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ISRAEL-IRAN CONFLICT

Israel-Iran Tensions

Their Iran blindspot

Trump and Netanyahu's decisions will make Iran's nuclearisation less immediate — but eventually, more certain

JONAH BLANK

ISRAEL'S DEVASTATING ATTACK on Iran on June 13 could hardly have been more telegraphed: Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu had talked about it for a decade and openly threatened it for months. Israel then systematically destroyed much of the nation's air defenses in preparation for the attack over the course of the past year. Any short-term setback, however, is likely only to accelerate Iran's long-term nuclear ambitions. But Iran should have known better: Neither the Israeli nor the American leader is ever planning for the long term.

Netanyahu has spent his entire career not planning for the long term. He has thwarted all attempts to achieve a two-state solution for the problems created by his nation's occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, but has never seriously considered the fate of the five million Palestinians who live there. In 2015, when then US President Barack Obama painstakingly forged a multinational agreement to contain Iran's nuclear weapons programme (the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, or JCPOA), Netanyahu plotted with Republican members of Congress to try to subvert it — without presenting any plausible alternative.

Israel's attacks have the stated goal of terminating Iran's nuclear programme, but they cannot achieve this objective: Thousands of centrifuges and hundreds of pounds of highly enriched uranium remain safely protected at underground facilities at Natanz and, particularly, Fordow. The only conventional munitions capable of destroying such strongholds are 30,000-lb "bunker buster" GBU-57 bombs, which the US has not provided. It is possible that Netanyahu aims to leverage America into delivering these weapons, or perhaps joining the attack directly. It's also possible that his real aim is regime change. But Netanyahu's primary motivation is probably far more limited: After a disastrous occupation of Gaza and several pending court cases for corruption, he is likely seeking any short-term distraction from his own political and legal woes.

Trump isn't playing for the long term either. "Long term" is not a concept in Trump's mental vocabulary. The US President does not base decisions on long-range American national security, economic, or geopolitical interests. He bases policy choices on his ever-changing whims. His overall drivers remain constant: Personal profit, vengeance and self-aggrandisement. But such a limited set of imperatives falls far short of anything that could be considered a long-term strategy.

The best long-term option is a return to the JCPOA: A status that contained Iran's nuclear programme, without forcing Tehran into precisely the sort of choice it faces today. After seeing what happens when one doesn't possess a nuclear deterrent, why would any sane Iranian leader not race full-out for a bomb?

Iran's remaining leadership has almost certainly absorbed that lesson by now, and is unlikely to give up its nuclear dreams: The only thing that could have prevented this attack would have been the threat of nuclear retaliation. Iran was ambivalent about its nuclear planning before this, publicly disavowing any intention of developing weapons and moving more slowly than it might have along the path towards weaponisation, while retaining the capability of a near-term "break out". Iran is now likely to seek a credible nuclear deterrent as speedily as possible.

Soon after taking office in January, Trump opened nuclear negotiations with Iran. These were always a flim-flam: The JCPOA had achieved greater containment than any other accord would have been likely to achieve, and Trump unilaterally reneged on that in his first term. The real purpose of Trump's negotiation, like that of all his deals, is vainglory.

Why does Trump want to recreate a nuclear deal he himself rejected? Because one of his grandiose ambitions (unrealistic as it might sound) is to be awarded a Nobel Prize. This honour was given to Obama in 2009, and it still irritates Trump endlessly. This explains his newfound emphasis on negotiating peace treaties across the world — even when such treaties are entirely fictional. Throughout the 2024 presidential campaign, he vowed to bring peace between Russia and Ukraine on his first day in office, and in a February Oval Office meeting, he publicly berated Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy in an unsuccessful attempt to bully him into accepting Russia's terms of surrender. After India responded militarily to Pakistan-backed terrorism at Pahalgam, Trump claimed to have "mediated" a ceasefire, only to have India slap the boast down.

The same dynamic is at play in the Middle East. After the Israeli attack, Trump said, "Iran and Israel should make a deal, and will make a deal, just like I got India and Pakistan to make, in that case by using TRADE with the United States." This narrative is clearly false: India was definitely not induced to cease Operation Sindoor by American pressure, let alone by "TRADE" concessions (which, in any case, have not actually materialised). For Trump, none of that matters: The Art of the Deal is merely the art of claiming a deal.

Agreeing to a permeable deal is likely Iran's best bet. Israel has already decimated Hezbollah and Hamas, the two most potent Iranian partners in conducting asymmetrical warfare through terrorism. The fall of Syrian dictator Bashar al-Assad deprived Iran of a key regional partner. Its other allies, like the Houthi forces in Yemen and Shi'a militias like the Islamic Resistance in Iraq, can project little power beyond their own nations.

