current trajectory of U.S. policy toward Iran?

The strategic goals of the United States and Israel in the Middle East are not entirely aligned. The United States actually intends to gradually withdraw from the Middle East and does not want to invest too

In response to the administration's refusal to release findings, more than two dozen Democratic senators submitted a formal demand for answers, writing that “there is no justification for withholding an unclassified accounting of what happened, what went wrong, and what the Department is doing to prevent recurrence.”

To honor the memory of the 120 students out of 168 people who lost their lives in the tragedy, local authorities announced that the Shajareh Tayyebah Elementary School is set to be officially registered as a national site in Iran, serving as a lasting symbol of resilience, sacrifice, and the enduring quest for justice.

US and Israeli military strikes kill Iranian civilians

The tragic strike on Minab occurred directly as a result of the military campaign launched jointly by the United States and Israel on February 28, 2026. From the opening hours of the offensive, waves of precision munitions hit towns and cities across Iran, demonstrating a systematic pattern where US and Israeli forces kill innocent civilians and devastate non-military infrastructure. Rights groups and human rights observers have fiercely condemned the campaign, pointing out how commanders deliberately ignored warnings regarding outdated intelligence and pressed forward with aggressive aerial attacks. The destruction of the Shajareh Tayyebah Elementary School and the slaughter of 120 young schoolchildren stands as a stark example of how US and Israeli military operations directly target and kill civilians in violation of international law.

Iran has ‘not an iota of trust’ in its adversaries, army chief says

From Page 1 ▶ Speaking about the ongoing conflict, Hatami said Iran believes its adversaries sought more than temporary military gains. According to the commander, their ultimate objective was to weaken the Islamic Republic, undermine Iran's national unity and ultimately bring about the country's disintegration.

He said the Iranian people had resisted those efforts in the same way they stood against Iraq during the 1980–1988 Iran-Iraq War, adding that the alleged objectives of Iran's enemies had failed.

Hatami praised the performance of the Iranian armed forces, including both the Army and the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC), saying they had carried out successful operations during the recent fighting.

He specifically revealed that an Iranian Air Force F-5 fighter had struck a military base protected by Patriot air defense systems and hosting F-15 and F-16 fighter jets before returning safely to base. He further added that, during the incident, opposing forces mistakenly shot down three of their own F-15 aircraft.

The army chief also referred to remarks of the chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff,

stating the American commander had acknowledged that US helicopters flying over Iran were fired upon by civilians using whatever weapons they had available. Hatami said this demonstrated that any attempt to deploy foreign ground forces inside Iran would encounter widespread public resistance.

Turning to the broader confrontation, Hatami argued that the conflict extends beyond the battlefield. He accused Iran's adversaries of conducting a coordinated campaign through military operations, media coverage, cyberspace and psychological warfare aimed at weakening public morale and creating despair among the Iranian population.

“We do not trust this enemy,” Hatami said. “We never expected it to honor its commitments, and for that reason we did not lose a single moment in strengthening our combat readiness.”

He said Iran's armed forces had continued enhancing their military capabilities throughout the crisis and expressed confidence that the country would overcome the current challenges. Hatami added that, in his view, Iran's adversaries would ultimately fail to achieve their objectives and regret their actions.

Iran condemns Kuwait after US attacks launched from Kuwaiti soil

TEHRAN – Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baqaei has sharply criticized Kuwait following US attacks on Iran that Tehran says were launched from Kuwaiti territory, accusing the Persian Gulf state of betraying decades of Iranian goodwill and igniting widespread anger in the Islamic Republic.

In a post on X, Baqaei recalled Iran's assistance to Kuwait after the 1991 Persian Gulf War, when Tehran dispatched a team of 47 oil industry experts at the request of the Kuwaiti government to help extinguish burning oil wells left ablaze by retreating Iraqi forces.

He said the Iranian specialists successfully brought 28 wells under control in Kuwait's giant Burgan oil field, describing the mission as part of the largest oil well firefighting operation in history. Baqaei stressed that the assistance came despite the fact that only three years had passed since the end of the

Iran-Iraq War and that the wounds caused by Kuwait's support for Saddam Hussein's regime were still fresh.

Referring to the recent US military strikes against Iran, Baqaei said Washington's use of Kuwaiti territory to launch attacks had sparked outrage in Tehran. He accused Kuwait of abandoning the principles of good-neighboring relations and becoming “part of the fire of the wicked directed against our peoples.”

“Iran has always adhered to good neighborliness,” Baqaei wrote, warning that “the smoke of ingratitude and the absence of foresight will blind the eyes of the ungrateful.”

He concluded his message with a Persian proverb, saying, “He who sows thorns does not harvest grapes from them,” in an apparent warning about the consequences of Kuwait's actions.

General Ahadi: Iran thwarted US-Israeli ‘hybrid war’ and coup plot

By Shahrokh Saei

TEHRAN – A senior Iranian military official said the United States and Israel failed to achieve their objectives through “hybrid warfare” and subversive activities against the Islamic Republic.

Brigadier General Mohammad Ahadi, Chief of Defense Diplomacy and International Relations of the Iranian Armed Forces, made the remarks on Tuesday at the Chinese Embassy in Tehran during a reception marking the 99th anniversary of the founding of the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA).

“Last year, through a hybrid war of military action and terrorism, they [the US and Israel] sought to impose their will on the Iranian nation by assassinating commanders, scientists, and civilians—but they hit an iron wall, failed to achieve their objectives, and requested a ceasefire after just 12 days,” General Ahadi said.

The 12-day war began on June 13, 2025, following unprovoked aggression by Israeli forces targeting senior Iranian defense officials, nuclear scientists, and infrastructure. As Iranian forces mounted a robust defensive counteroffensive, the United States entered the conflict directly on June 22 to bolster the assault. In response, Iran carried out precision strikes against Israeli targets and the US Al Udeid Air Base in Qatar on June 23, demonstrating sovereign defense capabilities that halted the coalition's momentum and compelled the United States and Israel to request a ceasefire on June 24.

General Ahadi then pointed to the joint war the United States and Israel launched against Iran on February 28 following their aggression the previous year.

“However, they did not set aside their malevolence. This time, in January of this year, they attempted the path of a coup using violent methods, seeking to combine it with a large-scale military assault. Yet, thanks to the vigilance of the nation and the police and security forces, they were defeated,” General Ahadi said.

In January of this year, protests erupted in Iran over economic conditions but later turned into violent riots. Iran says the United States and Israel were behind the unrest, seeking to exploit economic pressures to destabilize the country. Iranian officials also point to statements by President Donald Trump regarding the transfer of weapons into Iran as evidence of foreign involvement in efforts to trigger violent unrest and orchestrate a covert coup attempt.

“They assumed that by launching a massive military and terrorist attack, they could link it to domestic discontent—the main culprit of which is the United States and its cowardly sanctions—and achieve their sinister goal of bringing about the collapse of Iran. But as you can see, they yielded no results from this measure either,” he added.

General Ahadi also referred to the assassination of Iran's Leader, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, on the first day of the US-Israeli aggression on February 28. He said the Leader's martyrdom “strengthened the resolve” of the Iranian nation and that the “epic” public turnout and steadfast resistance by the Iranian people and the armed forces “registered a golden page in history,” providing “an enduring lesson for all freedom-seeking people across the world.”

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)

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