

America Strikes Iran's Nuclear Core

Posted at: 23/06/2025

America Strikes Iran's Nuclear Core: Escalation in West Asia

Context:

The **Israel-Iran conflict** has entered a dangerous new phase after the **United States directly targeted Iran's nuclear infrastructure**. In a significant escalation, **B-2 stealth bombers** deployed by the U.S. bombed **three major Iranian nuclear facilities—Fordow, Natanz, and Isfahan**—using **bunker-busting bombs**, including the **GBU-57 Massive Ordnance Penetrator (MOP)**.

This move signals a drastic shift in U.S. policy and carries deep implications for **regional stability**, **energy markets**, and countries like **India**, which are closely tied to West Asia economically and strategically.

US Military Strikes: A Major Escalation

- The U.S. used **B-2 Spirit stealth bombers** to launch precision strikes on Iran's fortified nuclear sites.
 - The operation included the deployment of the **GBU-57 MOP**, capable of penetrating **up to 60 meters of earth**.
 - The **Fordow Uranium Enrichment Plant**, located deep underground, was a key target.
 - This marked the **first known combat use** of the GBU-57 bomb.
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US-Israel Alliance at Its Peak

- The U.S. moved from indirect support to **active military engagement** in the Israel-Iran conflict.

- This demonstrates **“iron-clad” backing** of Israel’s stance that Iran is an existential nuclear threat.
 - The joint operation enhances Israel’s strategic advantage, especially in targeting **deeply buried facilities** it could not destroy alone.
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Trump's Policy U-Turn

- Former President **Donald Trump**, known for opposing "endless wars", had pledged to **avoid military entanglements**.
 - Ordering strikes on Iran contradicts his previous promises, marking a **sharp policy reversal**.
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A Strategic Win for Israel

- The U.S. strike achieved a long-standing Israeli objective—destroying **deep nuclear facilities** like Fordow.
 - This marks Israel's **strongest strategic position since the 1979 Islamic Revolution**.
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Iran’s Weakening Security Position

- Continuous assaults by Israel and the U.S. have left Iran significantly weakened:
 - Over **600 Iranian casualties** reported in just over a week.
 - Key Iran-backed groups like **Hamas** and **Hezbollah** are facing heavy losses.
 - Iran now finds itself at its **weakest strategic point in over four decades**.
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Collapse of Iran’s Regional Influence

- Iran's "**Axis of Resistance**" network—including Hezbollah, Hamas, Houthis—has eroded.
 - Israel's direct strikes on Iranian soil signify **Tehran's declining deterrence capability**.
 - Iran appears increasingly **isolated and vulnerable**.
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International Concerns and Legal Challenges

- Iran has denounced the U.S. strikes as violations of **sovereignty and international law**.
 - Comparisons are being drawn to the **2003 Iraq invasion**, which was based on false claims of WMDs.
 - Questions arise about **Washington's credibility** and the legality of targeting a **non-nuclear state**.
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Iran's Nuclear Program Under Threat

- Iran's nuclear infrastructure is under severe pressure.
 - Its **scientific and technical community** now faces its **toughest challenge in decades**.
 - The world is closely watching whether Iran will rebuild or pursue **nuclear weaponization**.
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Strait of Hormuz: The Next Flashpoint

- Iran's Parliament has approved a motion to **close the Strait of Hormuz**, pending final clearance.
- The strait is a **critical maritime chokepoint** connecting the Persian Gulf to the Arabian Sea.

Key Facts:

- **33 km wide**, with **3 km shipping lanes** in each direction.
 - Handles over **25% of global seaborne oil trade**.
 - Facilitates **20% of global LNG exports**, mainly from Qatar.
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Blockade Scenarios and Global Fallout

- Iran could block or disrupt the strait using:
 - **Sea mines**
 - **Missile or drone strikes**
 - **Seizure of vessels**
 - **Cyberattacks on navigation systems**
 - However, such actions could backfire:
 - Iran's own **oil exports to China** would be hit.
 - It would jeopardize **recent diplomatic gains** with Gulf countries.
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Impact on India: Energy and Economic Risks

- India imports:
 - **Over 85% of its crude oil**
 - **About 50% of its natural gas**
- Nearly **47% of India's May 2025 crude imports** passed through the Strait of Hormuz.

- A blockade would:
 - Disrupt energy supply
 - Trigger oil price spikes
 - Affect **forex reserves, rupee value, and inflation**
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India's Strategic Cushion

- **Energy Diversification:**
 - Imports from **Russia, Africa, Latin America, and the U.S.**
 - LNG from **Qatar, Australia, and the U.S.**
 - **Strategic Oil Reserves:**
 - Cover **9-10 days** of imports.
 - **Alternate Routes:**
 - Russian oil reaches India via **Suez Canal, Cape of Good Hope**, and Pacific routes.
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Possible Government Measures

- If prices rise further (e.g., **USD 80 per barrel**), the Indian government may:
 - **Subsidize diesel and LPG** to contain inflation.
 - Boost **diplomatic outreach** to stabilize the region.
 - Tap into **alternate suppliers**, despite higher freight costs.

Challenges for India's Connectivity Plans

- The ongoing instability threatens the **India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEEC)**.
- The project hinges on **regional peace and maritime security**.
- Prolonged conflict may **derail long-term trade and strategic cooperation**.



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