


# SPRI



Sharif Policy  
Research Institute

# Newsletter

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A Selection of Essays from Iran's Think Tanks during the Ramadan War





# Preface



SPRI International Newsletter, Vol. 2, No. 1 (March–April 2026) is presented as a special issue. It brings to an English-speaking readership a selected collection of policy essays originally written in Persian and published during the opening phase of the Iran–United States war by the Community of Think Tanks and KHANA House. These texts emerged from within Iran’s think tank sphere at a moment of extraordinary urgency. From the earliest days of the conflict, Iranian think tanks did not remain passive observers. They entered the field as institutions of analysis, explanation, and policy articulation, seeking to interpret unfolding events in real time and to connect strategic assessment with public reasoning. This issue reflects that immediate intellectual response and offers it in a coherent English-language format for international readers. The war itself did not begin in a diplomatic vacuum. Iran was engaged in an active negotiating track when military aggression was launched, within a regional context in which Israeli pressure and lobbying were widely understood as major drivers of escalation. As the conflict unfolded, certain events came to embody its profound moral gravity. Among them was the attack on the Shajareh Tayyebah Primary School in Minab, which came to symbolize not only the human tragedy of war, but also its assault on civilians and on the social future they represent. The thirty essays included in this issue were selected from the period between the outbreak of war and the first, still-fragile ceasefire between Iran and the United States. That ceasefire remains precarious, its durability uncertain as Israeli actions continue to place strain on efforts toward de-escalation. The present selection therefore belongs to a historically compressed and politically unsettled interval, one in which analysis was not produced retrospectively, but under the pressure of an unfolding crisis. These essays represent only a small portion of the much larger body of analysis generated during the war. They have been chosen not only for their topical relevance, but also because they demonstrate the distinctive role of think tanks as mediating institutions between media, universities, policymaking, and society. Their translation into English is therefore not a secondary or merely technical undertaking. It is part of a broader effort to project policy thought beyond domestic circulation and into transnational public space. This is the larger purpose of the present issue. By translating and curating these essays for an international audience, SPRI seeks not only to document an important moment in Iranian policy thought, but also to make that thought legible within wider scholarly and policy conversations. It is in this spirit that this special issue has been prepared.

**Sharif Policy Research Institute**

# Statement on the Attack Against Sharif University of Technology

At the early hours of April 6, 2026, Sharif University of Technology (SUT), one of Iran’s most prominent academic institutions, was heartbreakingly the target of an inhumanly outrageous attack by the coalition of the United States and Israel. During this attack, the Information and Communication Technology Center of SUT was bombed and sustained severe and irreparable damages. This Center hosts the university’s IT, Data, and AI infrastructures as well as its high-performance computing facilities. Universities, as institutions dedicated to education and the dissemination of knowledge, enjoy a privileged protection under international norms, and attacks against such civilian academic infrastructures are gross violations and potentially amount to war crimes. Such actions not only endanger civilian lives and safety of individuals but also infringe on the universal right to education and scientific progress. History has repeatedly evinced that violence against scientific and academic institutions has never succeeded in hampering the advancement of knowledge. The Alumni Association of Sharif University of Technology strongly condemns this attack and calls upon international academic institutions - many of which have been academic homes to SUT graduates and research partners of SUT faculty - to join SUT alumni in condemning such abhorrent actions and conveying their strong oppositions and condemnations of this attack to their governments, the UN, the UNESCO, and all relevant international organizations.

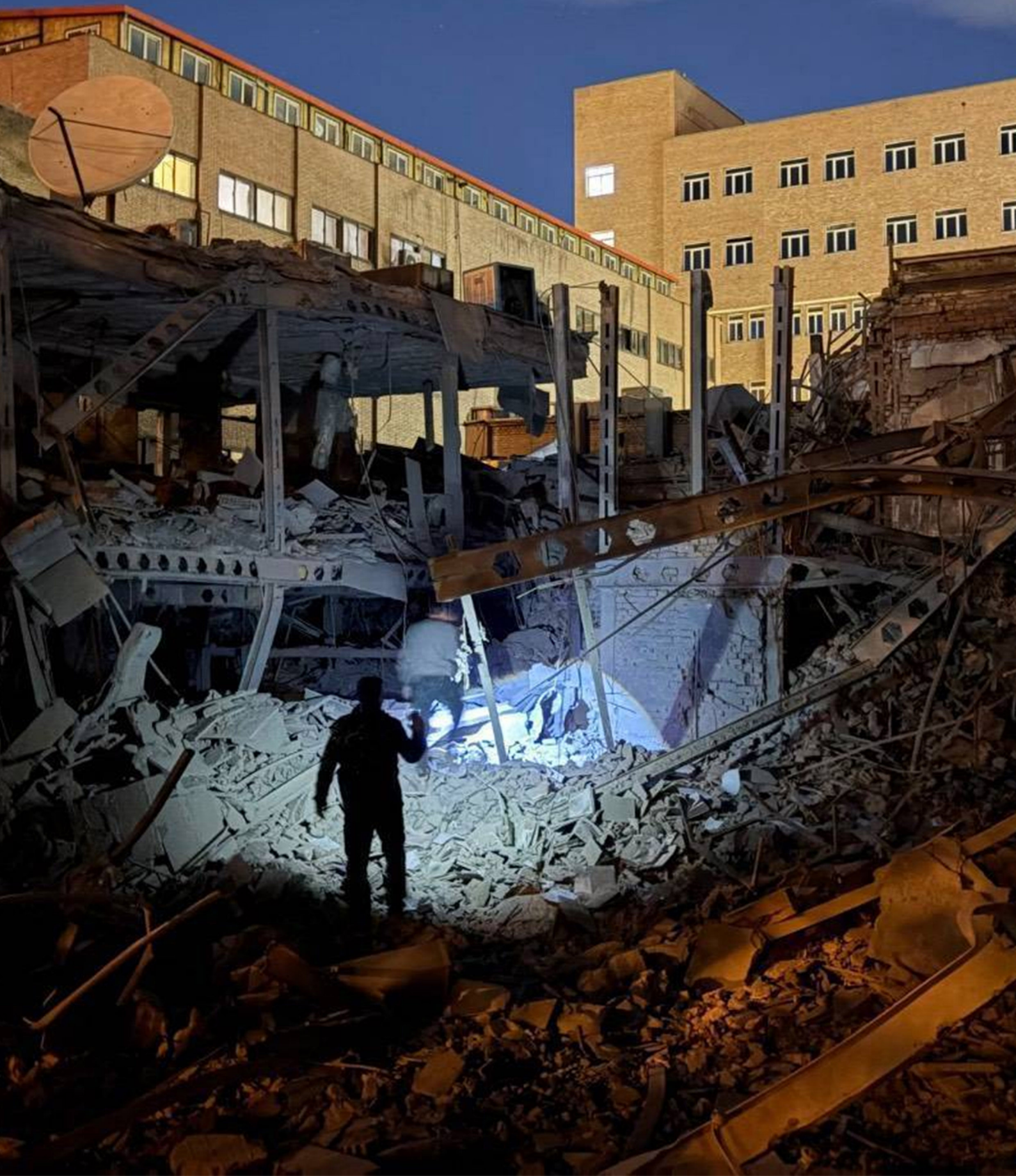
**Reza Samizadeh**

**Secretary General**

**Sharif University of Technology Alumni Association**







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# The Puzzle of War and Peace: Why Control of the Strait of Hormuz Is the Only Path to Deterrence

author | **Saber Mirzaei, Deputy for Research and Development, Presidential Center for Transformation and Progress Cooperation**

An assessment of the situation shows that the enemy is trapped in a deadlock and has no clear strategy either for continuing the war or for ending it. Prolonging this situation without achieving a result is costly, and the enemy hopes that an extended confrontation will lead to Iran’s exhaustion. But the reality is that continuing the war would also bring the Americans themselves a loss of international credibility, a decline in hegemony, and severe economic problems.

Why does Iran reject a temporary ceasefire and a fragile peace?

From Iran’s point of view, a “temporary ceasefire” merely gives the enemy an opportunity to regroup, and a “fragile peace” also deprives the country of the possibility of economic development. Iran seeks a “stable equilibrium,” but since the United States and the Zionist regime do not remain committed to their obligations, merely signing an agreement on paper does not bring peace.

What is the condition for achieving a stable equilibrium?

With agreements having lost their credibility, the possibility of achieving a stable equilibrium depends solely on creating conditions in which the two sides reach parity and balance; that is, deterrence must be established in such a way that any renewed aggression or attack becomes extremely costly for the enemy. In an ideal situation, in order to prevent the next war, the United States and its allies should pay war reparations and hand over the criminals. But since that appears unlikely, Iran has no choice but to acquire the instruments of the balance of power itself.

## The Strait of Hormuz: the guaranteeing lever and the instrument for imposing will

Why is control of the Strait of Hormuz the only real guarantee for Iran?

» **1. Reciprocal compensation for damage:**

When the enemy does not pay reparations, control of this vital artery allows Iran, in the event of any act of aggression, to recover its losses directly from U.S. interests.

» **2. A commercial shield:**

This lever of pressure prevents the United States from adventurism against Iran’s commercial fleet or from blocking the country’s trade routes.

» **3. Changing the regional equation:**

By using this instrument, Iran can align the countries of the region with itself and force the United States to leave the region. In this regard, Iran’s message is explicit: any military cooperation with the United States and

Israel will be regarded as a threat and will be targeted.

In short, dominance over Hormuz is a “glorious victory” that brings with it authority and immense wealth, while creating real deterrence.

Conclusion and the outlook for the end of the war: retreat instead of concessions  
In this battle of wills, Iran has chosen a strategy of “patient warfare.” But on the other side, accepting defeat is unacceptable to the Americans. It is expected that, in order to break this deadlock, they may even resort to a “ground attack”; yet after confronting Iran’s defensive barrier, they will become completely disillusioned with military options.

The key point is this: even after such a failure, the United States will still not be willing to grant Iran any “formal concession” at the negotiating table. For American policymakers, “a complete withdrawal from the region” is far more palatable and simpler than granting concessions in a formal agreement. Therefore, the most likely scenario for the end of the war is the U.S. withdrawal from the region, a withdrawal that would be accelerated by two factors: failure on the military battlefield, including a ground attack, and fear of an even greater nightmare called economic collapse.

I can also turn this into a more polished op-ed English, policy-paper English, or strictly literal translation version.



# Strait of Hormuz Diplomacy: Removing the Nuclear Program from the Negotiating Table

**Author | Reza Hesan, Director of the Policy Design Lab**

In the past, the main lever used to push Iran toward nuclear negotiations was the pressure created by crippling sanctions. At that time, Iran’s greater perceived need for an agreement created an opportunity for the Americans to exploit. But in the post-war environment (following the military attack by the United States and Israel on Iran), the equations have fundamentally changed.

Today, sanctions are no longer a one-sided instrument of pressure; rather, they have become a two-sided challenge, to the point that the United States’ sense of urgency to reach an agreement may now be far greater than Iran’s. In this context, Iran can use the geopolitical window of opportunity presented by the Strait of Hormuz to directly and indirectly break the sanctions regime, because the global economy, especially the energy security of Europe and East Asia, depends vitally on this waterway. Accordingly, Iran’s nuclear program must not be the focus of any negotiation in the post-war period. Iran, as a committed member of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and under the continuous supervision of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), has never moved toward producing a nuclear weapon and will not do so. Under conditions in which Iran has come under military attack, any retreat in the nuclear domain would not only run counter to logic and national security interests, but would also be regarded as surrender to military coercion.

The architecture of U.S. sanctions can, in practice, be made to collapse through an intelligent redesign of the legal regime governing the Strait of Hormuz. If Iran conditions the right of passage through this strait for third countries on their “non-compliance with U.S. sanctions” and implements this policy firmly and consistently, the structure of the sanctions regime will effectively begin to disintegrate. Within this framework, any plan for reopening the Strait of Hormuz, which must certainly be carried out in phases, must have a clear, measurable, and verifiable quid pro quo. It must be understood that the end of the war and the establishment of a ceasefire are not consequences of reopening the Strait of Hormuz; rather, they are its definite precondition. In other words, a full ceasefire must first be realized before the ground can be prepared for negotiations over the gradual reopening of the strait.

A phased (step-by-step) plan for turning threat into opportunity:

This strategy must be designed and implemented in phases so that the other side has the opportunity to demonstrate good faith:

**Stage One:** In exchange for issuing passage permits to a limited number of commercial ships (which have paid the transit or pilotage fee and are not carrying military cargo), part of Iran’s blocked financial resources in the cargo-owning countries would be released. The purpose of this step is to test the practical feasibility of the plan and create an initial breach in the wall of sanctions through third countries.

**Stage Two:** In exchange for increasing the quota of ships allowed to pass, the process of lifting sanctions would be accelerated, and Iran’s blocked financial resources in the United States or in other countries whose trade depends on the passage of goods through the Strait of Hormuz would be released.

**Stage Three:** Once sanctions are fully lifted, passage permits would also be granted to cargo-carrying vessels bound for the United States (but not Israel).

Countries dependent on Middle Eastern energy will naturally welcome any initiative that guarantees security of navigation in the Strait of Hormuz and can play the role of guarantor or facilitator in this process. By contrast, the United States would face a difficult dilemma and a heavy opportunity cost: either it must accept the gradual lifting of sanctions in exchange for the safe passage of ships, or it must accept escalating tensions, a global energy crisis, and a sharp rise in oil prices.

In the post-war period, the sanctions equation is no longer one-sided. Relying on its unparalleled geo-economic position in the Strait of Hormuz and presenting a phased plan with tangible reciprocity, Iran can neutralize sanctions and free its blocked financial resources without making any concession whatsoever on the nuclear file. The key to the success of this strategy is insistence on phased implementation and precise verification at every step.



# How Did Iran Become an Emerging Pole of Power?

**Author | Hossein Ghaferi, President of the Iran-China Think Tank for Strategic Studies**

In the equations of power, war is always a continuation of politics; but sometimes that continuation leads to outcomes its designers did not foresee. The recent attacks and tensions directed against Iran, which in their hidden layers pursued an objective beyond containment, namely regime change, are a clear example of precisely such a miscalculation. What was supposed to mark the end of one actor became the beginning of a new phase in its rise to power.

The strategy of the United States and Israel was based on one key assumption: that increasing military and security pressure, alongside economic pressure, could wear down Iran's internal structure and ultimately pave the way for change from within. But this assumption overlooked one fundamental variable: Iran's ability to turn threat into an instrument of power.

With the beginning of the new round of tensions, Iran, instead of retreating, changed the level on which the game was being played. One of the most important signs of this shift was the use of the sensitive geopolitical lever of the Strait of Hormuz. This vital passageway, through which a significant share of the world's energy flows, was transformed into an instrument of active deterrence. In effect, Iran showed that it could exert influence not only on the military battlefield, but also over the vital arteries of the global economy.

Alongside this geopolitical lever, Iran's missile capability, as the backbone of its deterrence, entered a new phase. Precision strikes, long range, and the ability to penetrate defense systems challenged the traditional equation of power. No longer was the discussion about a purely defensive power; Iran was able to show that, if necessary, it could impose broad and unpredictable costs on the opposing side. This is precisely the point at which deterrence moves out of the theoretical realm and becomes an operational reality.

But perhaps the most important consequence of this war emerged at the psychological and strategic levels. The "regime change" project, which for years had been presented as an option on the table, in practice encountered a serious obstacle: increased cohesion in the face of an external threat. History has repeatedly shown that outside pressure often leads to stronger internal solidarity, and that is exactly what happened here. Instead of collapse, a kind of redefinition of survival took shape.

At the regional level as well, this war led to a further expansion of Iran's influence. Aligned networks were not only left unweakened, but became more active and opened multiple fronts. As a result, any conflict quickly moved beyond a single geographic point and turned into a multilayered crisis. This is the very nightmare that the planners of war seek to avoid: a war whose beginning is clear, but whose end is not.