In the long term, even if the US enables Israel to devastate underground facilities at Fordow, Iran will likely be able to gain nuclear weapons capability. As was demonstrated two decades ago by Abdul Qadeer Khan's nuclear proliferation ring and North Korea's linked arms trading, any nation with Iran's resources can find willing vendors of nuclear and ballistic missile technology. The best long-term option is a return to the JCPOA: A status quo that contained Iran's nuclear programme, without forcing Tehran into precisely the sort of choice it faces today. After seeing what happens when one doesn't possess a nuclear deterrent, why would any sane Iranian leader not race full-out for a bomb?

Long-term planning requires trade-offs. If you're the leader of a powerful nation, you might have to forgo a flashy-but-transitory headline today in order to seal a boring-yet-substantial treaty that will benefit your successor. Neither Netanyahu nor Trump is that kind of leader. Which is why their decisions will make Iran's nuclearisation less immediate — but, eventually, more certain.

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- Israel's devastating **attack on Iran's nuclear facilities** on June 13, 2025, orchestrated by Netanyahu and backed by Trump, may delay but ultimately accelerate **Iran's nuclear ambitions**.
- Their short-term politics, lack of long-term strategy, and flawed diplomacy risk creating greater instability in **West Asia** and worsening global nuclear proliferation.
- This event, reminiscent of past **Israeli strikes**, has reignited debates about the effectiveness of military action versus diplomacy in addressing the perceived **existential threat** posed by Iran's nuclear program, including its potential development of a **nuclear warhead**.

NETANYAHU'S SHORT-TERM POLITICAL GAINS

- Netanyahu faces **corruption charges** and political setbacks; attacking Iran serves as a **short-term distraction** from domestic crises and legal troubles.

- He has persistently **undermined peace** and the **two-state solution** for Palestine, exacerbating regional instability rather than promoting long-term security for Israel.

- In 2015, Netanyahu **sabotaged the JCPOA agreement**, which offered Iran **sanctions relief** in exchange for nuclear restrictions, forging alliances with Republicans but proposing **no viable alternative** to contain Iran's nuclear program. This opposition to **the deal** has continued for nearly **30 years**.

- Israel's attack failed to **neutralise Iran's capabilities**; thousands of centrifuges and **highly enriched uranium** stockpiles remain **protected at Natanz and Fordow**. The strike also did not impact Iran's **heavy water production** facilities, crucial for certain types of nuclear reactors.

- Netanyahu lacks a coherent **long-term strategy**; whether pursuing **regime change**, provoking U.S. intervention, objectives remain unclear.

TRUMP'S LACK OF STRATEGIC VISION

- Trump operates purely on **personal whims**: profit, revenge, ego; lacking focus on America's **strategic interests** in West Asia or global security.

- Trump **unilaterally exited** the **nuclear deal** during his first term, destabilizing the containment of Iran's nuclear program for fleeting **domestic political gains** and eliminating the **sanctions relief** that had incentivized Iran's compliance.

- Trump's renewed **nuclear talks** aim for **personal glory**, not substantive peace; driven by his obsession with winning a **Nobel Peace Prize**.

- His boasts of mediating India-Pakistan ceasefire or Iran-Israel peace are **fabrications**, undermining America's **credibility** in global diplomacy.

- Trump's impulsive actions risk **further destabilisation** of West Asia, while failing to build a sustainable, enforceable **nuclear threshold** containment regime.

IMPACT ON IRAN'S NUCLEAR STRATEGY

- Israel's attack has convinced Iran to seek a **credible nuclear deterrent**, accelerating uranium enrichment and potential development of a **nuclear warhead**. This has likely increased the urgency of work among Iran's **nuclear scientists**.

- Previously, Iran pursued **ambiguity** — denying intent for weapons while maintaining breakout capability; post-attack, deterrence has become a strategic imperative.

- With **Hezbollah, Hamas, Assad** weakened, Iran's **proxy warfare** capabilities have declined, increasing reliance on **nuclear capability** for national security.

- Iran can access **global nuclear markets**, as proven by A.Q. Khan and North Korea; technical hurdles remain surmountable with **sufficient motivation**.

- Restoring the **JCPOA agreement**, including **sanctions relief**, remains the **best path** to curb Iran's nuclear ambitions; military actions only harden Tehran's resolve for **nuclear development**.

CONSEQUENCES FOR WEST ASIA STABILITY

- Israel's strike risks triggering a broader **regional arms race**, prompting other Middle Eastern powers to seek **nuclear capabilities**.
- Escalatory actions raise prospects of Iranian **retaliatory attacks** across West Asia, endangering **shipping routes**, oil markets, and civilian infrastructure.
- U.S.-Israeli actions further destabilize West Asia, exacerbating humanitarian crises and fueling **anti-Western sentiments** across the Islamic world.
- Discrediting multilateral accords like the JCPOA **erodes diplomatic norms**, encouraging reliance on unilateral military actions over **constructive diplomacy**.
- Heightened tensions provide recruiting tools for **terrorist groups**, undermining regional security and Western interests in West Asia.

