

Against Iran, tactical success doesn't mean strategic victory

Instead of simply waiting for Iran to act to design a response – a strategy that willingly forfeits the initiative – Israel ought to prepare effective responses in coordination with the US.

By [Amos Yadlin, Ari Heistein](#) / August 15, 2019

In recent months, Tehran has shifted its response to the American “maximum pressure” campaign from passive strategic patience to active strategic patience. The new Iranian approach, which includes low signature attacks on Gulf oil infrastructure, the downing of an advanced unmanned US intelligence collection aircraft, and minor breaches of the nuclear deal, has not yet resulted in dramatic change but it has increased the situation's volatility.

That is not to say we are headed to war. In fact, there is a low chance of that happening for the simple reason that both sides view war as an undesirable option.

So where are things headed?

Iran is now largely in control of the tempo and direction of events. That is because the US has already employed most of the economic and diplomatic measures at its disposal, and the Trump administration does not seem unified on any singular strategic goal beyond “maximum pressure.” Before assuming his current post, National Security Advisor John Bolton declared that regime change should be the goal of US Iran policy, while Secretary of State Mike Pompeo announced that Iran should meet 12 demands in accordance with global norms, and President Donald Trump's tweets indicate that he wants to negotiate a deal that prevents Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons. Thus, Washington awaits an Iranian response while its sanctions exact a heavy price.

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