From an economic point of view, the contradiction of the situation once again revealed itself. Insecurity in the region drove up energy prices, and the very factor that was supposed to suffocate Iran's economy indirectly gave it fresh breathing space. Iran, through informal sales networks and adaptive mechanisms, was able to take advantage of these conditions and stabilize, and at times even increase, its revenues.

At the macro level, these developments acquire meaning within a larger context: a world that is no longer unipolar. Power gaps, great-power competition, and the erosion of traditional hegemony have created an environment in which resilient actors can improve their position. Under pressure, Iran was compelled to adapt itself to this new order, and that very adaptation turned it into a more complex and more influential actor.

In the end, we are faced with a major contradiction: a war that had been designed for regime change ended up changing the balance of power instead. Iran was not only not eliminated, but reached a level of deterrence, influence, and impact that cannot be ignored. The intelligent use of positions such as the Strait of Hormuz, the development of missile capabilities, and the management of war on multiple levels have turned the country into a decisive actor.

The title “the fourth pole of world power” may still sound exaggerated to some, but one reality cannot be denied: today’s Iran is the direct product of the very pressures and wars that were meant to remove it from the scene. It has now become, not a target, but a factor, one whose presence in any equation is no longer optional, but unavoidable. The United States has shown that it has not read Iran’s history well and has no understanding of the Iranian nation.



# The Thirty-Third Special Issue of *Jebhe Energy*

**Author | Qodsieh Malekian, PhD Student in Oil and Gas Law, University of Tehran, Tehran, Iran; Attorney at Law.**

Petrochemical industries are among the most important vital infrastructures of the economy, because they possess high fixed-asset values, deep linkages with the industrial supply chain, and a meaningful share in non-oil exports and foreign-exchange earnings. In the economic structure of hydrocarbon-rich countries, including Iran, the role of this industry goes far beyond that of a single production unit, and any damage to petrochemical facilities leaves multi-layered effects on production, foreign trade, and economic stability. From an economic perspective, losses arising from damage to petrochemical facilities can be classified into three principal levels. At the first level are direct physical losses to the capital assets of the complexes, including process units, storage tanks, transmission lines and networks, process equipment, and control and safety systems. This category usually accounts for the largest share in monetary terms, and its assessment requires a precise estimate of the costs of repair, reconstruction, or rebuilding with similar capacity and functionality.

The second level consists of losses resulting from the stoppage or reduction of production. At this level, the portion of profit or revenue lost as a result of part of the production capacity going offline is calculated. In international claims practice, this category of damages is recognized under headings such as lost profits or loss of production, and is generally assessed on the basis of a defined time period, a production scenario under normal conditions, and reliable market prices.

The third level relates to chain effects and indirect impacts, including disruption in the supply of feedstock and raw materials to downstream industries, increased production costs in related sectors, a decline in the level of industrial activity in the region, and, in some cases, environmental damage arising from accidents, material leakage, or fires. In economic literature, these consequences are analyzed under the heading of the multiplier effect, and they can extend the real scope of damage beyond the boundaries of the complex itself.

In the law of international responsibility, the basis for compensation is the principle of full reparation, as set out in Article 31 of the Draft Articles on Responsibility of States for Internationally Wrongful Acts adopted by the International Law Commission in 2001. Under this principle, compensation must, to the extent possible, restore the injured party to the situation that existed before the wrongful act occurred, neither less than that nor beyond it. Within this framework, compensable losses in relation to petrochemical facilities encompass at least three categories:

- » **The cost of repairing, reconstructing, or replacing the damaged facilities;**
- » **Lost profits or revenue resulting from the stoppage or reduction of production;**
- » **Where appropriate, indirect economic and environmental losses that have a sufficiently proximate causal connection to the harmful event.**

For the valuation of complex industrial assets such as petrochemical complexes, two principal criteria are usually discussed: market value and replacement cost. Since such facilities generally do not have an active and transparent transactional market, and since their value lies more in their productive capacity and economic function than in their saleability as a whole, replacement cost is, in practice, the more appropriate tool for estimating loss. This approach has also been endorsed in the practice of certain international bodies, including the United Nations Compensation Commission after the Gulf War, which, in evaluating damage to Kuwait's oil infrastructure, relied on the actual costs of reconstruction and restoration of pro-

duction capacity.

In investment disputes as well, when an industrial asset lacked an active market or its market price was unreliable, arbitral tribunals have referred to indicators such as investment cost and the cost of constructing comparable facilities. For example, in *Amoco International Finance Corporation v. Iran* before the Iran–United States Claims Tribunal, and likewise in the ICSID award in *Santa Elena v. Costa Rica* (2000), emphasis was placed on the need for the valuation of damage to reflect the real value of the asset, and on the possibility of resorting to the replacement-cost method in the absence of a reliable market value.

In Iran’s case, sanctions-related considerations and constraints on access to international equipment, technology, and technical services add further layers to the calculation of loss. The operational cost of maintenance and continuity of production in such an environment is higher than under normal global market conditions because of indirect procurement of equipment, higher transport and logistics costs, difficulties in obtaining engineering services, and the need to invest in localization. Therefore, in assessing losses arising from damage to petrochemical facilities in Iran, the actual replacement cost must reflect these specific conditions and additional costs so that compensation remains consistent with the logic of restoring the prior situation, rather than being reduced to an abstract estimate based merely on global prices.

The Strait of Hormuz is the maritime corridor for crude oil and a significant share of the region’s LNG exports. In recent weeks, the possibility of disruption along this strategic route had confronted the market with a supply-shock scenario. The announcement of the possibility of safe passage, even in a limited and temporary form, constitutes an important signal for traders and energy shipping companies, and has helped reduce concern over an immediate disruption in supply.

That said, the downward reaction in oil prices does not necessarily mean that risk has fully disappeared. The two-week ceasefire is, in reality, a window for negotiation, and the market still faces a high degree of uncertainty regarding the final outcome of the talks. If a durable agreement is reached, there is a possibility that part of Iran’s export capacity could gradually return to the global market, which in turn could exert further downward pressure on prices.

By contrast, the failure of negotiations or the return of tensions could once again revive the risk of disruption in the Strait of Hormuz and rapidly drive prices back to higher levels. For this reason, in the short term the oil market will be more dependent than ever on the diplomatic and security developments of the region.



# The Trap of Building Democracy from Outside: A Comparative Review of External Democratization in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Libya

Author | Civilizational Diplomacy of Iran Think Tank

## Introduction

Over the past few decades, a number of countries have been subjected to military interventions, political pressure, or sweeping sanctions by the United States and its allies for various reasons.

The experience of these countries shows that foreign intervention and attempts to alter or reconstruct political structures from the outside are often accompanied by serious challenges and, in some cases, have led to political instability, the weakening of state institutions, and the emergence of security and social crises.

For this reason, examining the experiences of these countries can help provide a better understanding of the consequences of such interventions for their political and social structures. Among them, countries such as Iraq, Afghanistan, and Libya are notable examples, having faced different forms of foreign intervention in recent decades.

## A Comparative Review of the Experiences of Libya, Iraq, and Afghanistan

- » The weakening or rapid collapse of these countries’ central state structures after foreign intervention;
- » The existence of social, ethnic, or tribal cleavages within these countries;
- » The difficulty of the process of state-building and political institution-building after foreign intervention.

## Structural Differences Between the Experience of These Countries and That of the Islamic Republic

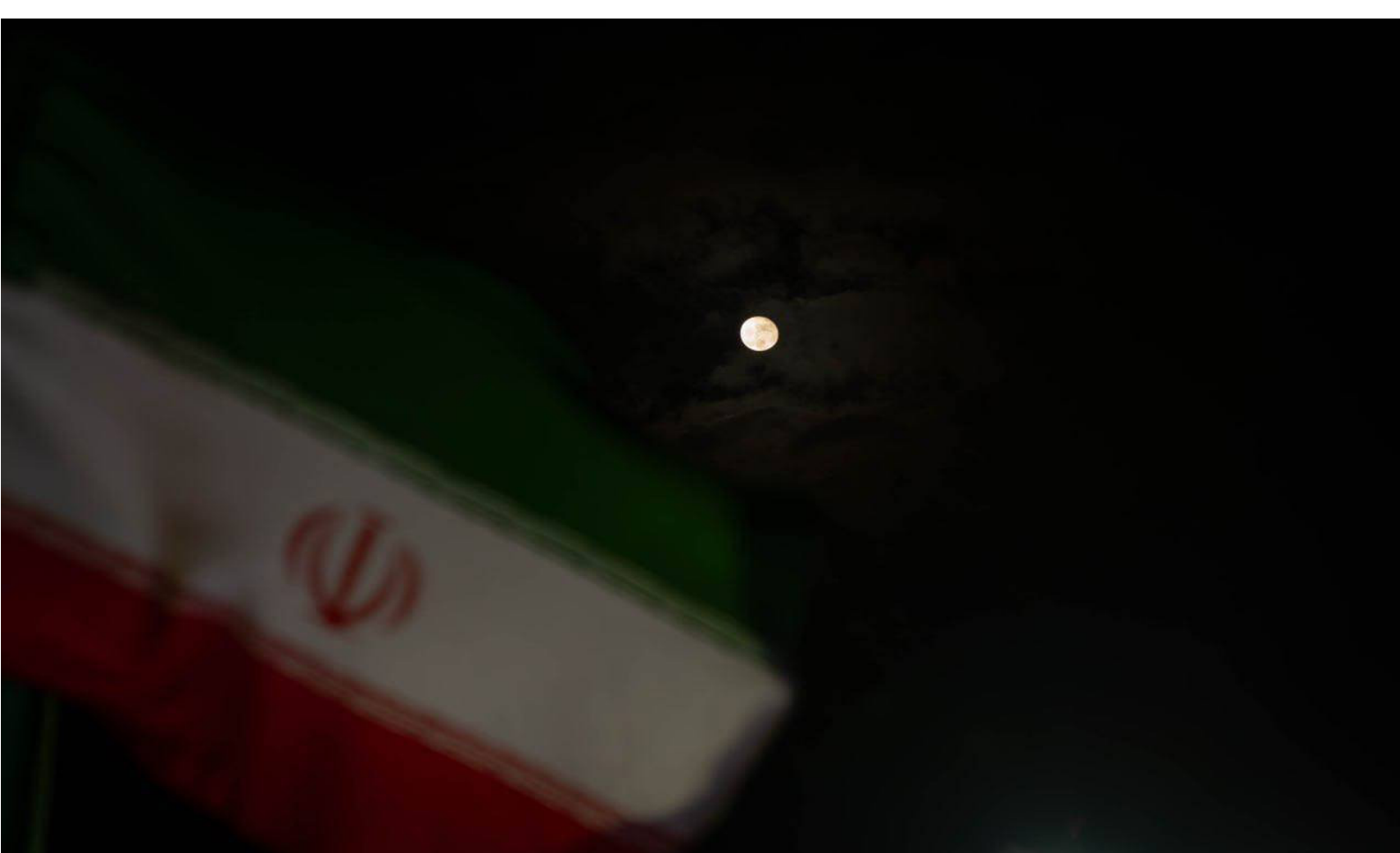
- » The first difference concerns the degree of cohesion and continuity of the central state structure. In Iraq, Afghanistan, and Libya, the political structure was to a large extent dependent on the ruler or on a limited network of political elites, and the institutions of governance enjoyed only limited institutional autonomy and durability. As a result, with the fall of the government, a significant part of the mechanisms for administering the country also collapsed. In the Islamic Republic, however,

the structure of governance is based on a set of established institutions in the legislative, executive, and judicial spheres that have endured over the past several decades. This institutional continuity has meant that the structure of governing the country is less dependent on a single individual or a limited group;

» The second important difference relates to territorial cohesion and national identity. In Iraq, Afghanistan, and Libya, ethnic, religious, and tribal diversity has in many cases become intertwined with power rivalries at the national level and, under conditions of a weak central government, has fueled internal conflicts. In Iran as well, ethnic and cultural diversity exists, but overall there has been a relatively stable national identity and a long historical experience in the formation of a centralized state. This factor, alongside a nationwide administrative network, has helped preserve the country's political unity.

» The third differentiating factor is the cohesion and organization of the military and security institutions. In those countries that came under foreign intervention, military structures were heavily dependent on the previous governments, and with the fall of those governments they lost a significant portion of their organizational capacity. In Iran, however, military and security institutions have, over the past decades, possessed a relatively cohesive and extensive organizational structure and have been defined within the framework of the governing system. This institutional cohesion has played an important role in preserving security stability.

» The fourth factor concerns the country's governance capacity and administrative structure. In Iraq, Afghanistan, and Libya, even before foreign interventions, governments faced serious limitations in administrative capacity, economic development, and the provision of public services. Under such conditions, the weakening of the central government quickly led to broad governance crises. In Iran, however, the administrative, economic, and service-delivery structure at the national level has been more extensive and has, in many cases, been able to preserve the continuity of state functioning.



# The End of the War in Proportion to the Strategic Objectives of the Islamic Republic

## A Proposal for an Operational Plan

Author | ITAN Think Tank

Defining a desirable end to the war requires setting out a framework based on the macro-strategies of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the region, one that can both lead the country through the current conditions and lay the groundwork for realizing the Islamic Republic of Iran's desired order in the region. In fact, the present circumstances should not lead to the abandonment of the Islamic Republic of Iran's main plan; rather, the desirable end of the war can only be achieved in relation to the realization of the Islamic Republic of Iran's desired regional order.

The realization of the Islamic Republic of Iran's order, which stands in opposition to the American order in the region, namely the imposition of a power equation centered on the Zionist regime, requires the adoption of the following strategies:

The interests that the countries of the region may have in the American plan must be reduced to a minimum by making the costs of aligning with that plan heavier for those countries.

The interests of the regional countries in the plan of the Islamic Republic of Iran must be maximized by tying the long-term stability of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the interests of those countries.

The United States must abandon its policy of all-out support for the Zionist regime as a result of the imposition of strategic costs on the United States and the intensification of international and domestic pressure against it.

The regional isolation of the Zionist regime must be brought about through the cutting off of American support and the imposition of a power equation in favor of the Lebanese and Palestinian resistance.

The separation between the countries of the region, the Zionist regime, and the United States is the central core of this plan. Through a gradual process lasting until the end of the war, it creates the conditions for the emergence of a new equation aimed at realizing the Islamic Republic of Iran's order.

Steps for implementing the plan:

» **The imposition of significant field costs on the United States, with the aim of defining the desired end of the war and forcing the United States to leave the war, should be pursued by concentrating on qualitative and publicly demonstrable field achievements that shift the equation of the war in Iran's favor. The definition of major field successes should be carried out at the discretion of, and under the responsibility of, the country's military institutions.**

» **The Islamic Republic of Iran should agree to halt its attacks in response to a request by the United States to leave the war. The request to leave the war by the United States must be announced by that country's president in the media in such a way that it is understood as meaning that the United States was unable to achieve its objectives.**

» **The imposition of Iran's conditions for American non-aggression should be based on setting field limits regarding the type and scale of the U.S. military presence in the region, whether within the territory of countries or in international waters, and should take real achievements into account.**

» **The continuation of the war between Iran and the Zionist regime should proceed until the po-**

sition of the Lebanese and Palestinian resistance is made dominant, with the aim of shaping a new balance of power in which the Zionist regime is forced to make major concessions.

- » The signing of a collective security treaty between Iran and the countries of the region should ensure that none of the regional countries will align with one another in future wars against each other.
- » The implementation of a maritime insurance mechanism in the area of the Strait of Hormuz and Bab el-Mandeb should be pursued in order to consolidate a new security-commercial equation under which the interests of the United States and the Zionist regime remain insecure in these areas.

