

From Shadow War to Hybrid Confrontation: The Transformation of Iran Israel Rivalry in the Middle East

Arooj Fatima ^{1*} Aneez Fatima ² Muhammad Usman Ikram ³

¹ BS Scholar, Department of International Relations, Government College University Faisalabad, Punjab, Pakistan.

Email: 144arooj@gmail.com

² BS Scholar, Department of International Relations, Government College University Faisalabad, Punjab, Pakistan.

Email: faneeza421@gmail.com

³ Investigating Officer, Directorate of Intelligence and Investigation - Inland Revenue, Faisalabad, Punjab, Pakistan.

Email: musabhutta2014@gmail.com

ABSTRACT: One of the oldest and complicated wars in the Middle East is war between Iran and Israel with the ultimate causes of Political, Religious and Territorial Quibbles. The geopolitical balance in the Middle East was altered after the 2025 Iran-Israeli war, and it became evident that international diplomacy is fragile and the liberal process of diplomacy in dealing with the nuclear issue is weak. The war, which lasted for twelve days, also reintroduced the question of anticipatory self-defense to discussion and also resulted in doubts about the viability of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) as the model for preventing any nuclear activity because of Israel's Operation Rising Lion and Iran's Operation True Promise 3. The paper reflects the impact of the conflict on the natural nature of the relations between regional actors, and how it has questioned the pertinence of international institutions created to advance peace, in the context of liberal institutionalism. Other powers, such as the United States, Russia and China, also played a role and the possibility of escalation created by the nuclear ambitions of Islamic Iran is also discussed. The basics of the conflict and stability to the region are to be achieved through further diplomatic efforts and improved regional cooperation as underscored in the paper.

KEYWORDS: Middle East Security, Israel-Iran tension, Nuclear Ambition, Proxy Wars, Cyber Warfare, Islamic Revolution

Introduction

Middle East has been one of the regions of collision of various conflicts, such as sectarianism and external intervention, and hence it is one of the geopolitically sensitive regions of the world. In that context, the war between Iran and Israel has become one of the largest wars of the 21st century. This competition has been intensifying in recent years, and both sides have been steadily ratcheting up the showdown through direct actions and cyber-attacks, as well as deterrence. Prior to the Iranian revolution of 1979, there was a relatively good relationship between Iran and Israel. The shah of Iran, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, recognized Israel and even shared in trade and intelligence with Israel (Naqvi, 2024).

After the revolution, which converted Iran into an Islamic Republic under the rule of Ayatollah Khamenei, Iran adopted this Anti-Israel stance, which included the suggestion to destroy the Zionist Regime. Such competition has

Pages: 60 – 69

Volume: 5

Issue: 8 (August 2026)

Corresponding Author

Arooj Fatima

✉ 144arooj@gmail.com

Cite this Article: Fatima, A., Fatima, A., & Ikram, M. U. (2026). From Shadow War to Hybrid Confrontation: The Transformation of Iran Israel Rivalry in the Middle East. *The Regional Tribune*, 5(8), 60-69. <https://doi.org/10.55737/trt/v-viii.381>

manifested itself more by proxy warfare and asymmetric warfare in the Middle East. Iran is found to be playing proxy games through non-state militant groups, such as the Houthis in Yemen, Shia militias in Iraq and Syria, Hezbollah in Lebanon and Hamas in Gaza, in order to gain influence and intimidation in the region. The Nuclear Program in Tehran further increased the competition that was hitherto existing between Iran and Israel since the Israelis viewed this as a threat to their existence. In response to this perceived danger, Israel has resorted to covert military activities geared towards the sabotage of Iran's nuclear program, such as the Stuxnet Attack of 2010 against Uranium enrichment at Natanz (Sahani, 2025).