UK's Assisted Dying Law

Assisted dying set to become law in England & Wales

Historic Bill narrowly clears UK House

SARAH YOUNG & ANDREW MACASKILL
LONDON, JUNE 20

BRITAIN'S PARLIAMENT voted on Friday in favour of a bill to legalise assisted dying, paving the way for the country's biggest social change in a generation.

The legislation passed by a vote of 314-291, clearing its biggest parliamentary hurdle.

The "Terminally Ill Adults (End of Life)" law would give mentally competent, terminally ill adults in England and Wales with six months or less left to live the right to choose to end their lives with medical help.

The bill now proceeds to Britain's upper chamber, the House of Lords, where it will undergo months of scrutiny. While there could be further amendments, the unelected Lords will be reluctant to block legislation that has been passed by elected members of the House of Commons.

The vote puts Britain on course to follow Australia, Canada and other countries, as well as some U.S. states, in permitting assisted dying.

Prime Minister Keir Starmer's Labour government was neutral on the legislation, meaning politicians voted according to their conscience rather than along party lines. Starmer voted for the legislation.

People in London celebrate the passage of the Bill. *Reuters*

Supporters of the bill say it will provide dignity and compassion to people suffering, but opponents worry that vulnerable people could be coerced into ending their lives.

Hundreds of people had gathered outside parliament to hear news of the vote.

When the result was read out, those in favour of the legislation hugged, clapped and cheered. They shouted "victory", "we won" and waved their placards. Those opposed to it stood in silence.

Opinion polls show that a majority of Britons back assisted dying. Friday's vote followed hours of emotional debate and references to personal stories in the chamber and followed a vote in November that approved the legislation in principle. **REUTERS**

A Step Towards Legalising End-of-Life Choices

- The UK House of Commons has passed a landmark bill **legalising assisted dying for terminally ill adults** in England and Wales.
- This development marks a significant shift in end-of-life care legislation, amidst heated political and societal debate.

Key Highlights of the Terminally Ill Adults (End of Life) Bill

- **Eligibility criteria:** The bill permits assisted dying under strict and clearly defined conditions – Individuals must be 18 years or older.
- Must be resident in England or Wales and registered with a General Practitioner (GP) for at least 12 months.
- Must have a **terminal illness with an expected life expectancy** of six months or less.
- Must possess the mental capacity to make an informed decision.
- Must make two formal, witnessed declarations expressing their wish to die.
- Evaluations are to be done by two independent doctors at least seven days apart.
- **Procedure:** After approval, there is a 14-day waiting period. A doctor would prepare the life-ending substance, but the individual must self-administer it.
- It will be a criminal offence to coerce or pressure someone into assisted dying, punishable by up to 14 years in prison.

Electric vehicle Manufacturing in India

Driving into the future

Electric vehicles will boost India's decarbonisation, manufacturing

MAHENDRA NATH PANDEY

INDIA IS THE fifth largest car market in the world and has the potential to become one of the top three in the near future — with about 40 crore customers in need of mobility solutions by the year 2030. That is one side of the coin. The other side is that the country needs a transportation revolution. The current trajectory of adding ever more cars running on expensive imported fuel and cluttering up already overcrowded cities suffering from infrastructure bottlenecks and intense air pollution is unfeasible. India's cities will choke. A transportation revolution will have many components — better "walkability", public transportation, railways, roads — and better cars. Many of these "better cars" will likely be electric.

The transition to electric mobility is a promising global strategy for decarbonising the transport sector. India is among a handful of countries that supports the global EV30@30 campaign, which aims for at least 30 per cent new vehicle sales to be electric by 2030. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's advocacy of five elements for climate change — "Panchamrit" — at the recently concluded COP26 in Glasgow is a commitment to the same. The PM espoused various ideas, like renewable energy catering to 50 per cent of India's energy needs, reducing carbon emission by 1 billion tonnes by 2030 and achieving net zero by 2070, so that future generations can lead secure and prosperous lives.

The push for EVs is driven by the global climate agenda established under the Paris Agreement to reduce carbon emissions in order to limit global warming. It is also projected to contribute in improving the overall energy security situation as the country imports over 80 per cent of its overall crude oil requirements, amounting to approximately $100 billion. The push is also expected to play an important role in the local EV manufacturing industry for job creation. Additionally, through several grid support services, EVs are expected to strengthen the grid and help accommodate higher renewable energy penetration while maintaining secure and stable grid operation.

The global electric mobility revolution is today defined by the rapid growth in electric vehicle (EV) uptake. It is estimated that two in every hundred cars sold today are powered by electricity. This phenomenon is today defined by the rapid growth in EV uptake, with EV sales for the year 2020, reaching 2.1 million. The global EV fleet totalled 8.0 million in 2020 with EVs accounting for 1 per cent of the global vehicle stock and 2.6 per cent of global car sales. Falling battery costs and rising performance efficiencies are fueling the demand for EVs globally.

