

What do U.S.-Iranian Tensions Mean for Israel?

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Fluctuations in the U.S.-Iranian relationship undoubtedly affect Israel, which counts the former as its closest ally and the latter as its most formidable threat. Our focus being Israeli national security, we set out here to assess potential implications of recent escalation between Washington and Teheran so that Jerusalem can better prepare for any nuclear or conventional challenges that result from it. Israel's vigilance has prevented the emergence of nuclear nightmare scenarios twice in the last four decades. One of us, Amos Yadlin, has played a role in those events by participating in the strike on Iraq's Osirak reactor in 1981 as a pilot and then in the destruction of Syria's reactor in 2007 as Chief of Intelligence.

The recent attacks on Saudi oil infrastructure and tankers off the coast of Fujairah that have been [attributed to Iran](#) by the U.S. national security advisor indicate that the Iran's "strategic patience" has worn thin. These strikes were likely a calculated (and perhaps indirect) response based on three key factors: Iran's need to cope with increasing financial pressure, an estimation that President Donald Trump is not interested in going to war with Iran, and Iran's need to build up leverage to both deter further action against it and potentially provide a stronger position for negotiation. Despite Iran's cultivation of strong relationships with well-armed proxies on Israel's borders and its desire to increase pressure on U.S. allies in response to the maximum pressure campaign, the likelihood that Teheran will now use its assets for a significant escalation against Israel is limited by three considerations.

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