Iran's Nuclear Scientists have also been targeted for assassination by Israel. These have been made to ensure Iran's attempts to develop a viable nuclear weapon are hampered. In June 2025, the war between Iran and Israel escalated to a higher level as Israel opened a significant air campaign against Iranian targets, and a significant change in the direction of indirect confrontation occurred, and hostilities escalated. The United States was now directly engaged in the war with precision airstrikes on Iran's Isfahan, Fordow and Natanz Nuclear facilities (Liu, 2025). The U.S. is still very much involved, providing military aid for Israel and threatening Iran in the context of economic sanctions. It proves that it was not aimed at delaying but perhaps even diminishing the strategic strength of the Islamic Republic.

The Israel-Iran conflict has, however, always been inextricably bound up with the shifting alliances in the Middle East, with which country is on the right side of the conflict and which on the wrong. This competition is a magnificent one in overcoming bilateral conflict and has an impact on the political and security framework in the entire region. The Iranian government has always emphasised its support for the Palestinian issue, and it has played a prominent role in the Palestinian movement of resistance in this Southern region, in the pursuit of its broader strategic objectives. Israel has been strengthening ties with Arab Gulf nations, particularly with the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Bahrain and Saudi Arabia (KSA), especially since the signing of the Abraham Accords, as Iran's influence has grown in the region in the coalition dubbed the Axis of Resistance, which encompasses Syria, Hezbollah and Houthis (Otubu & Efebeh, 2024). This change in the balance has sped up the militarisation rates, the creation of new arms races and even the involvement of outside players such as Russia and China, who are eager to capitalise on the change of balance.

Indirectly, the competition has turned the Middle East into a humanitarian crisis, given the displacement of millions of people and the instability of countries like Syria, Yemen and Gaza, due to the ongoing proxy wars and foreign interventions in the region. Since one of the world's largest oil reserves is in the Middle East, the region has a direct impact on the world's energy and economic balance. The already fragile Iran-Israel conflict is set to impact the key chokepoint, the Strait of Hormuz, in terms of trade and maritime security. The Israel-Iran conflict is not a historical conflict but a geopolitical one, and should be viewed in all of its context. In the past, the essence of long-term antagonism was an ideological and territorial conflict. Today, the military technology and development of nuclear weapons, and the character of the world powers, have caused the conflict points to increase and the character of the confrontation to change. This two-pronged approach would be crucial both to assess the current security problems and the structural factors which remain a cause for the instability in the Middle East (Mahmoudian, 2024).

The conflict between Israel and Iran is not an isolated one, but part of the general strategic situation in the Middle East, apart from the fighting. It supports an ongoing proxy war, arms race, militarisation of the region, and impacts the region's economic stability, energy security and the international order in general. The existing diplomatic process and the various multilateral agreements have not proven to be very effective in addressing these problems, which are so complex and entangled, especially in the fields of emerging technology, cyber warfare and asymmetric warfare. The conflict will be discussed in this paper in terms of its complexity and the three-dimensional impact of the conflict, as well as the regional, international and non-traditional dimensions of security and how

adaptive measures of policy and innovative diplomatic strategies can limit risk and facilitate sustainable stability in the region.

Literature Review

The article *The Israel-Iran Conflict: Shaping New Regional Dynamics in the Middle East* by Z Ali (2025) explores how Israel-Iran relations are changing the dynamics of regional politics and security. The authors concentrate on Iran's regional power in relation to proxy groups, Israeli military policy and how international powers such as the US are contributing to the fanning of the flame. The ideological, sectarian, and strategic causes of the conflict are also brought to focus in the study. However, the authors do not fully develop these dynamics as they affect smaller regional players of the Middle East, and some aspects are left out on the larger implications of the conflict (Ali, Kousar, & Ahmed, 2025).