It is estimated that by 2020-30 India's cumulative demand for batteries would be approximately 900-1100 GWh, but there is concern over the absence of a manufacturing base for batteries in India, leading to sole reliance on imports to meet rising demand. As per government data, India imported more than $1 billion worth of lithium-ion cells in 2021, even though there is negligible penetration of electric vehicles and battery storage in the power sector. While India is yet to grab the opportunity, global manufacturers are betting high on battery manufacturing and fast moving from gigafactories to terafactories.

With recent technology disruptions, battery storage has great opportunity in promoting sustainable development in the country, considering government initiatives to promote e-mobility and renewable power (450 GW energy capacity target by 2030). With rising levels of per capita income, there has been a tremendous demand for consumer electronics in the areas of mobile phones, UPS, laptops, power banks etc. that require advanced chemistry batteries. This makes manufacturing of advanced batteries one of the largest economic opportunities of the 21st century.

The government of India has taken various measures to develop and promote the EV ecosystem in the country, ranging from the remodeled Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of Electric Vehicles (FAME II) scheme (Rs 10,000 crore) for the consumer side to production-linked incentive (PLI) scheme for Advanced Chemistry Cell (ACC) (Rs 18,100 crore) for the supplier side, and finally the recently launched PLI scheme for Auto and Automotive Components (Rs 25,938 crore) for manufacturers of electric vehicles.

Thus, all these forward and backward integration mechanisms in the economy are expected to achieve robust growth in the coming years and will enable India to leapfrog to the environmentally cleaner electric vehicles and hydrogen fuel cell vehicles. This will not only help the nation conserve foreign exchange but also make India a global leader in manufacturing of EVs and better comply with the Paris Climate Change Agreement.

All three schemes cumulatively expect an investment of about Rs 1,00,000 crore which will boost domestic manufacturing and also facilitate EVs and battery demand creation along with the development of a complete domestic supply chain and foreign direct investment in the country. The programme envisages an oil import bill reduction of about Rs 2 lakh crore and import bill substitution of about Rs 1.5 lakh crore.

I hope the PM's vision will push both the public agencies and private entrepreneurs to embark on a collaborative journey that will benefit the country.

The writer is the minister for heavy industries, Government of India

India Electric Car Manufacturing

- India's planned electric four-wheeler manufacturing capacity is set to rise over tenfold to 2.5 million, according to new research by Rhodium Group.
- India's Rapid Expansion in Electric Vehicle Manufacturing India is poised to make a major leap in the global electric vehicle (EV) manufacturing race.
- According to a report by the Rhodium Group, the country is **expected to become the fourth-largest electric car manufacturer in the world by 2030,** trailing only China, the European Union, and the United States.
- This shift is driven by a **significant scale-up in EV production capacity,** proactive government policies, and strategic protectionist measures to support domestic players.

Projected Supply Surplus and Export Opportunities

- The Rhodium report estimates that I**ndia's EV production capacity will exceed domestic demand** by 1.1 to 2.1 million units between now and 2030.

- While domestic EV demand is expected to grow to between 0.4 to 1.4 million units by the end of the decade, this still falls short of the planned production capacity.

- This projected surplus opens up potential for India to emerge as a key EV exporter, provided that it can lower manufacturing costs and compete globally, especially against Chinese exports, which currently dominate global EV markets.

Role of Domestic Players and Current Market Share

- Indian automakers such as **Tata Motors, MG Motor, and Mahindra** have consolidated their dominance in the domestic market.

- These three accounted for **nearly 90% of India's electric car sales in 2024-25**, according to the Vahan dashboard.

- Despite low current EV penetration, just 2% in 2024, the Rhodium report notes that India has outpaced countries like Japan and South Korea in terms of future manufacturing capacity, driven by planned investments and supportive policies.

Policy Framework and Industrial Strategy

- India's rise in the EV space is strongly supported by a combination of industrial policy, market incentives, and a protectionist trade strategy.
- **Consumer Subsidies:** Linked to increasing localisation requirements, these subsidies aim to reduce dependency on imports and incentivise domestic manufacturing.
- **Production-Linked Incentives (PLI):** Schemes for advanced battery manufacturing and EV component production have catalysed investment.
- **Tariffs:** Import duties of 70–100% on fully built electric vehicles have shielded Indian manufacturers from foreign competition, enabling the domestic industry to scale up.
- **Infrastructure Expansion:** A concerted push to expand EV charging infrastructure supports long-term adoption goals.
- While these measures have helped boost local manufacturing, the Rhodium report cautions that they have also raised consumer costs and limited product variety.

Thank you

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