Strategic gains of the plan:

- » Shaping a new equation of power in the region without the United States and in favor of the resistance.
- » Transforming the current disorder into the Islamic Republic of Iran's desired order.
- » Convergence of the interests of the countries of the region in preventing U.S. military and security aggression.
- » A heavy blow to the American plan by leaving the Zionist regime politically and strategically isolated in the war.



# How Did Some Persian Speakers Come to Welcome War Against Their Homeland?

**Author | Hamzeh Amiri; PhD graduate in Social Cognitive Science**

The phenomenon of welcoming external pressure against a country cannot be explained merely through political labels. What is happening here is the result of a complex process of change in cognitive and identity frameworks. In the arena of hybrid warfare, the mind of the target society has become one of the principal fields of competition. Under such conditions, understanding the mechanisms of this cognitive disorder is vitally important not only for analyzing political developments, but also for understanding the future of social cohesion in any society.

In many wars, the reaction of societies is relatively predictable. When a country comes under foreign attack, even fierce critics of the government usually join others in defending their homeland. In political science, this phenomenon is referred to as the “rally ’round the flag” effect: a moment in which an external threat strengthens internal solidarity. Yet at times, scenes emerge that completely reverse this pattern. For many patriots and Iranians who feel a deep emotional bond with their homeland, witnessing reactions such as joy, celebration, or the welcoming attitude of some Persian speakers when the country’s soil comes under attack is strange and even shocking. Although war brings human losses, destruction of infrastructure, and social suffering, a group of users on social media not only refrain from condemning such events, but at times describe them as the “beginning of liberation.”

At a deeper level, an even more difficult phenomenon to comprehend can also be observed: some individuals calling on a foreign actor, especially one with a dark and controversial record of military intervention, to attack their own country. These appeals are often justified with terms such as “salvation,” “freedom,” or “ending the present situation.” This condition becomes even more complex once the real consequences of war become apparent. As the destructive effects of war reveal themselves, one might expect those who had previously welcomed it to at least reconsider their position, yet in some cases this does not happen. Even after seeing the consequences of war, some of these same individuals, instead of emphasizing resistance or national solidarity, prescribe surrender or an immediate end to the war, as though ending the conflict could reduce the psychological pressure created by the contradiction between their prior expectations and external reality.

Although at first glance this phenomenon may appear to be merely a political stance, it can in fact be a sign of a deeper process at the level of social perception, a process explained in the social-science literature through concepts such as alienation, identity rupture, and the re-engineering of collective perception.

In contemporary security literature, the term “hybrid warfare” refers to a form of power competition in which the main battlefield is not limited to the military sphere. In this type of warfare, the economy, media, technology, and especially the human mind become the principal arenas of competition. Under such conditions, the goal is not merely to alter the military balance, but to reshape public perception and the mental frameworks of society. Put differently, war reaches a deeper stage when the target society not only fails to resist external pressure, but a part of it even accepts that pressure as a “solution.” To understand such a condition, one must turn to the theoretical frameworks of the social sciences.

One of the first concepts that can help explain this phenomenon is alienation, as developed in the works of Karl Marx. In this theory, the individual reaches a condition in which he or she no longer feels a sense of belonging to the surrounding social and political structure. Society, instead of being the individual’s

“home,” becomes an external and even hostile structure. In such a condition, the fate of society is no longer perceived as part of the person’s own fate. Therefore, events that are painful for the majority of society may, for the alienated individual, no longer carry much significance.

In social identity theory, developed by Henri Tajfel, individuals derive part of their identity from membership in social groups, including the nation. But if this identity bond weakens, the individual may not only distance himself or herself from the group, but in some cases may even take an active position against it. Under such conditions, the boundary between “us” and “them” changes. The society in which the person lives is no longer regarded as the in-group.

Frantz Fanon, in his analysis of the psychology of colonialism, showed that long-term domination can generate a kind of internalized inferiority. In such a condition, the individual sees his or her own culture and society as inferior to the outside world. As a result, foreign systems are perceived not only as more powerful, but even as morally superior. Once such a perception becomes entrenched, foreign intervention is no longer seen as a threat; rather, it may be portrayed as “salvation” or “reform.”

In many studies of extremism, radicalization is understood as intense hostility toward an external group. But in some cases, a reverse process occurs: an individual or group comes to regard its own society as the source of evil and sees its destruction as the solution. Under such conditions, external pressure or even military attack may be justified as a tool of “purification” or “change.”

A review of the literature on social cognition and studies of cognitive warfare shows that the phenomenon in which part of a society accepts even foreign pressure or attack as a solution usually takes shape through a gradual process. This process can be explained in five stages.

The process of cognitive rupture usually begins with the gradual erosion of institutional trust. At this stage, several trends occur simultaneously: the constant highlighting of inefficiencies, the generalization of isolated errors into structural corruption, and the reinforcement of a narrative that the system is beyond reform. The result of this process is the formation of a kind of political and social deadlock. Under such conditions, segments of society come to the conclusion that change from within is impossible. Psychologically, this stage is consistent with what is described in the theory of learned helplessness.

The next step is the intensification of social divisions. At this stage, society becomes polarized on several levels. In horizontal polarization, the gap among social, ethnic, generational, or class groups widens. In vertical polarization, the gap between the people and governing institutions expands, and as a result, sub-national identities replace national identity. From the perspective of Tajfel’s social identity theory, at this stage the national group no longer serves as the primary reference point of identity.

At the next stage, the society’s historical perception undergoes change. Several mechanisms become active here: historical narrative is distorted through a focus on defeats and the removal or downplaying of moments of historical pride; collective memory is tampered with through the creation of a continuous narrative of historical failures; and finally, through a change in collective causal attributions, problems come to be interpreted not as correctable errors, but as inherent traits of society itself. At this stage, a kind of collective self-contempt takes shape. This is the very phenomenon that Fanon describes as the internalization of external superiority.

After this comes a shift in the identity reference point, in which a fundamental change occurs in the perceptual structure, and the source of legitimacy and the society’s preferred model is transferred from within to the outside world. Under such conditions, foreign systems are introduced as the desirable model, and foreign actors are portrayed as “legitimate arbiters.” At this stage, the target society is increasingly exposed to the glorification of the external system.

In the final stage, identity rupture reaches a level at which society itself is perceived as the source of the

crisis. At this stage, several phenomena are observed simultaneously. With the normalization of collapse discourse, discussion of collapse or foreign intervention moves from being a taboo to becoming a debatable option. At the same time, radical ideas and concepts such as severe sanctions, external pressure, or even military attack are presented as tools of change. In the most extreme case, part of society may even welcome foreign pressure against its own country. This is the condition that can be described as reverse radicalization.

Digital platforms significantly accelerate this process. Social-media algorithms generally amplify emotional, polarizing, or radical content to a greater degree. The result is the formation of cognitive echo chambers in which users are mainly exposed to narratives that confirm their prior beliefs. In such an environment, the process of re-engineering collective perception occurs more rapidly.

At the same time, it can be observed that even after war breaks out and heavy material and immaterial losses become visible, individuals affected by cognitive warfare who initially regarded war as a path to liberation now insist on surrender. According to cognitive dissonance theory, when a person perceives a conflict between a prior belief and experienced reality, he or she attempts to reduce that conflict. There are two ways to do this: changing the original belief or reinterpreting reality. In some cases, in order to reduce this psychological tension, individuals may conclude that a “quick end to the war”, even through surrender, is better than continuing resistance. This conclusion can serve as a psychological route for reducing the pressure caused by mental contradiction.

A study of developments over the past several decades shows that the phenomenon in which part of a society adopts a sympathetic or even supportive stance toward foreign pressure against its own country has appeared in various parts of the world. Examining these examples can help explain the cognitive mechanisms behind this phenomenon. One notable example in this regard is the breakup of Yugoslavia in the 1990s. In the final years of that country, several processes unfolded simultaneously: the intensification of ethnic and identity polarization, the rewriting of historical narratives among different groups, and the weakening of a shared Yugoslav identity. As a result, many citizens no longer saw themselves as part of a common nation. This identity rupture led some groups even to welcome foreign intervention as a means of changing the situation. In the end, the combination of internal and external pressures resulted in the country's collapse.

Another example frequently discussed in political-science studies is Iraq on the eve of the 2003 invasion. In the years before the war, ethnic and sectarian cleavages had intensified, public trust in governing institutions had sharply declined, and narratives of “salvation from outside” had emerged among some groups. In such an atmosphere, part of society imagined that foreign intervention could bring an end to the crises. Yet the post-war experience showed that the real consequences of such interventions are usually far more complex and costly than earlier narratives suggest.

The developments in Libya in 2011 provide another example of this pattern. During the country's political crisis, some groups welcomed foreign intervention as a way to end the existing situation. But after the fall of the central government, Libya entered a prolonged period of political instability and internal conflict. In many studies of international politics, this experience has been examined as an example of the gap between the mental image of foreign intervention and its actual consequences.

Another example can be observed in developments in Ukraine in recent years. In that country, the competition between Eastern and Western geopolitical narratives produced deep identity cleavages within society. In some regions, Russia was seen as the identity reference point, while in others the West was presented as the desirable model. This identity polarization ultimately became one of the principal backgrounds of the political crisis and war.

These examples show that the phenomenon of identity rupture and welcoming foreign pressure usually emerges under conditions in which several factors become active simultaneously: erosion of institutional trust, severe social polarization, the rewriting of historical narratives by others, and the transfer of the source of legitimacy to the outside. Under such conditions, a society may reach a point where parts of it accept foreign pressure as a tool of change.



# Why Has Iran Not Used the Tool of Closing the Strait of Hormuz Over the Past 47 Years?

**Author | Mohammad Fadaei**

At first glance, this question may seem strange. In today’s modern rationality, “possessing power” is often regarded as synonymous with “exercising power.” Therefore, when an individual or a country has power at its disposal but does not use it, many find that difficult to believe.

The United States has encountered challenge and attrition in the realm of ideas and theory even before, and more than, it has been defeated on the military battlefield. In the prevailing American logic, it is difficult to accept that a country may have the ability to create an economic crisis and disrupt global energy security through control of a strategic strait, yet refrain from using such a tool despite decades of sanctions and pressure.

This issue is considered so unbelievable that it has become one of America’s greatest miscalculations in the current war. They did not believe Iran could bring the strait under its control, an equation that has altered the entire balance of the war.

Under the present circumstances, time is passing in Iran’s favor. With each day that passes in the war, conditions in Western countries and among America’s civilizational allies become more difficult. So far, rising prices have become evident; one must wait for their consequences to reveal themselves in the form of shortages as well. At that point, the signs of the erosion of the order based on Western domination will be heard more clearly than ever before.

But the main question still remains: why has the Islamic Republic of Iran not taken such a step until now? The short answer is simple, yet unfamiliar to global public opinion.

The Islamic Republic of Iran has tried, as much as possible, to refrain from using its instruments of power. This approach has not stemmed from inability, but from a policy that has no inclination toward domination or opportunistic exploitation of crisis situations. Even under conditions of pressure and prolonged sanctions, efforts have been made to avoid turning this strategic passage into an instrument for creating insecurity and instability.

In fact, throughout these years Iran has sought, by playing a security-producing role, to help sustain the stable and relatively inexpensive flow of energy in the world. The Islamic Republic’s approach toward the Strait of Hormuz has always been based on preserving the security and stability of shipping, and its opposition to the American military presence in the Persian Gulf has likewise been framed within this context and with the aim of preventing the region from becoming an arena for competition and pressure by extra-regional powers.

There is no doubt that if the United States had direct access to and control over such a strategic passage, it would use it as an instrument for exerting broad influence over other countries and imposing its will on a global scale. Accordingly, Iran’s policy toward the Strait of Hormuz has not been to “close” it, but rather to “manage and secure” this strategic passage.

Managing the strait does not mean preventing other countries from passing through it. Rather, it means preserving stability, guaranteeing the security of shipping, and preventing this vital route from being turned into a tool for the exercise of pressure by extra-regional powers.

# Kharg and the Absolute Immunity of Iran's Oil Facilities

**A note by Amirhossein Pakdast, researcher at the Strategic Oil and Gas Industry Chain Think Tank (Petropal)**

Kharg is an island located in the Persian Gulf, in Bushehr Province. It is one of Iran's most important islands in the Persian Gulf and the point of origin for a significant share of Iran's oil exports. Although, in theory, targeting the energy facilities located on this island is not impossible for the enemy's air fleet, any action against those facilities would be a major gamble that would drag the world into a dark and profound crisis. This is because any damage to Iran's oil facilities would mean the end of the oil-based economy of the Gulf states and the destruction of the 20 percent share of global oil and gas supply that comes from this region. If damaging Kharg's oil facilities is possible for the enemy's air fleet, then the oil export outlets of the Gulf countries are even more defenseless and easier targets for Iran than any other objective.

Among these oil outlets, damage to just one of them would be enough to create an irreparable disruption in global energy supply. In Saudi Arabia, Ras Tanura is the world's largest offshore oil-loading center, with a loading capacity of up to 6 million barrels per day. In the same country, Ras Juaymah, the second important terminal, has a capacity of 3 to 3.6 million barrels per day.

It is clear that any disruption at these two centers would plunge Gulf energy exports into crisis. In addition to these two, which may be called the energy arteries of the Gulf, Fujairah Port in the UAE, which lies outside the Strait as well and is the region's largest bunkering hub with multiple berths, as well as Jebel Ali Port, would be two important and easily accessible targets for Iran. In Kuwait, there is Mina Al Ahmadi, the central crude-oil export terminal with deep-water berths and high capacity. Bahrain, which serves as a logistical support base for the United States military, is also accessible through the Sitra terminal. In Qatar, the world's largest LNG export facilities are located at Ras Laffan, and any disruption there would confront the world with crisis.



As is evident, in all the Gulf countries that host and support enemy military operations, there are major and highly vulnerable outlets that are fully within reach in response to any attack on Iran's oil facilities. If Iran is forced into war at this level and the world's energy terminals are damaged or disrupted, such damage and disruption would be an irreparable event for the Arab countries of the Persian Gulf, one that would subject their oil-based economies to partial or total collapse. Indeed, it could mark the end of their outward development built on oil revenues. Such an event would also be regarded as irreparable for the United States, because one of the major arms of American hegemony, namely the Arab states, their investments, and the petrodollar system, would face an existential threat.

For the other countries importing oil from the Persian Gulf, and more generally for the global economy, a crisis would emerge the like of which has no precedent in the post-World War II era, and even before that. Therefore, under no circumstances would the United States gamble on Iran's oil facilities, a gamble in which all sides would lose. In addition, the destruction of Iran's oil facilities is not something desirable even for the Americans, whose control over Iran's oil resources is itself one of their important objectives in this war.

It can therefore be said that Iran's oil facilities enjoy absolute immunity so long as Iran retains offensive power with respect to the aforementioned centers. Actions that are occasionally carried out on a limited scale are more in the nature of threats and symbolic gestures. Even at that level, however, they are met with a response intended to convey to the enemy that there exists a will and a capability to destroy the aforementioned facilities and terminals.



# Reconstruction of West Asia after the Ramadan War:

**Author | Ali Azimi Fard and Hossein Gholami**  
**Strategic Oil and Gas Industry Chain Think Tank (Petropal)**

War and military conflicts in West Asia have caused widespread destruction of vital infrastructure, which has hindered economic growth and the welfare of the people of the region. The reconstruction of this infrastructure provides an opportunity to create transformation in the fields of energy, transportation, and industries, and prepares the ground for sustainable development and regional cooperation. By making use of new technologies and the synergy of domestic capacities, it is possible to improve quality of life and strengthen the regional economy. This process requires systematic planning and coordination among countries in order to make use of shared opportunities.

