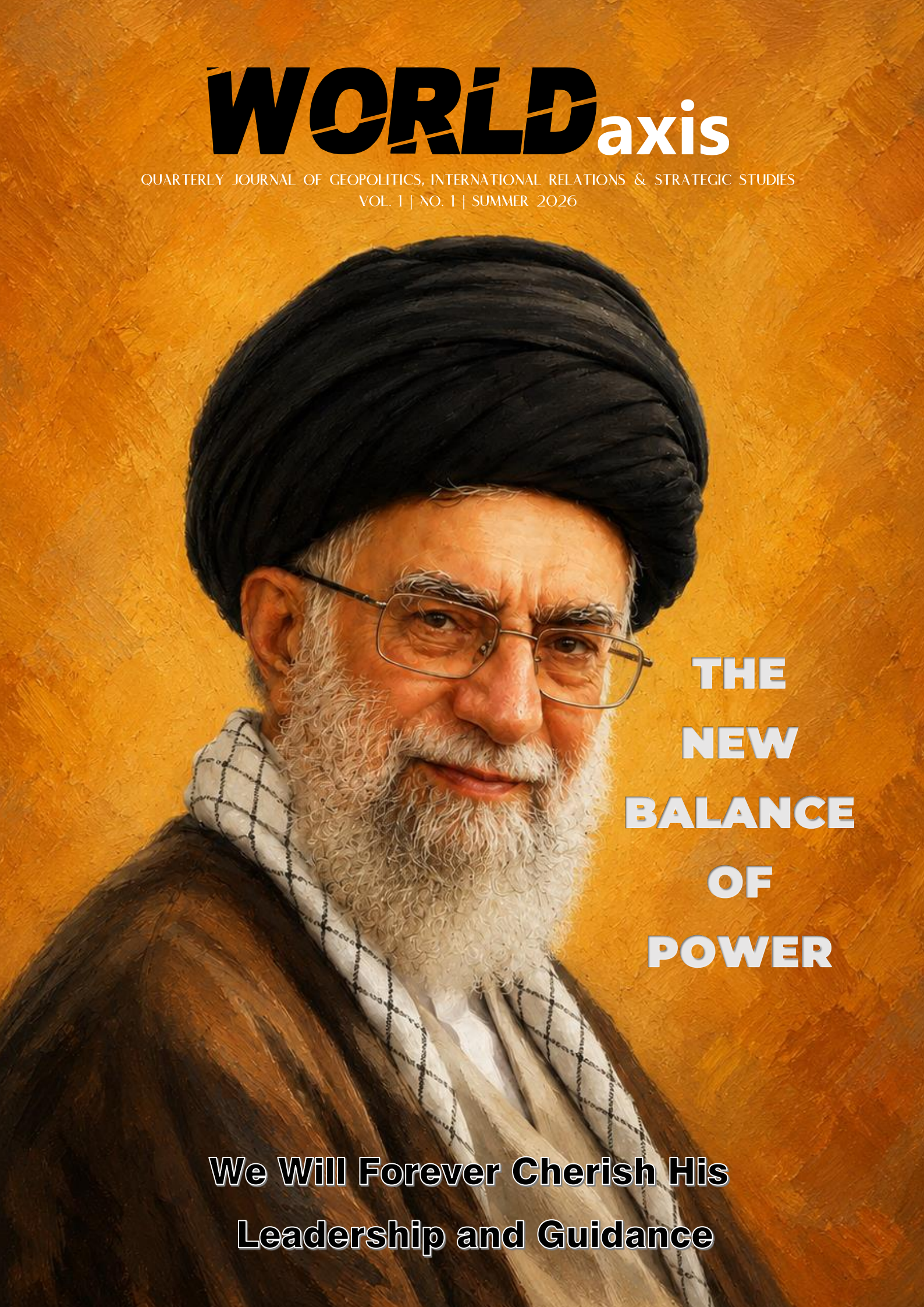


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A detailed oil painting of Ayatollah Khamenei, the Supreme Leader of Iran. He is depicted from the chest up, wearing a black turban and a white checkered scarf over a dark brown robe. He has a long, white beard and is wearing glasses. The background is a textured, warm orange-gold color.