The Iran-Israel Conflict: A Struggle for Oil, Missiles, and Power, The Geopolitical Battle Unfolds by Aman et al. (2025) examines the complicated relationship between Iran and Israel and emphasizes energy resources, the development of missiles, and the desire to be a leader of the region as the primary reasons for the conflict. The convergence of the Iranian nuclear program, the security of Israel and the strategic significance of the Strait of Hormuz as a vital energy artery in the world has brought back military and proxy wars, and analysis shows the involvement of outside players, especially the United States, in the mediation of the conflict. The research fails to clearly elaborate on the security architecture implications of the Middle East in the long term (Aman et al., 2025).

The article by D Khan, MS Zaid, and MM Ishfaq titled *Understanding the Iran-Israel Conflict (2024-2025): Root Causes, Proxy Warfare, and Changes to Middle Eastern Stability* focuses on the escalation between Iran and Israel in 2024-25, which has brought a proxy war to the forefront and into a direct conflict, with the backing of non-state actors from Iran and the preemptive defense and regionalist alliances Israel has taken on to protect itself. The study's analysis of the internal politics and social factors in Iran and Israel, as well as the local motivations of alliances and proxy groups, is limited (Khan et al., 2025).

The article: *Existential Threats and Evolving Jus ad Bellum: The June 2025 Israel-Iran Conflict* by Touiserkani (2025) examines the operation of Rising Lion, carried out by Russia with regard to the nuclear installations of Iran as an exercise of international law on the use of force. He analyses such matters as the threshold of armed attack, anticipatory self-defense, necessity, proportionality, as well as compliance with the UN Charter and comes to the conclusion that Israel was guilty of a violation of Article 2(4). The paper has not comprehensively discussed ways in which international law can evolve to avoid this kind of conflict in the future (Touiserkani, 2025).

The article *Twelve Days of Escalation: Analyzing the Israel-Iran War and the U.S. Precision Strikes on Iranian Nuclear Sites*, by DT Makar and TP Pillah, emphasizes the Israeli attacks on Iranian nuclear sites and U.S. precision attacks. It points out the role of proxy warfare in the place of direct confrontation and its impact on nuclear stability and deterrence in the region. The research observes that the effectiveness of these strikes was lowered by Iran having hardened infrastructure. Its main drawback is the lack of an in-depth study of the decision-making processes and nuclear risk resistance inside Iran (Maker & PILLAH, 2025).

Trump's stance on the Iran-Israel war and its impact on regional security and the foreign policy of Pakistan SJ Afridi, I Ahmad, U Khan: His initial role as a mediator between the warring countries and later turning pro-Israel has tipped the balance in favor of Israel, making Pakistan a party to a response- response dance. The major limitation is that it does not have much empirical evidence to support its claim about how the internal politics and civil-military dynamics in Pakistan impact its response to the conflict (Afridi et al., 2025).

Research Gap

The past literature on the Iran–Israel conflict has concentrated mainly on the ideological rivalry, nuclear issue, proxy warfare, and non-state actors such as Hezbollah/Hamas and the “shadow war” between the two states. Comparatively less attention has, however, been paid to the recent changes in the conflict, which has now taken the form of more overt military confrontation and what this shift in the nature of the conflict means for the future strategic environment of the Middle East. Furthermore, the focus of most previous research has been on investigating certain aspects of Iran–Israel rivalry, external powers, proxy groups, cyber warfare, and nuclear tensions separately from one another and without considering their interdependence or role in the development of the conflict. However, the understanding of the conflict is incomplete from the standpoint of the shadow war, because it lacks clarity when it comes to the evolving nature of the role of non-state actors, the involvement of great powers like the United States and Russia, cyber warfare, new regional strategic dynamics, and the role of intelligence warfare. In this regard, this research tries to fill the gap by studying the Iran–Israel conflict beyond covert and proxy confrontation and analyzing the emerging patterns, actors and strategic implications of this development for regional security and stability.

Research Questions

1. How will the shift from proxy wars to a more localized direct confrontation between Iran and Israel impact strategic security in the Middle East?
2. What is shadow war in the modern era between Iran and Israel in the cyber warfare and intelligence arena?
3. What are the outside influences, particularly from the U.S., in the escalation and continuation of the Iran-Israel conflict apart from the ideological conflict that is going on in the region?