## Necessity and Objectives of the Research

After the Ramadan War and the military assault of the United States and the Zionist regime on Iran, vital infrastructure in West Asia has been severely destroyed. The sectors of energy, transportation, industries, water and electricity, and urban infrastructure have faced extensive damage that has reduced economic capacity and public services. Despite this crisis, the reconstruction of infrastructure has provided a golden opportunity for the sustainable development of the region. This reconstruction must be based on a shared regional strategy that is coordinated with national plans and expands the possibility of Iran's economic and industrial cooperation with the countries around the Persian Gulf. The use of new technologies and the creation of new value chains can help revive the economy and increase production capacity. The final objective is to strengthen Iran's domestic market and move beyond dependence on foreign resources through regional participation in infrastructure development. On this basis, in this report, the main focus of the analyses and policy proposals has been placed on the energy sector.

## The capacities of the Islamic Republic of Iran for participation in regional reconstruction

Among these capacities are:

### » Turning external pressures into domestic capacity

In recent decades, external restrictions and pressures have led to the formation of a trend of industrial and technological self-reliance in Iran. These conditions, despite the difficulties, have caused the development of domestic industrial, technical, and engineering capabilities that are now capable of implementing large infrastructure projects. In other words, the pressures have created capacities that make possible the extensive design and construction of projects relying on domestic capability. This experience has turned Iranian companies and institutions into capable actors in complex environments, which is of special importance in post-crisis reconstruction.

### » Key areas of Iran's capability

Iran's capabilities for participation in the reconstruction of the region's infrastructure can be categorized into several main areas, each of which covers part of the eco-

nomic and infrastructural reconstruction needs of the countries of the region: Heavy industries and the manufacture of industrial equipment: In recent years, Iran's economy has been able to develop heavy industries and design and build the industrial equipment needed by the oil, gas, petrochemical, and power industries. This capability in the design and construction of process equipment, machinery, and key components has made it possible to meet the infrastructural needs of the countries of the region through domestic production capacity.

**Design and implementation of major civil and infrastructure projects:** Iranian companies have gained considerable experience in the design and implementation of major civil projects such as dam construction, road construction, water transmission networks, and transportation infrastructure. These capabilities have created broad technical and managerial capacity that can be used in the reconstruction of destroyed infrastructure in the fields of transportation, water resources, urban infrastructure, and industrial spaces;

**Engineering and technical services and project management:** Iran has a broad network of consulting engineering companies and technical services that specialize in the design, supervision, and management of infrastructure projects. These experts have gained considerable experience in managing large projects and can play a key role in the reconstruction of areas of high technical importance.

## **The logic of turning threat into opportunity: from infrastructure destruction to a regional value network**

The extensive destruction of infrastructure in West Asia is not only a serious challenge to regional stability, but also an opportunity for reconstruction based on cooperation and regional economic transformation.

### **Infrastructure destruction as a regional strategic challenge**

Wars in West Asia have caused extensive destruction of economic and urban infrastructure that requires major investment and management for reconstruction. This destruction is a threat to economic and social stability, but it can be an opportunity for economic rearrangement, modernization of technologies, and regional cooperation. Reconstruction is not only the restoration of the previous condition, but also the beginning of transformation and new economic cooperation in the region.

### **Reconstruction as a motor of economic cooperation**

The reconstruction of infrastructure requires financial resources, technical capability, industrial capacity, and project management, which usually one country alone is not capable of providing, and therefore regional and international cooperation is needed. Large infrastructure projects include a network of different actors whose continuous cooperation can lead to the formation of stable economic ties among countries and the development of regional economic networks. These cooperations act beyond mere reconstruction and cause the strengthening of long-term economic relations.

### **The formation of regional value chains**

Regional value chains are a set of related economic activities that are divided among several countries, with each country carrying out part of the production or services based on its own advantage. In the reconstruction of infrastructure, for example, one country makes equipment, another provides engineering services, a third country finances, and the host executes and operates the project. This sustainable division of labor causes the formation of a network of mutual economic interdependencies that increases efficien-

cy, reduces tensions, and strengthens shared regional interests.

## **Main areas of cooperation: energy, transportation, industry, and technology**

For designing an effective strategy for the reconstruction of damaged infrastructure in West Asia, four main areas of cooperation have been selected on the basis of economic impact, need for investment and technical capacity, Iran's domestic capabilities, and the sustainability of regional cooperation: energy, as the main axis and driver of the economy, and transportation, industry, and technology. The proposed cooperation model includes the design of joint projects, financing, and economic participation, which is executable in all of these sectors.

### **Energy sector**

The energy sector in West Asia has the role of the driver of the economy, and damage to its infrastructure causes disruption in other sectors and social instability. In wars, the vital energy facilities of the region have been damaged, and their reconstruction is essential for reviving the economy and upgrading technology. Iran, with capability in the design, construction, and operation of power plants, production of oil and gas equipment, and experience in managing major energy projects under sanctions, has high capacity for participation in the reconstruction and modernization of the region's energy infrastructure. These capabilities turn Iran into an important strategic partner in shaping the new energy order and the economic development of West Asia.

### **Transportation and logistics infrastructure sector**

Transportation and logistics infrastructure in West Asia are vital for economic development and regional trade, and damage to them in wars disrupts the flow of trade and the movement of goods. Iranian companies and contractors, with experience in civil projects such as roads, bridges, railways, and ports, have the capability for effective participation in reconstruction. The importance of the Strait of Hormuz and the development of the capacity of Persian Gulf ports can create more efficient logistics networks. The development of combined maritime, rail, and road routes and their connection to Iran's infrastructure make possible the formation of energy-logistics corridors and the strengthening of Iran's position in regional transit.

### **Industry and production sector**

The reconstruction of the economies of affected countries is not limited only to the restoration of physical infrastructure, but also requires the reconstruction and development of productive capacities. Iran's industrial capacities in areas such as the production of industrial equipment, steel, mining industries, and some basic industries can be used in the reconstruction of industrial units and the creation of new productive capacities in the region. The creation of industrial cooperation between Iran and the countries of the region can also lead to the formation of a network of production and supply at the regional level.

### **Technology and innovation sector**

Technology and innovation, especially in digital fields and smart systems, have a complementary and effec-

tive role in improving the productivity and quality of infrastructure and energy projects. The use of digital technologies, smart monitoring and surveillance systems, and digital solutions in urban management can facilitate the process of reconstruction and regional economic development and at the same time develop regional markets for knowledge-based products.

## Financing model: strategic use of blocked resources

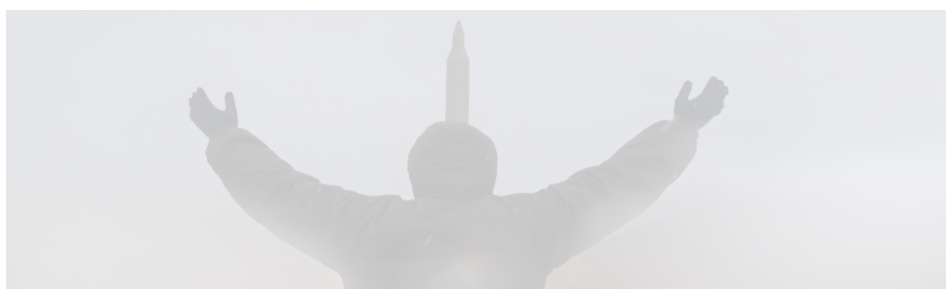
The design of new models for financing the reconstruction of infrastructure in the affected countries of West Asia is necessary because the government budget is limited and extensive investment is needed. Iran can benefit from its blocked resources abroad and, by creating appropriate legal and financial mechanisms, turn these resources into credit that can be spent on projects. It is proposed that joint infrastructure development funds be formed with the participation of Iran and the host countries, and that different models such as barter of services and equipment, the BOT model for energy, and small financial credits for technology be employed. Also, the management of legal, banking, currency, and political risks through tripartite contracts with international financial institutions must guarantee the sustainability of these models. These approaches can facilitate sustainable reconstruction and regional economic cooperation.

## Proposed institutional structure in Iran

For Iran to have an effective and sustainable role in the reconstruction of West Asia, the creation of a National Center for Steering Reconstruction and Regional Development Cooperation is necessary. This center, with sufficient authority and an intersectoral composition, assumes the role of coordinating policy-making, negotiation, implementation, and supervision. The main structure will include three sections: economic diplomacy, technical-engineering, and financial-investment, which will aggregate the capacities of the related institutions and support Iranian companies. Also, by creating a consortium-building platform, contractual legal support, and a regional data-monitoring system, this center will increase the competitive power of companies. The center must be a coordinator among the existing institutions and manage executive processes and the obtaining of permits so as to prevent the fragmentation of decision-making and present coherent packages. This structure, with government support and clear legal standing, turns Iran from a passive actor into a strategic actor in regional development.

## Summary

Recent developments in West Asia and the damage inflicted on infrastructure have provided an important opportunity for the development and reconstruction of the region. Iran, with industrial, engineering, and technological capacities in the fields of energy, transportation, and industries, has the ability to play a key role in these projects, which can strengthen regional economic ties and help regional stability. This presence requires a strategic approach, long-term planning, and risk management. Concentration on infrastructure projects with regional impact, such as energy, transportation, and new technologies, lays the ground for the consolidation of Iran's position. Also, making use of innovative financing mechanisms such as the use of blocked resources, joint funds, and public-private partnership models makes it possible to implement major projects without pressure on domestic resources.



# Supplying Essential Goods During War and in the Postwar Period

**Author | Alireza Peyman-Pak, former head of the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran, in an interview with Rayekeh Eghtesad**

With the blocking of informal payment channels based in the UAE, one of the most important financial transfer routes for Iran's foreign trade has been disrupted. This situation, more than ever, highlights the necessity of returning to the overlooked capacities within the official payment system.

In recent years, platforms had been created for settling transactions through the banking network and using currencies such as the ruble and the yuan; a mechanism that made it possible to carry out transparent payments, open letters of credit (LCs), and reduce operational risks, but it was not widely used.

## Reviving official ruble- and yuan-based channels

Under the current circumstances, using the capacity of Russian banks and yuan-ruble settlement channels can serve as a practical solution for the continuation of foreign trade. In addition to transparency, these routes make it possible to manage risk more effectively and reduce dependence on intermediaries.

## A forced transition away from informal routes

The closure of the UAE channel has, in practice, placed the continued use of informal routes under serious constraint. These conditions create an opportunity to redefine the payment model and move toward formal and sustainable mechanisms.

## The need to remove institutional resistance

Past experience shows that part of the underdevelopment of these channels stemmed from vested interests formed around informal routes and resistance to replacing them with more transparent mechanisms.

Under the current circumstances, and with those routes now restricted, the ground has been prepared for reducing such resistance, and the possibility of moving toward the use of formal, lower-risk, and more efficient channels is more favorable than before.

# The Persian Gulf Security Dilemma and Several Strategic Propositions

**Author | Dr. Hamidreza Fartookzadeh, faculty member of Malek Ashtar University of Technology:**

## Fluid and Progressive Insecurity

The land of Iran, as an independent political entity in the north of the Persian Gulf and connected to multiple geopolitical spheres in the east, west, and north of the geography of the Iranian plateau, is faced with a fluid and progressive insecurity rooted in extra-regional conflicts. The center of this fluid insecurity is the Anglo-Saxon order, which declared its existence with the entry of the East India Company into the Bay of Bengal and India in the seventeenth century and gradually expanded. One of the turning points of this order is the establishment of the Zionist regime in 1948. This order has turned into an aggressive and domineering empire. It is a complex, intelligent system equipped with all kinds of tools and equipment and active in all geopolitical, geoeconomic, and geocultural spheres. Therefore, it cannot be regarded as a simple rival; rather, we are faced with a malignant yet highly skillful power. A domineering empire that has combined a primitive disposition with modern tools and weaponization from peaceful infrastructures, especially in the fields of information and communications technology and global trade.

## Pentagon executive order in 2001: destruction of seven countries

After the events of September 11, 2001, an executive order for the destruction of seven countries in the region was approved and issued. This plan included Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, and finally Iran. General Wesley Clark has explicitly referred to this matter.

## Formation of the Axis of Resistance

The formation of the resistance camp, through the prudence of the martyred Leader and Martyr Commander Soleimani, prevented the full realization of this plan. This constellation was formed from the Mediterranean to Yemen and established a logistical line, training, joint command, and smart communications, which led to the neutralization of the enemy's plan and the removal of the shadow of war from Iran. The rise of ISIS and the fall of Mosul in 2014 were the prelude to the fall of Iran, which failed because of a counter-strategy from Iran, and in the end the enemy, in revenge against Iran, resorted to the cowardly assassination of Martyr Commander Soleimani in 2020.

## Developments after the martyrdom of Commander Soleimani

After the martyrdom of Commander Soleimani, important changes were observed in strategic behavior. The silent and subterranean developments in Idlib showed that the 2020 ceasefire had in practice been violated and that allowing takfiri activities in that region caused the formation of a center of crisis. This situation required proactive and strategic behavior, which was not adopted. Probably because of consideration for the then Syrian government.

## **Attack on the Damascus consulate and a turning point**

The Zionist regime's attack on the Iranian consulate in Damascus in Farvardin 1403 constituted a turning point in the security equations. This attack on the official representation of the Islamic Republic of Iran, which was present there at the invitation of the lawful Syrian government, did not bring about an immediate and proportionate response. Unlike the attack on T-4.

## **Wrong signals and their consequences**

This behavior led to the sending of signals to the effect that Iran no longer wanted proactive behavior and the showing of power, and preferred to display peaceful and kind behavior. This perception led to the conclusion that Iran was no longer the country of 2016–2018 and had turned into a mild and kind country.

## **The -12day war and the continuation of signals**

On the eve of the 12-day war, the warm and friendly reception of a senior Saudi Arabian official was also among the signals that, in the strategic mentality of the enemy, showed Iran's commitment to the security of the Persian Gulf. Even at the cost of Iran itself becoming insecure. In this war, it was proven that the southern sheikhdoms of the Persian Gulf are mostly captured and absorbed into the enemy camp; the military, intelligence, security bases, and smart infrastructures of these countries are serving the enemy's objectives.

## **Negotiations and the Albusaidi interview**

The recent negotiations and the interview of the Omani foreign minister, to the effect that "the Iranians showed flexibility beyond imagination and there is absolutely no cause for concern," also explain other corners of this security puzzle. Negotiations that were accompanied by bloody aggression against Iran. This aggression had two objectives: creating paralyzing shock through the assassination of the leadership and senior commanders, and plunging the nation into deep mourning through an attack on children.

## **A reflection on the semantic distortion of the word war in describing what is taking place between us and the enemy**

America is committing aggression, and Iran is engaged in defense and resistance. The use of the word war to describe the current situation carries a semantic distortion

# War Update: From “Strategic Patience” to “Pre-emptive Escalation”

**Author | Mehdi Mohammadi, adviser to the Speaker of the Islamic Consultative Assembly**

## 1. The new doctrine: Pre-emptive Escalation

Iran has now entered the final phase of the war; a stage in which both sides are seeking to “frame the ending” in their own favor. Contrary to the enemy’s assumption that Iran would merely react, the Islamic Republic has chosen the strategy of “pre-emptive escalation.” That is, before the enemy can implement its offensive plans, Iran has disrupted their calculations by increasing the volume and precision of its attacks and has placed the enemy in a state of absolute surprise.

## 2. The failure of CENTCOM’s conventional ground-operation plan so far

The Americans (CENTCOM) intended to launch a ground operation against Iran’s coasts and islands and had positioned their forces in centers such as Ras Al Khaimah. But the fighters of Islam, with precise intelligence dominance, targeted their command centers, logistics hubs, and depots before enemy forces could even complete their deployment. The use of hypersonic and ballistic missiles has struck fear into the aggressors and frozen them in their positions.

## 3. A leap in air defense: the downing of American F15-s

The 15th of Farvardin was recorded as a golden day in the history of Iran’s air defense. In a single day, three advanced American fighter jets were shot down. One F-15 was hit in central Iran; its pilots ejected, and despite enemy helicopter efforts to rescue them, they were caught in Iran’s intelligence net. Two other aircraft were struck over the Persian Gulf and crashed into the sea. This success indicates that Iran has obtained the enemy’s flight pattern, which means the end of operational freedom for hostile aircraft in Iranian skies.