**THE
NEW
BALANCE
OF
POWER**

**We Will Forever Cherish His
Leadership and Guidance**

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Editorial

In Search of a New World Order

The confrontation between Iran and the West has never been merely a political or economic dispute. At its core, it represents a collision between two competing worldviews: one founded upon materialism, consumerism, and hegemonic dominance; the other grounded in monotheism, justice, and human dignity.

In this issue, we seek to examine what we describe as Iran's **civilizational challenge** to the prevailing Western order. Our central argument is that genuine power is not measured by unprecedented military expenditures, but by the fusion of **faith** and **collective will**. From this perspective, Iran's foreign policy reflects what may be termed **Divine Realism**—a strategic doctrine in which global justice is regarded not as a distant ideal, but as an attainable and operational objective.

As the international system enters a period of profound transformation, today's world increasingly appears to be shaped by the contest between two fundamentally different visions. One seeks to preserve an increasingly fragile hegemonic order, while the other aspires to establish a more pluralistic and equitable international system. Within this turbulent environment, understanding the underlying dynamics governing international relations is no longer merely an academic exercise; it has become a strategic necessity for anyone attempting to navigate the complexities of contemporary global politics.

Developments across today's world—particularly in West Asia—reveal a deepening crisis rooted in decades of destabilizing policies pursued by the United States. Having long sought to impose an armed peace and sustain a unipolar international order, Washington now faces mounting domestic challenges alongside a steady erosion of its global credibility. In response, it increasingly relies upon instability itself as an instrument of geopolitical management. Proxy wars, comprehensive sanctions, and military interventions all reflect attempts to prevent the emergence of alternative

centers of power. Yet these structural crises, while contributing to regional instability, have simultaneously created an unprecedented opportunity for nations to reassess the foundations of international order and reclaim greater strategic autonomy.

Against this backdrop, the Islamic Republic of Iran, under the leadership of the late Leader of the Revolution, Ayatollah Khamenei, adopted a markedly different strategic trajectory. Rather than limiting his leadership to tactical responses, he sought to establish the long-term foundations of Iran's post-revolutionary security architecture. Recognizing that genuine national security cannot be achieved through dependence upon external powers, he articulated a doctrine in which **resistance** became not merely a political slogan, but a comprehensive national security doctrine and a strategic philosophy of state resilience.

The regional and international expansion of the **Axis of Resistance** remains one of his most enduring legacies. By conceptualizing a strategic framework that connected oppressed nations and movements through shared commitments to justice, human dignity, and resistance against domination, this doctrine evolved into a significant geopolitical reality—one that has altered regional balances of power and amplified previously marginalized voices within global decision-making processes.

Another cornerstone of his strategic thought was the uncompromising emphasis on **national independence** and **strategic self-reliance**. He consistently argued that dependence in defense and security affairs ultimately transfers sovereign decision-making to external actors. Consequently, his insistence upon indigenous defense capabilities reflected not economic nationalism alone, but a carefully developed strategic assessment. His objective was to ensure that Iran would remain capable of making independent decisions during moments of national crisis without external coercion influencing its strategic choices.

This commitment to self-sufficiency ultimately proved to be far more than a theoretical aspiration. During the recent military confrontation involving

the United States and Israel—whose planners reportedly anticipated the rapid collapse of Iran's defense infrastructure—they instead encountered an indigenous security architecture capable not only of absorbing strategic shocks but also of delivering a decisive response. The failure of that campaign illustrated the practical significance of strategic autonomy, demonstrating that independent defense capabilities constitute the principal guarantor of national sovereignty and resilience under conditions of sustained external pressure. Iran's continued advances in sophisticated military technologies despite extensive sanctions further underscore the long-term strategic vision that shaped this approach to national defense.