Research Methodology

In the present research, a qualitative analytical method has been used to study the Iran-Israel conflict and its role in the reconfiguration of the regional security configuration in the Middle East. The study design is a descriptive and explanatory research design, which is used to analyze the patterns of conflict, intervention and alignment. The analysis is mainly conducted through secondary data sources, policy reports from reputable think tanks, official statements, and reports of international organizations like the United Nations, the International Monetary Fund and reputable research institutes. It is also selectively adapted and cited from reputable international media sources to document recent events, military exchanges and diplomatic developments between 2023 and 2025. Theoretical context for the study is derived from the theories and concepts of security studies: asymmetric deterrence, proxy attacks, and regional security complexes, which offer an analytical lens in describing state and non-state behavior. Earlier stages of Middle East wars have been mentioned in comparison to mark continuity and change in Middle East security practices.

Research Objectives

- ▶ To identify the influence of non-state actors and proxy groups on the course, escalation and intensity of conflict.
- ▶ To explore how these external influences, such as the U.S, Russia, and Gulf states, have played a role in the Israel-Iran conflict and its implications for stability in the region.
- ▶ To gauge the development of new regional dynamics and formation of emerging strategic patterns due to the Israel-Iran tensions.

Historical Context

The Iran-Israel war has traditionally been protracted through proxy war. Iran has carried out arms, training, and financial assistance to allied non-state actors, like Hezbollah in Lebanon, the Houthis in Yemen, and Hamas in Gaza, and provided tactical guidance to them. This was a part of Tehran's regional policy to stand against Israel and U.S. influence without facing direct state-to-state war. As part of Iran's regional influence strategy, it has supported Hezbollah, Palestinian factions and other affiliated militia groups with both financial and military and logistical support, according to a research briefing released by the UK Parliament.

Israel has also indirectly participated through providing covert support and operational cooperation with local armed groups and communities in neighbouring conflict areas. For instance, Israel has supported Druze militias in the south of Syria against the advance of Islamist militants and to defend its borders. Indirect operations in Israel have consisted of precision airstrikes, cyber operations, intelligence operations, and attacks on Iranian military infrastructure and armed groups (Roomi, 2023). This was a battle of indirect confrontation, which enabled both Iran and Israel to pursue strategic goals without risking a full-scale interstate war. But as the power of regional armed groups grew and the area of conflict was expanded, this competition gradually evolved.

Evolution from Proxy Warfare to Hybrid Confrontation

The indirect competition between Iran and Israel went further and wider, and more into a hybrid war involving proxy warfare with direct military exchanges, in the period from 2023 to 2025. Israel recently struck an Iranian nuclear and missile complex in the area of Isfahan and a missile command center in Yazd in June 2025, in a series of large-scale airstrikes. In addition to the attacks on centrifuge production, surface-to-surface missile systems were attacked as part of a campaign to undermine Iran's nuclear and long-range strike capabilities. In the conflicts between 2024 and 2025, Iran fired numerous missile and armed drone attacks against Israel. These were important milestones in what was a dramatic change from direct military action between states to a reliance primarily on proxy attacks. The new concept of a hybrid model is a mixture of asymmetric proxy operations, targeted counter-force, cyber operations, intelligence actions, and some direct military engagements. Instead of replacing the shadow war altogether, there is a direct confrontation, in addition to the indirect confrontation. This leaves a space for a degree of escalation but also allows the prospect of a broader regional conflict (Bukhari & Khan, 2024).