## 4. Strikes on intelligence arteries and infrastructure

By targeting sensitive civilian objectives of high strategic value, Iran responded to the enemy’s crimes:

- » The destruction of Amazon’s data centers in Bahrain and Oracle’s in Abu Dhabi, into which billions of dollars had been invested for artificial intelligence infrastructure and signal analysis.
- » A coordinated, heavy salvo of Khorramshahr missiles fired into the heart of Tel Aviv in response to the enemy’s attack on scientific centers such as the Pasteur Institute of Iran and Shahid Beheshti University.

## 5. A new order in the Strait of Hormuz and Trump’s deadlock

Iran has officially announced that a new Strait of Hormuz has been born, one under Iran’s full supervision

and regulation. From now on, even if the war ends, no U.S. Army logistics vessel will be permitted to pass through this waterway. Trump is now trapped in a deadlock from which he has neither a way forward nor a way back; he can neither extinguish Iran's firepower nor find a way to escape this trap with dignity.

## 6. A warning against misleading domestic signals

While the fighters on the battlefield are consolidating victory, some figures, such as Mr. Zarif, by raising the issue of a "comprehensive agreement," are sending the enemy misleading signals and signs of weakness. Now is not the time for negotiation; it is the time to stand firm so that battlefield victory can be turned into a long-term strategic asset. Any talk of compromise at this stage will only lead the enemy to miscalculate once again and prolong the war.

## 7. The options on the table for the next stages

Iran has still not used all of its capabilities. Options such as:

- » **closing the Bab al-Mandab Strait;**
- » **withdrawing from the NPT;**
- » **using new weapons and occupying U.S. embassies in the region;**

are measures that, in the event of any foolish act by the enemy against Iran's infrastructure, will be put into operation immediately.

The war will continue until full deterrence has been restored and the option of military attack has been erased from the enemy's mind forever.



# Why the Claim of Violating the Sovereignty of Arab States in Resolution 2817 Lacks Legal Merit?

**Author | Mohammad Hossein Heydari, Researcher at the Institute for Economic Diplomacy Studies**

Following the adoption of Resolution No. 2817, proposed by Bahrain, various discussions regarding this resolution took shape in the country's public sphere. The Security Council, as an inherently political body, does not have judicial duties toward the United Nations and its members, but its resolutions can carry legal weight.

This writing seeks to critique the claims of this resolution through the lens of international law and by making use of the unclean hands doctrine; claims through which Bahrain has accused Iran of violating its sovereignty and that of six other countries, Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Oman, the United Arab Emirates, and Jordan, on the grounds that Iran, by targeting American interests and military bases in the region, is violating their sovereign rights. Nevertheless, Iran's alleged violation of the sovereignty of these countries lacks the necessary legal merit.

Following the illegitimate and unlawful Israeli and American attacks on Iran in Esfand, the Islamic Republic of Iran, pursuant to Article 51 of the United Nations Charter, exercised its inherent right of self-defense against the aggressors and, in addition to targeting the Zionist regime, targeted United States interests, whether at their regional bases, at the locations of American troops, or at areas from which United States fire was carried out outside their bases in Arab territories. This matter was met with protest by the member states of the Gulf Cooperation Council and Jordan.

In this same context, Bahrain's proposed resolution concerning the condemnation of Iran's attacks, with the claim that they violated the sovereignty of the aforementioned countries, was adopted by the Security Council as the political arm of the United Nations. Quite apart from the predominantly recommendatory language of this resolution, the legitimacy and legal merit of the claims made in it still remain in question. It is for this reason that this writing seeks to examine this dispute.

The point of dispute between Iran and the aforementioned governments concerns the possible conflict between Article 2 of the United Nations Charter, namely, the sovereign right of the Arab states over their territory, and Iran's inherent right of self-defense as grounded in Article 51 of the United Nations Charter. In other words, the main root of the dispute on this matter, which has given rise to the claims of the Arab states against Iran, is the friction between these two rights:

» **Iran's right of self-defense;**

» **The territorial sovereignty of the Arab states.**

In general, the right of state sovereignty, in addition to being one of the most important principles accepted by civilized nations, underlies the objective of the United Nations Charter, namely the equality of states vis-à-vis one another. From this, one can understand the importance of sovereignty in international law. On the other hand, self-defense, reflected in Article 51 of the United Nations Charter, in addition to being something rationally self-evident, is, alongside the conditions set forth in Chapter VII of the Charter, one of the two exceptions to the rule prohibiting the use of force. This too demonstrates the status of self-defense.

Accordingly, Resolution No. 2817, proposed by Bahrain, was adopted with two abstentions by China and Russia. This resolution asks Iran to respect the sovereignty of the Arab states. At first, this matter requested of Iran, namely, respecting the sovereignty of the Arab states, appears legitimate and possessed of legal merit. However, with a more precise look at the existing situation, one can understand that, fundamentally, in this war, respect for the sovereignty of the Arab states has no place. According to the unclean hands doctrine, if a party disregards its obligations under international law and infringes the rights of others, its rights are not entitled to respect, and other states are no longer obliged to observe their obligations toward that state within the sphere of the rights that it has violated. In other words, under this doctrine, mutual respect for one another's rights is a prerequisite of law in the relations between the parties, and in the event of repeated violation of the rights of another, the aggrieved right-holder is permitted to engage in reciprocal conduct.

The Arab countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council, together with Jordan, by allowing the United States of America to establish bases, have over recent years provided the ground for American-Israeli misuse; and, contrary to their obligations, have repeatedly denied the conduct of aggressive and unlawful American operations against the Islamic Republic from their soil. American bases in these countries are the point of origin of aggression against Iran. This breach of commitment and bad faith has gone so far that there is firm and irrefutable evidence of CENTCOM's use of the airspace of these countries for refueling or for the launching of surface-to-surface missiles from areas outside the perimeter of American bases in order to strike Iran.



# In the New World Order, “Land-Sea” Civilizations Are the Winners

**Author | Hojjat al-Islam Hossein Mahdizadeh, Deputy for Scientific-Research Affairs of the Emad Center for Progress Studies:**

In analyzing the historical transformations of world order, one noteworthy conceptual framework is the distinction between “land civilization” and “maritime civilization.” More than referring to entirely independent historical entities, these two concepts are analytical tools for understanding deep changes in the way power is organized in the world. Examining these two patterns shows that the several-thousand-year history of human civilization can, to a great extent, be understood through the competition and displacement between these two civilizational logics.

Land civilization can be regarded as the dominant formation in a major part of the history of the Old World. In this period, the main networks of human communications were located within a zone that in geographical tradition was referred to as “the inhabited quarter”; that is, the collection of the lands of Asia, Africa, and Europe. In such a world, the oceans were seen more as natural borders and did not play a significant role in organizing power and communications. Technical limitations in navigation also made extensive and regular movement across the oceans impossible. Therefore, the greater part of economic, cultural, and political exchanges took place through land routes.

In this order, a network of land routes had taken shape that in a sense formed the backbone of global communications. One of the most important nodes of this network was located in a region that began in Central Asia, passed through the Iranian plateau, and reached the Mediterranean and the Red Sea. This region, because of its special geographical position, had become a civilizational crossroads through which many of the cultural and economic exchanges of the Old World passed. In such a structure, centers of power were also mostly located deep within the land, and great empires focused more on controlling land routes and inland territories.

However, from the late Middle Ages onward, a fundamental transformation emerged in this order. Progress in maritime technology, especially in the construction of advanced sailing ships, made more effective movement across the oceans possible. These ships were able to move in different wind directions and largely removed the previous limitations on sea voyages. As a result, maritime traffic, which had previously been limited and dependent on special natural conditions, turned into a more regular and extensive activity.

The combination of this technical transformation with progress in gunpowder and artillery technology created the conditions for the expansion of maritime powers. European states were able, relying on this military and naval superiority, to reach distant shores and establish military fortifications there. Out of this process, the colonial system was formed, and a new pattern of organizing power in the world emerged that can be called “maritime civilization.”

Maritime civilization, by transferring the center of gravity of power from land to sea, transformed the structure of world order. In this pattern, coasts and sea routes became the key points of power, and control of the seas became the determining factor in world politics. Maritime powers, by dominating shipping routes and creating a network of coastal bases, were able to gain control over global trade and many distant regions of the world.

In the competition between these two civilizational logics, the regions located at the heart of land net-

works possessed special importance. One of the most important of these regions is the zone that in some geopolitical analyses is referred to as the “land of the five seas”; a region between the Caspian Sea, the Black Sea, the Mediterranean Sea, the Red Sea, and the Sea of Oman. Throughout history, this region has, because of its particular geographical position, played the role of linking different parts of the Old World. Many of the great historical empires also took shape in this very zone, because control of this region meant access to the main communication networks of the world.

Iran lies at the heart of this very geographical zone, and for this reason it has always held an important place in the historical equations of power. Nevertheless, in the period of the expansion of maritime powers, Iran gradually distanced itself from its maritime capacities. The arrival of the Portuguese in the Persian Gulf in the early sixteenth century was a clear symbol of the expansion of the influence of maritime civilization in this region. Even after the departure of the Portuguese, the influence of other maritime powers continued, and Iran was for a long time unable to have an effective presence at sea.

Even so, it should be noted that the concepts of land civilization and maritime civilization should not be regarded as completely independent and separate realities from one another. These two concepts are in fact analytical frameworks that help toward a better understanding of historical transformations. In practice, there has always been a kind of interaction and coexistence between land-based and maritime elements, and in many periods these two logics have operated alongside one another.

In the contemporary world, important signs of change in the global order can be observed. One of the most important of these signs is the economic return of powers such as China and India to the global stage. The rapid economic growth of these countries in recent decades shows that the center of gravity of the world economy is moving toward Asia. This transformation is not only an economic change, but also has broad geopolitical and civilizational consequences.

In this process, Asian powers are trying, in addition to active presence on maritime routes, to revive land communication networks as well. Projects such as the revival of the historical routes of overland trade are examples of these efforts. Such transformations show that the future order of the world will probably be based neither merely on land logic nor entirely on maritime logic, but will encompass a combination of both.

Alongside these transformations, different theoretical views have been raised about the future shape of the world order. Some analyses speak of the formation of a multipolar world in which different regions will become independent civilizational poles. In contrast, there are also views that emphasize that in today’s networked world, the importance of geography is declining and that what is becoming increasingly important is the networks of connection among cities and economic and technological centers. Under such conditions, the question of the place of countries such as Iran in the future order of the world acquires special importance. Answering this question requires simultaneous attention to two levels: first, strengthening internal capabilities and upgrading economic, scientific, and productive capacities; and second, shaping a network of cooperation and regional synergies in the zone referred to as the “Middle Land.”

In the end, the formation of the future order of the world will not be limited only to economic and geopolitical factors, but will also require the presentation of new patterns for organizing human relations. If the world is passing from an order based on domination and colonialism, it will inevitably need patterns formed on the basis of human dignity and mutual cooperation. In such a horizon, the essential question is whether different civilizations can present patterns of coexistence and world order that can replace the logic of domination in contemporary history.

# Hidden Dimensions of the Mining Industries' Dependence on the Strait of Hormuz

**Author | Reza Mousaei, Secretary of the Office of Strategic Studies of Production Prosperity**

While the attention of global public opinion is focused on the price of gasoline and crude oil, a quiet yet devastating storm is taking shape in the underlying layers of the economy and the supply chain of mineral materials. The recent tensions in the Middle East do not merely mean more expensive fuel; rather, they mean the stoppage of mining machinery, the locking up of metal industries, and a crisis in the production of strategic tools from China to Japan.

## » **Explosives and extraction: the threat at the first step**

The mining industry needs explosives in order to crush rocks and gain access to minerals. The principal precursor of these materials is nitrogen and ammonia derivatives. The Middle East holds 22 percent of the global market share of urea and ammonia. Disruption in this chain means the risk of stoppage of extraction operations in Asia's major mines because of a shortage of explosive inputs.

## » **Sulfur: the golden key to metal processing**

Without sulfur, the production of copper, zinc, and many strategic metals is impossible. By supplying 45 percent of global sulfur exports, the Middle East plays the role of the beating heart of metallurgical industries. This material is the principal input for the production of sulfuric acid, which is vital for mineral processing. Its shortage will paralyze industrial processes throughout Asia.

## » **The pulse of the metals market in the hands of the region**

The Middle East's share in extractive and metallic commodities is far beyond public imagination. These figures show why the construction and technology market in Asia is worried:

Gold powder (36% of the global market): fluctuation in the supply of precise electronic components.

Industrial diamond (26% of the global market): vital for drilling bits and cutting tools.

Aluminum (24% of global exports): the base metal of the automotive and aerospace industries.

Steel structures (28% of the global market): the backbone of major infrastructure projects.

## » **Forced migration to the coal age**

The natural gas (LNG) crisis in Asia is serious. Countries such as India have gas reserves for only 6 days. With restrictions on gas supply from the Middle East, power plants in Asia will be forced to shift toward coal. This sudden change will impose unprecedented pressure on the coal supply chain, extraction, and logistics, and will drive the price of this fossil fuel to its peak.

## » **Logistics: the coup de grâce to prices**

Because of their heavy weight, mineral materials are absolutely dependent on maritime transport. When the Baltic Dirty Tanker Index (BDTI), which tracks heavy cargoes, jumps by 47 percent, it means that the cost of transporting each ton of mineral material has become drastically more expensive. This increase in cost will ultimately show itself in the form of higher prices for housing, automobiles, and consumer goods in the heart of Asia.

# The Mediterranean Pipeline Mirage: A Technical Impasse for Replacing the Strait of Hormuz

**Author | Ruhollah Shamizad, researcher at the Oil and Energy Think Tank**

The closure of the Strait of Hormuz בעקבות the aggression of the American and Zionist regimes against our country has triggered a global energy crisis. In this context, Benjamin Netanyahu has claimed that it would be possible to create alternative routes through Israeli territory for the transit of the region's oil and gas. In reality, however, this idea suffers from numerous technical, engineering, and operational flaws, which are examined below.

## Transfer-capacity constraints

More than 20 million barrels of crude oil and petroleum products used to pass through the Strait of Hormuz every day. By contrast, even the world's largest oil pipelines, under the best conditions, have capacities of only about 1.5 to 5 million barrels per day. Replacing the Strait of Hormuz would require a parallel network of four or five massive pipelines stretching from Saudi Arabia to the Mediterranean. Constructing such infrastructure would require hundreds of billions of dollars in initial investment, along with dozens of pressure-boosting stations and giant pumping facilities, the maintenance and protection of which along a long desert route would itself become an endless logistical challenge.

## LNG supply

A large part of global energy security, especially in Europe and East Asia, depends on Qatar's liquefied natural gas cargoes, all of which pass through the Strait of Hormuz. Transporting gas over very long distances by pipeline entails severe pressure loss and enormous cost; therefore, implementing Netanyahu's idea would require the construction of gas liquefaction terminals on an unprecedented scale. In reality, the main problem in LNG supply is not pipeline-laying, but the absence of capacity for establishing export terminals on the Mediterranean coast.

## Pricing

From the perspective of port engineering and maritime logistics, Israel's Mediterranean coastline lacks the depth and infrastructure necessary for the simultaneous berthing of a large number of supertankers known as VLCCs. Moreover, turning the export process into a multi-stage operation would sharply increase technical risks, insurance costs, and delivery times, and in practice would raise the final cost of energy for the end consumer to a non-competitive level.

