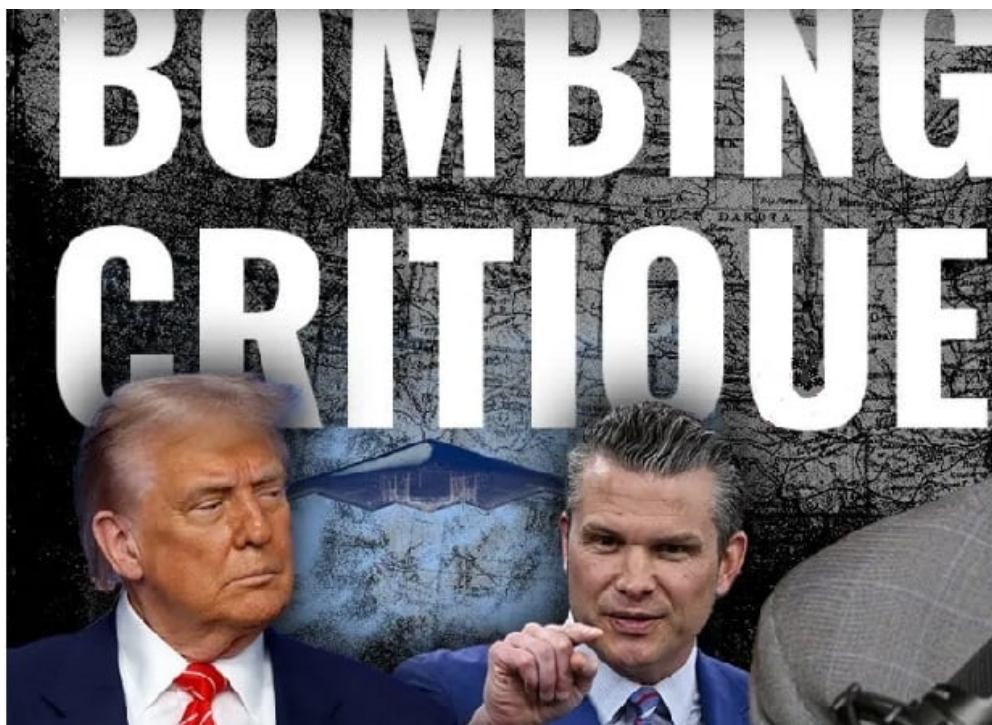


It Doesn't Matter If Iran Can Build a Bomb. It Matters If America Has the Guts to Bomb It, Again

By Victor Davis Hanson

We're now in the aftermath of the Saturday night, June 21st American strike to take out the three enrichment plants that were necessary for Iran's acquisition of a bomb. And we've had now four or five days of reaction to it. And it's kind of been mixed. And I'd like to review, very quickly, the validity of the criticisms of the strike and what the strike was really about.



There's a lot of people on the American Left, in [the media](#)—there was a leak from the Pentagon as well—saying that this strike really didn't achieve its aim of destroying,

entirely, these three enrichment facilities. But of course, we don't know that. We wouldn't trust the Iranians, who say that it didn't harm them. Of course, they're gonna say that.

The head of the International Atomic Energy Agency that

watches this says that it was very successful. I agree with it. [The military](#) says it was very successful. And the point being is it doesn't really matter to what degree—it's 90% destroyed, 80% destroyed, 100% destroyed—it's been severely damaged. And it doesn't really matter for this reason: Iran will have to rebuild them.

There's been all sorts of rebuilding costs out there in the public domain: \$100 billion, \$200 billion, \$400 billion, \$500 billion, to go down 500 feet, 300 feet, 200 feet in a new mountain cavern. And remember, they would be reacting to a B-2 strike. And they would look at the damage and they said, "We'd have to go even lower, which means we're gonna have to spend more money."

But here's the interesting equation. Add the money that Iran, still subject to oil embargoes, with an economy that its gross domestic product has collapsed by 45% over the last two or three years, is going to come up with a wherewithal and make that argument to the people: "Hey, everybody, you're going to miss now not just one paycheck, but two paychecks every three months because we have to rebuild the nuclear facilities that were completely demolished. And we have to spend more money."

The Iranian in the street would say: "And then what? They're gonna be destroyed again. How can you stop them? You have no air defenses. The Russians don't want to give us air defenses. The Chinese will not give us air defenses. Why would they want to give us air defenses? They go up in smoke. They only humiliate their own equipment. It's you—you, the military; you, the theocracy—that's the problem."

And so, if you boil that down, ask yourself, in a cost-to-benefit analysis, is it more—is it cheaper for Iran to go back and start from scratch and build these mountainous subterranean facilities or is it cheaper for the United States to send another seven or 10 or 12 B-2 bombers and send them into airspace for about 35 minutes and take them out? That's

what they can do.

But there is a caveat. There is a warning here. There's only one limit on our ability to take out the next generation, should it appear, of uranium enrichment. And that problem is not in Iran. It's not in Hezbollah. It's not with Hamas. It's with Washington and Tel Aviv.

Will the United States government have the courage and have the competency and understand the geostrategic complications and implications and dangers of Iran having another bomb? And what I mean by that is, if you have another Obama administration or if you have another Biden administration, will they act when they see another uranium facility being developed? Will you have another [Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu](#) in Israel?

So, what am I getting at? The only worry that we all have in the West is that [Iran](#), at some future date, will look at the political composition in Washington and Tel Aviv and say, "We've seen this bunch before. So, pedal to the metal. Let's hurry up and enrich because they will not stop it."

But even then it will take a huge investment, a huge investment that has to be sold to a population that has been deprived of trillions of dollars of internal development, that has been diverted to Hezbollah, Hamas, the Houthis, the Assads that are all up in smoke, and then they will have to hear an argument to re-arm all of those people for terrorist deterrence, and then rebuild everything for nuclear deterrence, and hope there's somebody not like Netanyahu and [President Donald Trump](#) in Washington.

And for now, those are pretty good odds that the strike is successful and will be in the near future.

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