Regional Power Realignment and Strategic Interaction Change

The Iran-Iraq war has greatly shaped regional alliances and helped to push a shift away from rigid blocks to more flexible geopolitical arrangements. The Abraham Accords were a positive development in the Arab-Israeli relationship before the latest escalation. The deals paved the way for Israel to normalize relations with countries such as the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Sudan and Morocco and fostered cooperation in sectors like trade, defense and technology. Political and security barriers, however, have emerged for such normalization efforts due to the escalation of the Iran-Israel conflict. In recent years, Arab governments have had to play a balancing act between their strategic interests and national and regional considerations relating to Palestine. Saudi Arabia's strategic flip is a telling example of this change of gears. It had been believed that Riyadh was eager to join an expanded version of the Abraham Accords, but has, thus far, been strategically ambiguous in that regard and made it clear that normalization with Israel needs to be tied to the pursuit of Palestinian statehood and increased security assurances. Meanwhile, Saudi Arabia has reconstructed ties with Iran in March 2023 after seven years of estrangement (Maher, 2023). This development brought opportunities for dialogue on the regional level and mitigated risks in the near term. As a result, Riyadh has been on the verge of adopting a balancing or hedging policy between Tehran and Jerusalem. Others have also modified their policies in the region. In an effort to build up their position as diplomatic mediators, Turkey and

Qatar have kept in touch with various regional and international partners. Turkey has been in contact with the Gulf states, Russia and Iran, while Qatar has been the venue for talks between the United States, Iran and other regional players. These are signs of a gradual shift towards a more multipolar regional configuration that favors the principle of national interests, economic interdependence, strategic autonomy and security hedging over permanent alignment with any one country or bloc.

Evolving Role of Non-state Armed Groups in the Modern Battlefield

The changing nature of non-state armed groups in the contemporary battlefield. Non-state armed groups have been a crucial part of the Iran- Israel conflict in the past but have grown much more significant in the current scenario. Founded in the early 1980s with the support of the IRGs, Hezbollah went from a resistance group to becoming one of the strongest non-state armed groups in the region. It has a sizeable number of fighters and rockets and missiles, which allows it to continue to keep Israel under military pressure. In times of escalation, especially after late 2023, Hezbollah had a vast amount of contact with Israeli forces across the border (Rabinovich, 2015). These clashes left casualties and damage to property on both sides and highlighted the ongoing utility of Hezbollah. The Houthis in Yemen are also an important asymmetric military force. The group began to fire missiles and drones at Israel in October 2023, then extended its operations to attacking commercial shipping and naval vessels in the Red Sea. Such attacks were a major hindrance to maritime trade. Shipping companies diverted vessels around the Cape of Good Hope, causing a significant drop in traffic through the Red Sea and Suez Canal. In doing so, it was revealed that the activities of a regional non-state actor can indeed have repercussions for international trade and global supply chains, in terms of travel distances, fuel costs and insurance prices. The Houthis' campaign involved taking control of ships like the *Galaxy Leader*, as well as the launch of missiles and drones. Some of these attacks were followed by Israeli airstrikes against targets in Yemen in the Houthis' territory. The increasing capabilities and autonomy of non-state groups have expanded the geographical scope of the Iran–Israel confrontation from the Levant to the Red Sea, Gulf of Aden, Eastern Mediterranean, and other areas. They employ ballistic missiles, armed drones, naval drones, and explosive boats, so they can impose strategic costs that are more than their formal size can bear (Katz, 2025).

Fragmentation of the Regional Security Order

The Iran-Israel conflict has been a factor in breaking up the traditional Middle East security order. Alliances that are established have grown less predictable with the growing significance of issue-specific and short-term partnerships. The U.S. security umbrella was important to Gulf monarchies in opposing Iranian influence in the region historically. But after multiple regional flashpoints, a few Gulf states have taken a cautious approach to neither side of Washington nor Tehran. One such example of this shift was the Saudi–Iran rapprochement facilitated by China in March 2023. Diplomatic relations and diplomatic channels were restored and reopened, reflecting increased agency of the region and the deblocking of geopolitical alliances. The security architecture in the Gulf also proved to be weak during the 12-day war in June 2025. The strike on the U.S. Al Udeid Air Base in Qatar, in response to attacks on Iranian nuclear sites, revealed ways in which regional military infrastructural systems could be directly linked to Iran–Israel regional escalation. The conflict has also contributed to the militarization and polarization of the region. From Yemen to Lebanon, several fronts have emerged that foster an atmosphere of asymmetric deterrence, unpredictable escalation and overlapping security crises. The advent of drones and ballistic missiles has reduced the risk level for high-impact military operations even further (Khaled et al., 2025).