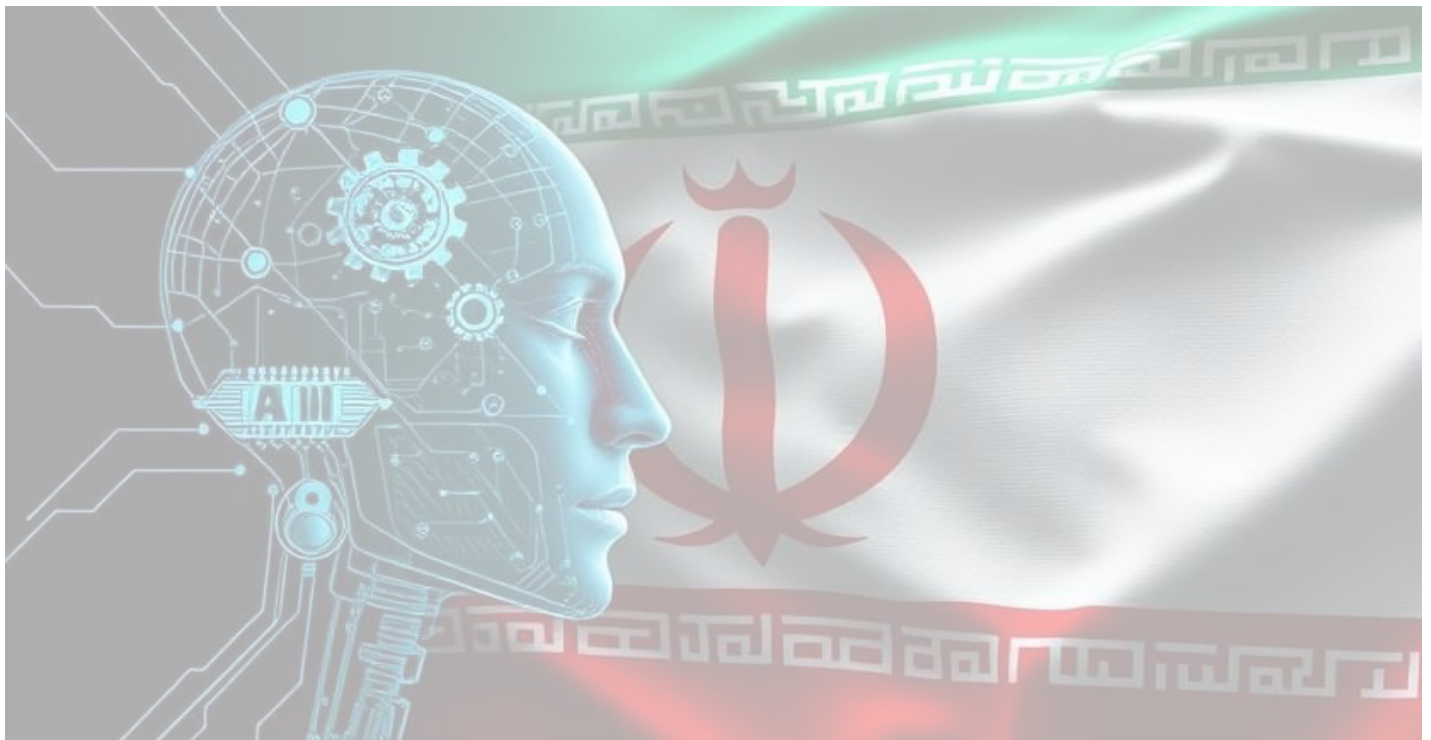
## System flexibility

In today's world, energy security is defined on the basis of route diversity and maneuverability. However, in Israel's pipeline-based system, any technical failure in pumping stations or in the integrity of the pipelines would mean the complete severing of the artery claimed to replace Hormuz.

## Time

Pipeline projects on this scale, even under conditions of full peace and stability, require between 7 and 15 years for study, design, land acquisition, engineering work, and implementation. The port structures of Ashkelon or Haifa, and the existing pipelines in those areas, were designed only for limited domestic needs or small-scale regional transfers. Upgrading them to a level capable of bearing the traffic load of the Strait of Hormuz would, in terms of structural engineering and hydraulics, require a complete redesign of the coastal geography.

As a result, replacing the Strait of Hormuz with pipelines passing through Israel is less an engineering reality than an “energy utopia”, one that does not accord with the physical limitations of fluid flow, storage capacity, and the time realities of major infrastructure projects. The world of energy cannot alter its vital arteries on the basis of assumptions that examine transmission capacity only at a theoretical level.



# The Narrative of the Iranian Nation's Victory in the Ramadan War

**Author | Alireza Nasresfahani, faculty member of the Islamic Parliament Research Center**

It must be said that despite its multiple defeats in the Ramadan War, the enemy is constructing a narrative of victory for itself in the media space; but we did not create a public, attractive, dramatic, tangible, and pervasive narrative of our own victory, and we still do not believe in our own capability, the scale of our will, the power of our faith, and the Iranian nation.

The components of this narrative of victory are many, but a few obvious ones that, before this war, were not even believable for many of us are as follows:

- » **The resilience of the Iranian nation despite the martyrdom of their leader, children, scientists, ordinary people, and many military commanders;**
- » **The epic presence of the people in the streets for more than 20 nights during the holy month of Ramadan and the New Year despite the enemy's threats;**
- » **Fundamental blows to military bases and to America's hegemony in the region;**
- » **Control of the Strait of Hormuz despite pressure from America and its allies;**
- » **A change in the region's energy equations through striking gas facilities in Qatar;**
- » **The destruction of the myth of the power of American fighter jets and warships.**

It must be said that the narrative of the 1979 Revolution was independence, freedom, the Islamic Republic, and the departure of the American Shah from Iran, which Imam Khomeini set in motion on 1964.

The narrative of the Ramadan War and the 2026 revolution became clear and manifest with the martyrdom of Sayyid Ali Khamenei and the mobilization of the people to create a broad and public movement for the elimination of the Zionist regime in the region.

But Ayatollah Sayyid Ali Khamenei had foretold this movement 10 years ago, on 2015: "By Allah's favor and grace, nothing called the 'Zionist regime' will exist by 25 years from now." And with the martyrdom of our leader in 2026, it entered a new stage.

With the occurrence of the Ramadan War, a new era has begun in the world. The narrative of this era requires thousands of martyr-Avinis to narrate, to the world, to the region, and to the general public, the victory of the Iranian nation and the disgraceful defeat of America and the Zionist regime.

# The Strait of Hormuz in the Post-War Horizon

**Author | Hossein Ghaferi, Head of the Strategic Studies Think Tank of Iran and China and Member of the Scientific Council**

the Strait of Hormuz have once again highlighted the unparalleled role of this strategic passageway in global energy security and trade. Under such circumstances, it is essential that analyses and policy recommendations, with a deep, balanced, and forward-looking perspective, move beyond the level of short-term reactions and be organized within a sustainable and dependable framework.

The reality is that the Strait of Hormuz is not merely a maritime transit route; rather, it is part of a complex geopolitical and geoeconomic structure whose management requires the integration of security, legal, and economic considerations. From this perspective, any approach that reduces this position to short-term instruments or limited revenues may, in the long run, face challenges in terms of effectiveness and international acceptance.

During periods of crisis, the adoption of certain control measures for risk management and the provision of security is understandable. However, in the post-war horizon, moving toward mechanisms that are based on “predictability,” “confidence-building,” and “regional cooperation” will be of greater importance. International experience also shows that sustainability in the management of vital passageways depends, above all else, on creating a balance between national interests and the requirements of international shipping.

In this same context, paying attention to existing legal frameworks and striving to make intelligent use of their capacities can help strengthen Iran's position. Even in cases where legal disagreements exist, adopting an approach based on responsible interpretations aligned with international custom will help reduce tensions and increase the legitimacy of actions.

On the other hand, engagement with major actors such as Asian countries requires a precise understanding of their priorities. These countries generally seek stability, security, and the continuity of energy flows, and any increase in uncertainty may lead to the redefinition of routes and a reduction of dependence. Therefore, strengthening Iran's role as a “provider of security and facilitator of safe passage” can provide a suitable basis for the expansion of cooperation.

At the strategic level, three complementary orientations may be considered:

## » **Strengthening bilateral and regional cooperation**

Especially with countries such as Oman, with the aim of designing joint mechanisms for managing the strait and enhancing the safety and efficiency of shipping;

## » **Developing maritime and logistical services on the country's southern coasts**

In such a way that economic value creation is realized through the provision of sustainable and competitive services;

## » **Integrating the management of the strait into a broader corridor strategy**

That can strengthen Iran's role in connecting regional and transregional trade and energy networks.

Overall, the current conditions can be regarded as an opportunity to rethink the governance model of the Strait of Hormuz. Making optimal use of this opportunity requires avoiding short-term perspectives and moving toward an approach that, while preserving national interests, also contributes to regional stability and international confidence. Such an approach can consolidate Iran's position not merely as an influential actor, but as one of the principal pillars in shaping a stable order in this vital passageway.

# Why Does the United States Not Want the War to Expand to the Destruction of Energy Infrastructure?

Author | Mohammad Mehdi Ehsan Talab, Economic Diplomacy Studies Think Tank

## Introduction

Energy is a key input in production, the efficiency and scale of which depend on the extent of access to and the cost of energy resources. The global energy system has changed significantly since the early 1970s, and these rapid changes continue. The transition to clean energy, geopolitical tensions, and the growth of cyber threats have expanded the scope of the concept of energy security in the present era. Energy security is usually defined as the provision of a sufficient amount of energy in a reliable and affordable manner. Energy security can be analyzed from two different temporal perspectives:

- » **In the short term, this issue mainly relates to the ability to respond quickly to sudden changes in the balance of supply and demand;**
- » **In the long term, energy security deals with timely investments to supply energy in accordance with economic developments, technological changes, and environmental needs.**

Transformations in energy markets can shape geopolitical dynamics. In proportion to these transformations, the behavior of global powers has become a function of an interconnected chain of mutual global interests and their assessment of the outlook of new arenas of competition in energy industries. In this framework, and with attention to the main indicators used by the International Energy Agency for ranking countries in energy security performance in the field of oil and gas, these indicators being:

- » **dependence on imports;**
- » **diversity of supply;**
- » **storage and inventories;**
- » **continuity of supply and economic significance.**

Considering the balance that the Islamic Republic of Iran established in the Ramadan War based on a decisive and immediate response to any aggression by the United States against the country's infrastructure, as a result of which all energy infrastructure in West Asia become legitimate targets for destruction by Iran, it is possible, on the basis of the reasons mentioned below, to analyze the causes of the United States' unwillingness to expand the war to the destruction of the region's energy infrastructure:

- » **The intertwined interests of global powers in ensuring the security of the global energy supply chain;**
- » **Strengthening Russia's position by removing competitors from the oil and gas market;**
- » **The vast hydrocarbon industry and the clean energy chain under China's domination;**
- » **Limited strategic reserves;**
- » **The importance of preserving the global petrodollar system for the United States.**

## Conclusion

Traditional risks related to the supply of fossil fuels are changing, but they are not disappearing. Efficient markets, along with safety nets such as the spare capacity of key producers and the coordinated oil stockpiling system of the International Energy Agency, have helped countries cope with disruptions in supply and demand. But the emergence of a hard and long-term disruption at the origin of the energy supply chain is not an issue that can be solved by spare production capacity or strategic reserves. Assessing energy security is a complex process that requires analysis of technical, economic, and political considerations. Technical issues relate to the technology of energy production and transmission, technology that determines physical risks, substitutability among different primary energy resources, as well as investment requirements and duration. Economic aspects revolve around the level and fluctuation of energy costs, which are related to the affordability of energy and market regulation. These aspects also deal with financing energy investments and encouraging innovation to improve reliability and affordability and to minimize environmental impacts. In this framework, considering the above-mentioned reasons, the probability that the ongoing conflicts will enter a phase of widespread damage to the region’s energy production infrastructure is low. Ensuring global energy security, as one of the pillars of preserving the United States petrodollar system, is of strategic importance for this country.



# Iran Holds the Upper Hand in the War over Energy Infrastructure

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With the enemy threatening energy infrastructure and putting those threats into action through bombardment against the power grid, fuel storage tanks, the oil export terminal located on Kharg Island, and Iran's gas extraction and refining fields, the war has, from the third week onward, entered the phase of energy infrastructure and is intensifying. Since the purpose and ultimate objective of this battle is to disable the country's essential services, including transportation, production, and the people's basic necessities, the country that will prevail in this war is therefore the one that possesses greater resilience than the others.

To assess the resilience of countries, multiple indicators can be taken into account: diversity in the final energy consumption mix, the share of the energy sector in the national budget and economy, dependence on the presence of foreign companies in the energy sector, and diversity in trade routes and access to open waters are all indicators that can show the degree of countries' resilience against the targeting of energy infrastructure.

Although, in terms of diversity in the energy basket, there is considerable dependence on natural gas, and likewise the energy sector has a significant share in Iran's economy, Iran has, by relying on indigenous knowledge and strategic cooperation with the independent powers of the world, managed to reduce its dependence on Western companies, especially American ones, to a minimum; an issue that, under wartime conditions, constitutes a major strength. By contrast, countries such as the UAE, Bahrain, and the Zionist regime, because of their technical and managerial reliance on Washington, would face the paralysis of their infrastructure if Western personnel and specialists were to withdraw. In recent years, Iran has also sought, by pursuing the resistance economy, to localize the production of many needed consumer goods and reduce its dependence on foreign countries, especially in energy equipment.

Most importantly, Iran's unique geographical position, which provides simultaneous access to northern and southern open waters and extensive borders with the independent countries of the Eurasian sphere, enables the country to keep its economic and energy cycle active by changing trade routes and bypassing wartime restrictions. Therefore, in the war over energy infrastructure, which is now refraining from extending into the power generation sector, the combination of "technical independence," "the resistance economy," and "unique geopolitics" has given Iran the upper hand and enabled it to preserve, for a longer period of time than enemies dependent on the West, the capacity to manage the crisis and continue the war.



# Israel’s Strategic Failure in Eliminating Resistance Leaders

**Author | Abrar Moaser Tehran Research Institute**

Certainly, one of the most frequently used security terms in Israel is “targeted assassination,” which was carried out by Zionist groups against Palestinians even before its occupation and illegitimate establishment. How a person enters the assassination list and, so to speak, how a “red slip” is signed for him, has its own mechanism, which there is no room to address here now (Abrar Moaser Tehran Research Institute dealt with this subject in detail in a comprehensive report in Mehr 1402). But one of the most important analytical questions regarding the assassination of a person is the consequences of eliminating him. This assessment of consequences becomes even more serious if the subject of the assassination holds a position of leadership and command.

In the history of Israeli assassinations, there are at least two targeted operations against leaders that were later accompanied by a kind of strategic regret. What follows is an excerpt from the book *Rise and Kill First*, written by Ronen Bergman, which may be regarded as the most distinctive book in the field of Israeli assassination operations. Bergman, in two sections of this book, points to the strategic consequences of the assassination of Abu Jihad, commander of the military and security branch of the Fatah movement, and the assassination of Sayyed Abbas al-Musawi, the former Secretary-General of Hezbollah in Lebanon. Reading these two excerpts, in these days of war and assassination, is not without value, and in some cases, it can provide much food for thought for the future.

Abu Jihad, the senior security and military figure of the Palestine Liberation Organization in Tunisia, was assassinated in 1998 in Tunisia. This operation was carried out with planning by Mossad and the participation of Aman, Shayetet 13 (the naval commando unit), and Sayeret Matkal (the army’s elite commando unit). Bergman writes regarding the consequences of this assassination:

As time passed, many of the Israelis who participated in the operation now regret it. Some believe that Abu Jihad’s powerful presence had a restraining and calming effect on Arafat, and that his voice would have been very useful after the establishment of the “Palestinian Authority” in 1994. If the charismatic and popular Abu Jihad had remained alive, perhaps Hamas would not have been able to consolidate its position and take hold of large sections of Palestinian public opinion.

With the elimination of Abu Jihad, the possibility of Fatah influencing the Stone Intifada was effectively lost, and Islamist Hamas, with a discourse different from and more dangerous than that of Fatah, entered the arena of struggle against Israel.