New Security and Economic Opportunities

The evolving nature of the Iran–Israel conflict has imposed major security and economic difficulties on the region. A war that is being expanded on several fronts has raised the risk of escalation and puts more strain on governments in the region. The war is more complicated with the use of advanced military technology such as drones, ballistic missiles, precision-guided weaponry and cyber warfare. They enable high-impact operations, with varying degrees of distance and deniability, both for state and non-state actors. Economic pressures also have been significant, especially in connection with Iran. International sanctions and limitations on oil exports have limited Iran's economic development and decreased its attractiveness to foreign investment. Oil revenues and economic opportunities for Iran were greatly limited following the lifting of U.S. sanctions in 2018. Sanctions have played a role in the depreciation of the rial, drop in investment, and structural constraints on Tehran's military budget and regional power projection. Economic and maritime routes are also at risk in the conflict. Unstable conditions in the Red Sea, Gulf of Aden and the Strait of Hormuz can impact the world's energy supplies, shipping, insurers and world trade (Mansour, 2008).

Analyze the Role and Limitation of International Institutions

The interventions in the Iran-Iraq conflict have been fragmented, selective, and limited. While hostilities have increased since the end of 2023 and direct military contact has occurred in 2025, international institutions have not been able to develop efficient mechanisms to de-escalate the situation. The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) has been a significant platform to discuss the crisis. The Council has convened several meetings and emergency meetings since October 2023 regarding developments related to Israel, Iran and the consequences of these developments in the region. But the powers of permanent members have been hindered in their capacity to be effective in binding action due to political disagreements between the permanent members (Yaqub & Tabassum, 2025). The

United States has been Israel's primary diplomatic ally, and, except for some of Israel's actions, Russia and China have expressed criticism in the past but have developed ineffective enforcement mechanisms. This division has been playing a critical role in institutional impasse. They also have been supported by statements from regional groups such as the Arab League, the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation and the Gulf Cooperation Council calling for calm and condemning violence. But the power they bring to the fight has been curtailed because of conflicting interests and the lack of effective measures to enforce. The international diplomatic sphere has been unable to stay ahead of the rapid advances in military capabilities, thereby further contributing to the growing tendency of states to act independently and make ad hoc political arrangements in the region (Farooq et al., 2025).

The Role of Global Powers and the Emerging Multipolar Order

The global powers have had a selective role in the Iran-Israel conflict. The United States continues to be the most active external presence, offering Israel military, intelligence and diplomatic assistance and trying to stop the fighting from spiraling out of control into a regional war. What has been evident here is the extent to which the U.S. has been able to limit the strategic choices of its regional partners. Russia has taken a diplomatic positioning strategy: It criticizes Western policies but maintains relations with Iran and Israel. But Russia's role as a viable mediator has been hampered by its involvement in the Ukraine crisis and its weak influence over Israeli decision-making. We have seen China stressing dialogue and de-escalation. This was significant in the Saudi-Iranian reconciliation that occurred during 2023, as it was helping to broker the process. This indicated Beijing's rising diplomatic involvement in the Middle East as it played a key role in the Saudi-Iranian reconciliation process in 2023. But China has been wary of

getting directly caught up in the Iran-Israel standoff in favour of economic diplomacy and avoiding risk (Pinfold et al., 2025).

Conclusion

The Iran–Israel conflict has become a pivotal force in transforming the modern-day security landscape of the Middle East. The fight is no longer a purely indirect proxy battle, but is now a hybrid, multipolar battle involving asymmetrical tactics, some direct military fighting and strategic signaling. The change has blurred the distinction between proxy war and interstate war, making it easier for miscalculations to occur as well as "normalizing" the use of controlled escalation to be a pivotal point in regional security. The war has contributed to the erosion of the security framework in the region by challenging traditional security relationships and the sense of trust in collective security arrangements. The tendency has been for regional states to pursue hedging policies, rather than alliance blocs, based on one-sided threats, flexible alliances, and issue-based cooperation. The relative independence of non-state armed groups has added to the difficulties of crisis management, widened the geographical embrace of the conflict and lowered the risk of escalation to other theatres.

International organisations and the world powers have demonstrated that they too cannot calm the situation. A self-help logic in security is driving regional actors to more selective intervention, and institutional stagnation is hampering the efficiency of diplomatic means amid great-power competition. But external involvement has often resulted in increased strategic competition and distrust, exacerbating regional instability, rather than reducing it. However, external involvement has often ended in an increase in strategic competition and mistrust – deepening the regional environment into a multipolar but fragmented one. In general, the Iran–Israel conflict has not only mirrored the existing regional tensions but has also played a significant role in shaping them; it has also been a catalyst for regional dynamics of militarization, polarization, and institutional erosion. The new security system will feature uncertainty, asymmetric deterrence, and converging conflicts, and it will be difficult to see how the Middle East can weather the storm without regional dialogue and viable de-escalation plans.

Recommendations

- ▶ To avoid miscalculations between Iran and Israel, particularly in times of increased military activity, regional actors should put in place structured de-escalation and crisis-management processes.
- ▶ International organizations like the United Nations and the European Union should play a more proactive mediation role, including ceasefire facilitation, conflict monitoring and humanitarian access in the affected areas.
- ▶ The international community ought to strive to establish norms and frameworks for drone and cyber operations, and precision strikes to minimize the danger of escalation spiraling out of control.
- ▶ There is a need for bilateral and multilateral cooperation in the region to prevent the spillover of the Iran-Israel politics into surrounding countries, through the monitoring of financial, logistical and military networks which could lead to regional destabilization.
- ▶ Existing multilateral platforms should be used to promote inclusive security dialogue, going beyond zero-sum thinking to cooperation on security in the region.
- ▶ Policymakers need to pay more attention to civilian protection issues, human security concerns and humanitarian law matters, especially in war-torn areas of the world like Gaza, Lebanon and Syria.