Operation Night Time was designed to gather intelligence on Sayyed Abbas al-Musawi, the former Secretary-General of Hezbollah in Lebanon, and apparently with the intention of abducting him, but due to changing field requirements and the target being within reach, it turned into a targeted assassination operation. Aman and the Israeli army air forces were the principal executors of this operation, and in the end, Sayyed Abbas al-Musawi was martyred in February 1992 along with his wife and son. Bergman writes regarding the consequences of this assassination:

Within Israel, before the attack was carried out, no serious discussion had taken place regarding what would happen after the death of [Sayyed Abbas] Musawi [the Secretary-General of Hezbollah in Lebanon]. In their view, there was no significant difference among the various members of Hezbollah, and no one bothered to ask who would probably succeed Musawi and whether this succession would be better for

Israel or not. One of the officers who was serving in Aman at the time says: "From our point of view, they were all black" [...] If the Israelis had somehow imagined that Hezbollah would become moderate by killing Musawi, Nasrallah's propaganda activities quickly disabused them of this mistake. Compared with Musawi, Nasrallah was considered an extreme radical figure. [After some time] it became clear that even black itself has its own spectrum; Nasrallah was blacker than black [...] Nasrallah had loosened Mughniyeh's restraints; and the retaliation for Musawi's assassination came very quickly. As soon as the funeral ceremony of the slain leader ended, Hezbollah fighters fired a barrage of rockets toward the Western Galilee. For 5 consecutive days, they bombarded Israel's northern settlements... In Mughniyeh's view, the battlefield was global. He wanted to rewrite the rules of the game: any attack on any important Hezbollah figure would bring about a response, and not only in the place that he and Nasrallah called the "region," meaning Israel and Lebanon, but outside the region as well, meaning attacks on Israeli and Jewish targets throughout the world.



# Redefining Iran's National Brand in the Regional War: Transition from the Anholt Model to the Resistance Pattern

**Author | Marzieh Babaei, Head of the Governance Office of the Iran National Brand Think Tank**

The Ramadan War against Iran and the U.S.-Israel coalition, with the synergy of Jewish Zionism, Christian Zionism, and Islamic Zionism, will not only be an existential challenge, but also a geopolitical complexity with deep consequences for Iran's national brand.

Traditional models of nation branding, especially Simon Anholt's classical model, which is focused on six components, tourism, exports, policy, investment, culture, and people, lose the capacity to construct and present an effective strategy under conditions of various kinds of hybrid warfare and identity and security war. This note seeks to state, in a reasoned way, that Iran's national brand in the context of confrontation with Western hegemony, especially in the scenario of regional war, follows a unique framework that can be called the model of revolutionary and popular resistance.

Classical models such as Anholt's are designed, on the basis of competitive advantage-making at various levels, to attract tourists, capital, and promote a positive mental image. This model has fundamental deficiencies in confronting the Ramadan War. Under conditions of cognitive as well as direct conflict, components such as tourism and foreign investment approach zero, and this shows the collapse of the soft components of this model.

In this space, the function of public diplomacy is activated in a changed form, and public diplomacy is transformed from soft cultural interactions into a war of narratives. Also, the Anholt model emphasizes constructing an independent identity, whereas in the midst of war one can rely on othering; that is, national identity has the capacity to be redefined in confrontation with the hostile other, America and Israel and even some homeland-selling diaspora. Just as the martyred Leader of the Revolution, on one of the days of the eight-year Sacred Defense, in response to a fighter's question about the conformity of Iran and Islam, had stated, and in the arena of this very war today it can be seen concretely that homeland is one with Islam, even if some do not like it.

Alternative theoretical framework: the model of the national brand of revolutionary and popular resistance Iran's national brand under the present conditions operates on the basis of the resistance market. This model has five main components that replace Anholt's six-sided dimensions:

Highlighting the component of endurance, instead of ordinary cultural diplomacy:

» Iran must, in continuity with the context of its several-thousand-year civilizational heritage, focus on the narrative of the last bastion of resistance against the order of domination. This narrative, among nations with an anti-colonial background and the resistance front, has created symbolic capital, traces of which during the 12-day war of 1404 could be seen in the elite spaces of these countries and on social networks;

» Highlighting the component of Iranian symbolic power in replacing the export component: Iranian goods, especially defense products and strategic technologies, acquire added value in minds not because of price or pure quality, but because of the symbol of national self-belief and standing against sanctions;

- » The component of aligned geography: This component, instead of attracting investment under conditions of sanctions and war, has good capacity to create economic and security pacts with aligned actors;
- » The component of the sphere of public opinion: In the present space, the component of the sphere of public opinion should correctly replace attracting tourists; that is, the physical tourist should turn into a virtual tourist and a sympathetic audience.
- » The component of the people as actor in the resistance model: The people of Iran, in the final statements of the martyred Imam, were described as a nation that knows its Islamic and Shiite lessons well and knows what to do, and in his main recommendation, he regarded timeliness and timely presence as the important matter, which shows the livingness of the nation in the context of this Revolution. This livingness proceeds in the context of agency, and the dimensions of social resilience in the intellectual apparatus of a living and timely nation themselves become the principal component of deterrence and the reproduction of the national brand.



# Redefining the Concept of “Arab Security” in the Shadow of the Ramadan War

**Author | Abrar Moaser Tehran International Studies and Research Institute**

Since the beginning of the aggression by the United States and the Zionist regime against our country, and Iran’s response, which has been accompanied by targeting American bases in surrounding countries, discussion in the Arab world regarding the necessity of redefining the discourse of national security and the security of the Arab world has once again become a focus of attention among the elites of these countries.

While many are trying to present Tehran as an “other” and a threat to the security of the Arab world, some experienced Arab experts are attempting, through a precise analysis of the nature of the recent battle, to draw a realistic picture of the future of security for the Arab countries in the shadow of the efforts by Tel Aviv and Washington to consolidate their hegemony in the coming regional order.

For example, Abdullah Baabood, pointing to America’s support for Israel in the Gaza war and its alliance with this regime in the attack on Iran, despite the advice of the leaders of the Arab world, expresses his concern over the exclusion of the Arabs from the future equations of the region. Mohamed ElBaradei, the former Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency, also believes that whatever the outcome of the Iran war may be, the biggest losers will be the countries of the Arab world. He goes on, in a warning tone, to add: if there is no serious reconsideration at the political, economic, and military levels, and in the axes of national, domestic, foreign, regional, and international security of the Arab world, we will have no place at the negotiating table; rather, we will be part of the menu on the table.

Meanwhile, Abdullah Al-Nafisi, the well-known Kuwaiti analyst, by explaining Iran’s war within the framework of China-U.S. competition, describes the goal of the recent battle as Trump’s attempt to cut China’s vital oil artery from Hormuz, and adds that Netanyahu and Trump want the Gulf countries to intervene in order to join this war against Iran, but we must avoid this. Al-Nafisi further, referring to the consequences of the present battle for the security of the countries of the Arab world, has called for the formation of a “Gulf Confederation.”

The foregoing analyses indicate that Arab elites are aware of the nature of the “Ramadan War,” and on this basis, they are trying, by warning the leaders of the Arab world, to encourage them to reconsider the concept of national security and common Arab security.

# Review of the Situation of the Zionist Regime

**Author | By the Iran Think Tanks Network (ITTN) and the International and Strategic Analysis Center (IAS Center)**

With 15 days having passed since the war began, the Zionist regime, with the aim of pressuring the Islamic Republic, has directed its targets toward military sites as well as police centers in order, in its own view, to pave the way for regime change. With the targeting of the oil depot of the Shahr Rey refinery and the oil depots of some areas of Tehran, the war has entered a new equation. The targeting of Tehran's oil storage tanks has shifted the equation of war toward economic infrastructure. The beginning of this equation is in Tehran, but it is not clear that its end will be confined to Tehran. Now both sides have been placed in an important test and seek to increase the cost for the other side and make the blow more painful.

The Zionist regime, with an area of more than 22,000 square kilometers, is one-seventy-fifth the size of Iran. The smallness of its area has resulted in less geographical dispersion of infrastructure and its concentration within a limited geography. Also, the nature of the regime's industrial and water policymaking has led to centralization and dependence on limited infrastructure. This means that if one piece of infrastructure is targeted in war, the entire regime will be disrupted.

## » Water Infrastructure

The Zionist regime, with an average annual rainfall of less than 250 millimeters, is among the territories facing severe water stress. In order to overcome the structural water scarcity crisis, this country depends on two options, both of which are costly: Water transfer from the Jordan River and the upper reaches of Lake Tiberias; Large-scale seawater desalination.

## » Gas Infrastructure

The Zionist regime has multiple gas fields in the gas sector. Gas fields such as "Leviathan," "Tamar," and "Karish" are among the most important exploitable gas fields: Leviathan gas field; Tamar gas field; Karish gas field.

## » Oil Infrastructure

The Zionist regime depends on imports to supply the oil needed by its refineries. This regime also imports refined products, which are consumed as fuel in the occupied territories and in some cases are re-exported. The key ports for importing crude oil and refined products are the ports of Ashkelon (Asqalan), Ashdod, and Haifa. Also, due to the insecurity created in Ashkelon as a result of Operation al-Aqsa Flood, the Port of Eilat, which is connected to Ashdod through a pipeline, has also been used in recent years for crude oil imports.

Given the position of the Zionist regime, it is heavily dependent on imports by sea; moreover, it does not have a pipeline for importing oil from neighboring countries. Given that it has a relatively large air force, there is substantial overlap between its civilian and military fuel supply chains.

## » Oil Refineries

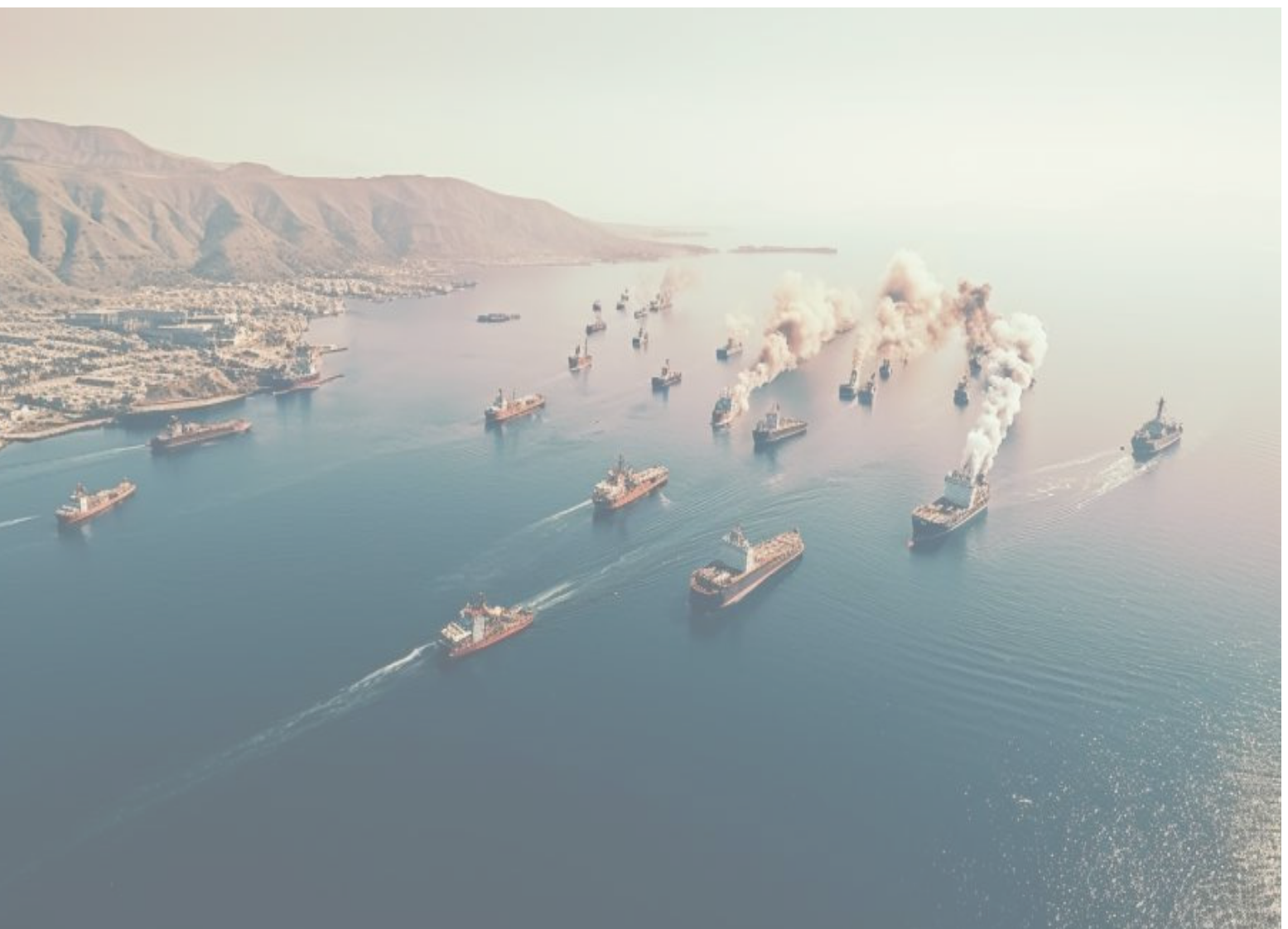
**» The regime's oil refineries, in terms of number, are fewer than the fingers of one hand. The two important refineries of the Zionist regime bear the main burden of oil refining in the occupied territories .**

## » Electricity Infrastructure

The Zionist regime has more than 25,000 megawatts of electricity generation capacity and supplies this amount of electricity through 70 small and large power plants. The major fuel for these power plants depends on natural gas, which is supplied through three gas fields: Leviathan; Tamar; Aphrodite.

According to reports, in 2023 the regime’s electricity generation power plants supplied more than 70 percent of their fuel through natural gas.

**Conclusion: The Scenario of Entering the Infrastructure Equation Has Transregional Consequences**  
Despite having multiple infrastructures, if the Zionist regime enters the equation of infrastructure war, it will have very low resilience compared to Iran. Due to its limited geographical area, the concentration of infrastructure, and its heavy dependence on certain focal infrastructures such as desalination stations and refineries, the smallest blow to one of these vital points will disrupt life in the occupied territories and make the situation for war-stricken residents even more critical. In previous wars involving the Zionist regime, such as on October 7, with the start of Hezbollah’s operation from the north, the Zionist regime tried to create a psychological atmosphere in order to normalize the situation in the north of the occupied territories and the areas adjacent to the Gaza Strip. Now, if it enters an infrastructure war in which the first blow disrupts daily life for residents, tension in this equation will most likely end in Iran’s favor



# A Conceptual Reflection on the Steadfastness of the Iranian Person at Historical Turning Points

**Author | Hamid Abedi, Director of the Iran National Branding Strategic Studies Think Tank**

At a time when the heavy shadow of war has fallen over Iran, familiar political and social boundaries lose their function, and new fault lines begin to form within the layers of society. These new boundaries are no longer defined on the basis of claims or everyday political affiliations; rather, the main criterion here is standing firm, standing firm at the moment when being present and remaining comes with cost and danger. It is precisely from within this lived and difficult experience that one can speak of the birth of a renewed concept: patriotism.

Here, patriotism goes beyond the legal and civil definition of citizenship. Citizenship is a legal-administrative concept tied above all to geography and identity papers, but patriotism, in this sense, is a moral position and a conscious choice to safeguard the existence of one's home. A patriot is someone who, in the midst of crises, does not abandon the homeland, neither physically, nor mentally, nor in his or her public stance.

In the recent wartime conditions, this distinction has manifested itself in concrete terms. The principal divide is no longer between supporters and opponents of a political system, but between those who regard the preservation of the country's existence as the precondition for any reform or change, and those who consider its collapse or weakening justifiable or even desirable. Patriot is the name for the first group: those who prefer standing firm, with all its costs, to departure, passivity, or alignment with external pressure.