References

- Afridi, S. J., Ahmad, I., Khan, U., & Khan, A. (2025). Trump's stance on the Iran-Israel war and how it affects regional security and Pakistan's foreign policy. *Social Science Review Archives*, 3(3), 968–975. <https://doi.org/10.70670/sra.v3i3.929>
- Ali, Z., Kousar, F., & Ahmed, S. (2025). The Israel-Iran conflict: Shaping new regional dynamics in the Middle East. *Journal Of Social Science and Knowledge Horizons*, 1(1), 27-37.
- Aman, A., Khalid, F., & Ara, R. (2025). The Iran-Israel conflict: A struggle for oil, missiles, and power-the geopolitical battle unfolds. *Journal of Politics and International Studies*, 11(1), 55-64. <https://jpis.pu.edu.pk/45/article/view/1400>
- Bukhari, S. R., Khan, A. U., & Haq, I. U. (2024). Cracking the Enigma: Iran-Israel relations unveiled a provocative exploration into global geopolitics. *Spry Contemporary Educational Practices*, 3(1), 444-460. <https://doi.org/10.62681/sprypublishers.scep/3/1/24>
- Farooq, U., Saqib, M., & Mustafa, G. (2025). Iran's Nuclear Ambitions: A Potential Threat to Israel. *Pakistan Social Sciences Review*, 9(II), 89-98. [https://doi.org/10.35484/pssr.2025\(9-ii\)07](https://doi.org/10.35484/pssr.2025(9-ii)07)
- Katz, Y. (2025). A decade of change in Middle Eastern geopolitics. *Athens Journal of Politics & International Affair*, 1(2), 163-178. <https://doi.org/10.30958/ajpia.1-2-4>
- Al-Khaled, H., Al-Humaidi, S., & Al-Roumi, N. (2025). The configuration of power in the Middle East following the israel-iran tension: A geopolitical. *International Journal of Education and Social Science Studies*, 1(2), 123-132. <https://doi.org/10.60153/ijess.v1i2.204>
- Khan, D., Zaid, S., Ishfaq, M., & Muhammad, S. (2024). Understanding the Iran - Israel conflict (2024–2025) root causes, proxy warfare, and impacts on middle eastern stability. *Journal for Current Sign*, 3(2), 731–744. <https://currentsignreview.com/index.php/JCS/article/view/197>
- Liu, S. (2025). Beyond the battlefield: Economic and geopolitical reverberations of the 2024 Israel-Iran escalation in the Middle East, South Asia, and East Africa. *Asian Journal of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies*, 19(2), 130-153. <https://doi.org/10.1080/25765949.2025.2553258>
- Maher, N. (2023). Balancing deterrence: Iran-Israel relations in a turbulent Middle East. *Review of Economics and Political Science*, 8(3), 226-245. <https://doi.org/10.1108/reps-06-2019-0085>
- Mahmoudian, A. (2024). Iran-Israel conflict: A new stage emerges. *GNSI publications*, 15-20. <https://doi.org/10.5038/tplx8603>
- Makar, D. T., & Pillah, T. P. (2025). Twelve Days of Escalation: Analyzing the June 2025 Israel–Iran War and US Precision Strikes on Nuclear Infrastructure. *IRASS Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences*, 2(7), 1-12. <https://irasspublisher.com/assets/articles/1751440309.pdf>
- Mansour, I. (2008). Iran and instability in the Middle East. *International Journal: Canada's Journal of Global Policy Analysis*, 63(4), 941-964. <https://doi.org/10.1177/002070200806300408>
- Naqvi, S. F. (2024). Renewed Iran-Israel Rivalry in the Middle East: Consequences for the Arab World. *Focus (Policy Journal of the institute of regional studies)*, 1-14. <https://irs.org.pk/Focus/FJune24.pdf>
- Otubu, A., Efebeh, V. E., & Sanubi, F. A. (2024). United States-Iran conflict and its security implications for Middle East. *Malikussaleh Social and Political Reviews*, 5(1), 44-50. <https://doi.org/10.29103/mspr.v5i1.16528>
- Pinfold, R. G., Jones, C., & Ehteshami, A. (2025). Collision course: How Iran and Israel brought the Middle East to the brink of war. *Global Policy*, 16(2), 289-298. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1758-5899.70004>
- Rabinovich, I. (2015). Israel and the changing Middle East. *Middle east memo*, 34, 1-11. <https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Israel-Rabinovich-01292015-1.pdf>

- Roomi, F. (2023). The Iran-Israel conflict: An ultra-ideological explanation. *Middle East Policy*, 30(2), 94-109. <https://doi.org/10.1111/mepo.12687>
- Sahani, S. K. A Strategic Analysis of the Iran–Israel Conflict and its Implications for Middle East Security and Global Diplomacy. *Future Fact Society Varanasi (UP) India*, 140.
- Touiserkani, M. (2025). Existential threats and evolving jus ad bellum: The June 2025 Israel-Iran conflict as a stress test for international law's capacity to address persistent state-sponsored hostility and WMD proliferation. *Social Science Research Network*, 43. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.5577110>
- Yaqub, Z., & Tabassum, S. (2025). Israel's Soft Power Application through Digital Diplomacy against Hamas to Iran Wars (2023-2025). *ASSAJ*, 4(01), 3908-3920. <https://www.assajournal.com/index.php/36/article/view/871>