Patriotism is not limited to a particular profession, class, or lifestyle. The concept encompasses a spectrum of actions:

A patriot is that Iranian emigrant who, at the height of warnings and threats, chooses the road back to his homeland, because he knows that his identity loses its full meaning outside this geography.

A patriot is that military serviceman who, fully aware of mortal danger, stands at air-defense stations and accepts responsibility for defending collective security.

A patriot is the ordinary person who, despite round-the-clock anxiety, preserves the flow of life and maintains a presence in public spaces in order to show that Iranian society is not empty of will and is not passive.

A patriot is that doctor, worker, teacher, and student who turns his or her daily work, under these turbulent conditions, into part of a resilient national resistance.

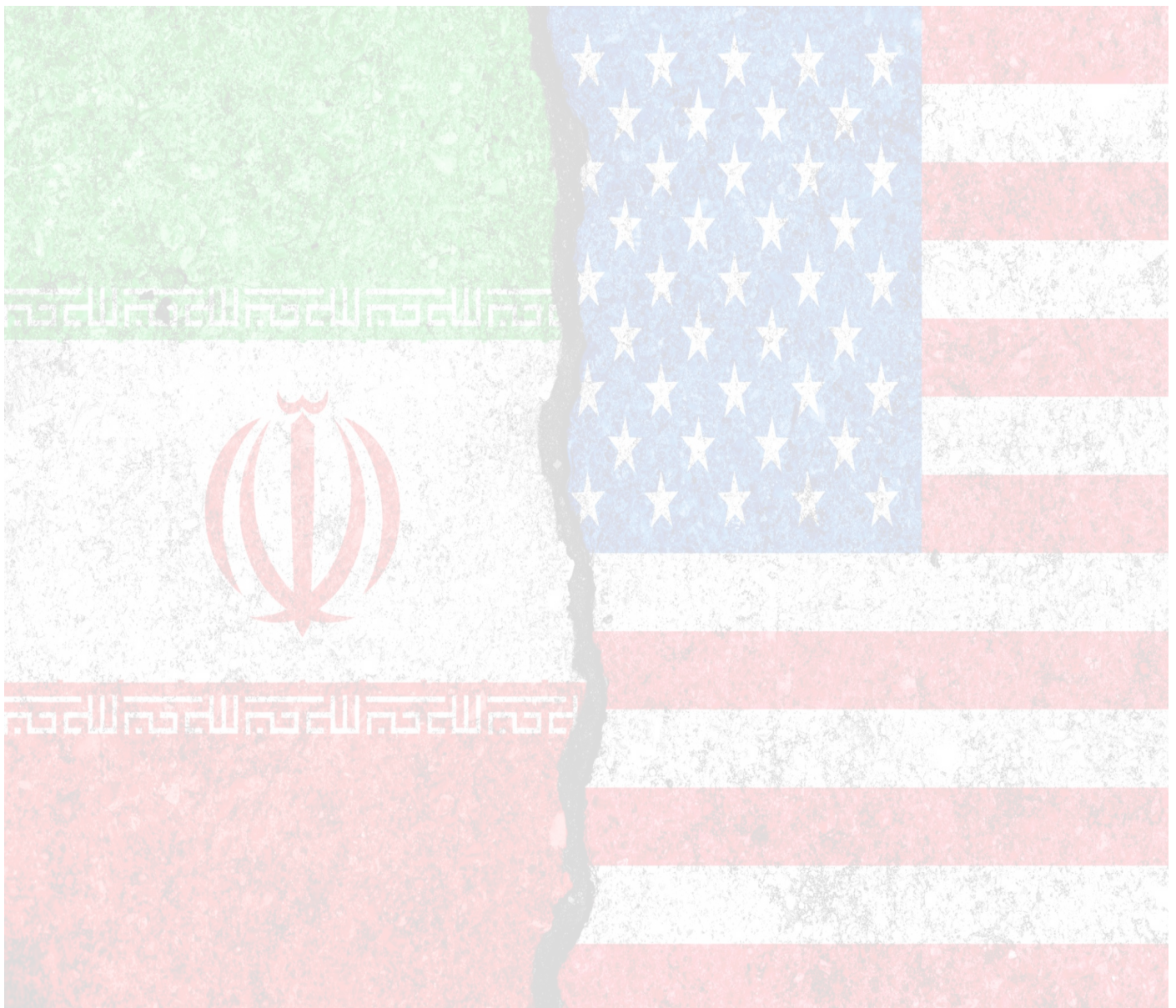
What all these actions share is not heroism, but the acceptance of responsibility at the very moment when withdrawal would be easier.

The important point is that patriotism in no way means the negation of criticism or the denial of accumulated suffering. The difference lies here: a patriot has reached the understanding and political maturity to give meaning to criticism within the framework of preserving the home. From this perspective, no internal disagreement can justify welcoming an external threat or the destruction of the country's infrastructure, because reform presupposes something called survival.

If we turn to Iran's historical memory, and even that of other nations, what remains is the names of those

who clarified their position in moments of danger. History does not record rootless citizens; it remembers patriots, those who stood firm, not necessarily those who were right.

In this sense, patriotism is not an emotional or propagandistic term for exaggerated hero-making. Rather, it is a call to return to national responsibility within the framework of understanding a particular historical condition. It is a term for naming the divide that today has become more decisive than any ordinary political divide: the divide between standing and not standing. At this sensitive juncture, each person, in accordance with his or her own position, can determine the path ahead by asking one simple question: “If this home is harmed, where in history do I stand?” The answer to that question makes clear the boundary between passivity and joining the ranks of the patriots.



# An Appropriate Response to the Attacks on Iran's Oil and Gas Facilities

**Author | Arman Shahcheraghi, Gharar Think Tank**

Following the enemy's American-Zionist attacks on several oil depots in Tehran on 16 Esfand, the 27 Esfand attack by the coalition of the Zionist regime and the United States on part of the South Pars gas facilities must be regarded as a significant escalation in the attacks on Iran's oil and gas facilities. Under such conditions, in addition to the blows themselves and the direct pressure resulting from them, it appears that the enemy has sought to define the battlefield in the domain of "energy infrastructure."

Retaliatory attacks on the enemy's oil and gas facilities are certainly a necessary and unavoidable response to the enemy front as a whole, but specifically with regard to the Zionist regime, although its fundamental vulnerability in this domain is clearer than the noonday sun, its parasitic existence must not be forgotten in the analyses, and the dust of war must not cause us to be merely forced into defensive reactions on terrain defined by the enemy.

With this point in mind, at the very least based on the logic of "an eye for an eye," this question must be raised: what domain is for the regime equivalent to the oil and gas domain for Iran?

Oil and gas constitute about one-fourth of Iran's gross domestic product and half of its exports, and they are the country's most important industry and the pillar of its economy. Fortunately, finding the equivalent of this industry for the Zionist regime is not complicated: the advanced technologies industry constitutes about one-fifth of the regime's gross domestic product and more than half of its exports, and it is the only option that, in a strategic equation, can be set against Iran's oil and gas. Of course, long before the current conflict, we had already received numerous blows from the products of this industry, and even aside from the current equation, the regime owes us a heavy debt in this regard.

To inflict an effective blow on the regime's advanced technologies industry in the space of the current conflict, it appears that striking in three areas is highly necessary:

- » **Data exchange and processing infrastructure, including data centers, submarine cables, booster stations, and their connections. These facilities, in which enormous investments have been made, also play a pivotal role in supporting the regime's military operations, and the effects of serious disruption to them would be visible in the shortest possible time, although repairing them may be less challenging than in the other two cases;**
- » **The semiconductor industry, which is a strategic and fragile domain in the American-Zionist front. Companies such as "Intel," "Nvidia," "Annapurna," "Flex," "Tower," and "Samsung" have important production lines and facilities in the occupied territories, and striking them would have significant medium-term effects;**
- » **The infrastructure of incubators, accelerators, and research and development centers, on whose facilities enormous investments have in some cases been made. Striking these centers, in addition to material losses, would affect the security of multinational companies and fugitive Zionist elites, and would have long-term effects on the regime's technology ecosystem.**

# Rethinking the Architecture of Regional Collective Security; the Shared Mission of Think Tanks and Thinkers of Southwest Asia

**Authors | Alireza Nasr Esfahani, faculty member of the Majlis Research Center of Iran**

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## **Collapse of the imported order**

The developments in the Southwest Asia region over these past decades show that the conceptual model for administering the region by the United States has reached the end of its path. The conceptual model for administering the region since the war with Saddam has been such that America would receive an important share of the benefits of the Arab countries under the pretext of providing security, and from that very source it would provide billions of dollars in non-repayable military aid to Israel in order to guarantee the regime’s unquestioned superiority over all the countries of the region. Parallel to that, the policy of creating fear of Iran and making Muslim brothers pessimistic toward one another provided sufficient motivation among the Arabs for presence in this campaign.

## **Structural contradiction and the sacrificing of regional security**

Today it has become clear that in America’s security doctrine, Israel’s security is a “strategic priority” and the security of the Arab countries is merely an “economic market.” By officially publishing the launch positions for ground attack by HIMARS systems against Iran from the soil of Arab countries, and also attack on Iran’s energy infrastructure, the United States is trying to force Iran into damaging America’s military bases in Arab countries. This recklessness shows that Washington is willing to sacrifice the security of the region to the regime’s geopolitical interests. The very countries that spend billions of dollars every year to buy security from America.

## **The necessity of Track II Diplomacy and the role of think tanks**

With the failure of transatlantic security patterns, it is not fitting that the future plan for administering this region should still be drawn up in Western think tanks. Sustainable security is the product of internal convergence, and this historical mission now rests on the shoulders of the think institutions and elites of the Southwest Asia region to enter the field through “Track II Diplomacy.”

The history of think-tank diplomacy in the world shows that informal elite networks are the most efficient tool for reducing security misperceptions and designing indigenous architecture. The most prominent example of this mechanism is the Valdai Discussion Club in Russia. The Valdai Club was able, by creating an international network of policy researchers, academics, and senior officials, to create an informal but highly influential platform for producing strategic literature, bringing opposing viewpoints closer together, and shaping independent foreign policy.

On the horizon ahead, rethinking regional security will be realized only when the initiative is transferred from the think rooms of Washington and London to the dialogue tables of Tehran, Baghdad, Muscat, Doha, Riyadh, and Dubai. In this historical transition, think tanks will be not only analysts, but also the architects of the new Middle East order.

## Designing the mechanism of the “Southwest Asia Dialogue Chamber”

Inspired by successful models such as Valdai, Iran’s major and reputable think tanks, by changing their approach toward strategic agency, should facilitate the establishment of the “Southwest Asia Dialogue Chamber.” This mechanism can be designed on the basis of the following axes:

» **The formation of networked dialogues:**

An institutionalized connection among the strategic think tanks of Iran, Iraq, Oman, Qatar, and the other countries on the margins of the Persian Gulf for the production of a shared security literature;

» **Elite meetings:**

Holding international conferences with the presence of strategists, former officials, and intellectual leaders of the region for transition from “imported and weapons-centered security” to “collective and development-centered security”;

» **Production of indigenous policy knowledge:**

Presenting operational solutions for neutralizing extra-regional divisiveness and explaining the mutual dependence of the energy, food, pharmaceutical, and defense security of all the countries of the region upon one another.



# Marine Insurance in the Strait of Hormuz: A Soft and Legitimate Tool for Implementing the New Order

**Author | Iran Think Tanks Network (ITAN)**

The Islamic Republic of Iran, with the aim of pressuring the American-Zionist enemy, has now closed the strategic Strait of Hormuz. This action will directly cause an increase in energy prices in global markets and make it impossible for the Persian Gulf littoral states to export oil. Although Iran's initial objective in taking this measure is to pressure the enemy, the continuation of this trend, because its consequences extend to non-belligerent countries and cause them harm, will create the conditions for political pressure on the Islamic Republic of Iran. In order to move toward the attainment of a new global order, it is necessary to manage such political pressures and regulate relations with strategic partners.

At present, the country's armed forces are allowing only Iranian and Chinese vessels to pass through the strait. This rule-setting method, adopted in accordance with wartime conditions, cannot continue in the long term or under peacetime conditions, because it relies extensively on military instruments and involves a high, yet unpredictable, level of risk. Therefore, a failure to adapt the rules to a prolonged war and to peacetime conditions will sustain general disruption in navigation through the Strait of Hormuz and, in global perception, transform the Islamic Republic of Iran from a force that creates order and provides security into a source of regional insecurity.

The experience of rules applied exclusively through military operations by Ansar Allah in Yemen in the Red Sea shows the same thing: because the rules were not adapted to changing conditions, even after the end of the Gaza war and the public announcement by Ansar Allah of a ceasefire and a halt to operations, shipping in the Red Sea has still not returned to normal. Therefore, in order to make the rules proportionate, it is necessary to employ soft tools so as to create a distinction between legitimate and illegitimate shipping flows in the Strait of Hormuz. Under the protection of the armed forces' full awareness of information concerning passing vessels, the military instrument can then continue to serve as the enforcement mechanism for these soft rules and as the means of dealing with violators. Through this measure, the risks associated with passage through the strait become measurable for shipping companies, while the military instrument is used in the direction of forming a new security order and establishing full oversight over the Strait of Hormuz.

Since insurance is recognized as a tool for risk assessment and control in maritime navigation, the Islamic Republic of Iran, drawing on its previous experience in the insurance industry during the sanctions period and on the insurance capacities already existing within the country, can enforce its soft rules in the Strait of Hormuz through the instrument of marine insurance. In order to implement this tool:

- » **The Islamic Republic of Iran determines the criteria for linkage with hostile countries;**
- » **The Islamic Republic of Iran announces that, relying on its own capabilities and with the participation of the insurance industry of aligned countries, it will henceforth provide marine war-risk insurance in the Strait of Hormuz to the legitimate flow of trade;**
- » **Vessels seeking passage through this strategic chokepoint will purchase war-risk insurance in order to cover their risks. This step will constitute the Islamic Republic's new equation in the matter of economic sanctions;**
- » **Companies providing war-risk insurance, after reviewing the applicants' information and provided**

that they are not deemed connected to the declared hostile countries, will issue war-risk policies.

Accordingly, under the Iranian order governing the Strait of Hormuz, vessels passing through this route will fall into three categories:

- » Vessels linked to aligned countries: they will pass with ease and under the supervision of this order;
- » Vessels linked to non-belligerent countries: the insurance tariff can be used as a tool to encourage their alignment with the policies of the Islamic Republic of Iran. If vessels linked to non-belligerent countries fail to obtain insurance coverage and exchange information, they will be subject to detention and inspection;
- » Vessels linked to hostile countries: they will be regarded as targets by the armed forces and will not be eligible for war-risk insurance coverage.

Given that the risks of vessel passage are covered by the insurance institutions of the Islamic Republic of Iran, while at the same time the security of this strait is ensured, or threatened, by the armed forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the risk coefficient of this insurance for insurance companies will be zero, and its assurance value for passing vessels will be 100 percent.



**STRAIT OF HORMUZ**

We are committed to facilitating meaningful stakeholder engagement and contributing to Iran's policy development processes. Through our diverse portfolio of events, publications, and research initiatives, we seek to address critical challenges facing Iranian society and to provide evidence-based recommendations for policy improvement.

Our collaboration with the Iran Think Tanks Community further strengthens our capacity to reach broader audiences and to contribute to the collective advancement of policy research in Iran. We remain dedicated to maintaining the highest standards of academic excellence while ensuring that our research outputs remain relevant, practical, and actionable for policy practitioners.

Looking ahead, we will continue to expand our research portfolio, strengthen our partnerships, and enhance our contribution to Iran's policy development ecosystem. We sincerely thank all our collaborators, participants, and supporters whose engagement makes these achievements possible.



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