Beyond Iran, Ayatollah Khamenei occupied a distinctive position throughout the Islamic world that extended beyond conventional political leadership. As a symbol of Islamic unity and

collective solidarity, he consistently emphasized cooperation across sectarian and national divisions. His vision held that genuine Islamic revival could only emerge when Muslim societies freed themselves from dependence upon colonial and external powers while organizing around shared interests and common moral principles. His enduring influence across much of the Muslim world reflects a political philosophy that sought to transcend geography and address broader questions concerning justice, sovereignty, and the future of international order.

We Will Forever Cherish His Leadership and Guidance

Alireza Mashoori

Part I. Civilizational and Intellectual Foundations

1. Shiite School of Thought; the Basis of “Divine Realism” in the Foreign Policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran

Alireza Mashoori

The victory of the Islamic Revolution of Iran can be regarded as one of the turning points of contemporary world history, affecting both Iran’s internal equations and the conceptual structures of international relations. At the heart of this revolution lies the Shiite school of thought as the intellectual and theological foundation of the new system; a school that, with its emphasis on justice, resistance against oppression, and the necessity of religious governance, introduced a new framework for understanding the international system. From this perspective, the foreign policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran emerges from a form of revolutionary idealism grounded in historical and divine reality, standing in a complex relationship with the theory of realism in international relations.

In classical theories of international relations—particularly realism—states operate in an anarchic world and seek to maximize power in order to ensure national interest and survival. Realists argue that morality, ideology, and religion have no independent role in foreign policy decision-making and are merely tools serving material and security interests. In contrast, the Islamic Revolution of Iran demonstrated that foreign policy can be based on divine and justice-oriented concepts without neglecting the hard realities of the international system. This fusion of faith and expediency—or more precisely, Shiite idealism combined with classical realism—is one of the distinguishing features of Iran’s foreign policy.

Unlike secular readings of politics, Shiite thought does not separate religion from politics. Concepts such as Imamate, justice, jihad, enjoining good and forbidding evil, and awaiting the promised savior constitute foundational elements that give meaning and direction to politics in Shiite thought. In the thought of Imam Khomeini, these principles

transcend the individual and ethical level and extend into governance and international relations. In this framework, Iran’s foreign policy serves both as an instrument for increasing state power and as a means for realizing divine ideals, defending the oppressed, and confronting domination. However, this idealism does not imply detachment from international realities; rather, Shiite thought, with its deep understanding of history and power, presents a realist yet divine approach.

For example, the Supreme Leader, as the head of the Islamic system, is responsible not only for safeguarding ideological, religious, and national values but also for diagnosing the interests of the Islamic ummah in complex international conditions. This link between rationality and Sharia, and between ideals and expediency, constitutes the basis of what can be called “divine realism.” In practice, Iran’s foreign policy has combined these two dimensions: supporting resistance and anti-hegemonic movements on one hand, and engaging in calculated diplomatic interaction with the international system on the other.

National security in realist theory is defined through deterrence, balance of power, and material interests. However, in the foreign policy of the Islamic Republic, security has a broader meaning and extends to “spiritual and identity-based security.” For Iran, preserving cultural and identity independence is as important as protecting territorial borders. This is rooted in the Shiite worldview, which regards submission to oppression as acceptance of humiliation. This perspective redefines power in international relations, arguing that power is not limited to military or economic capability but also lies in faith, legitimacy, and resistance.

Shiite thought in Iran's foreign policy also revives the concept of the "Islamic Ummah" as a transnational spiritual unit beyond the modern nation-state. This contrasts with realist views that consider the state the ultimate actor. It is reflected in Iran's regional policies and support for Palestine and the Axis of Resistance. Although Western critics label this approach ideological and unrealistic, from the perspective of Shiite thought it represents divine realism grounded in historical-religious reality.

Shiite thought has always valued reason and political prudence. Concepts such as *taqiyya* (prudential concealment), expediency, and dynamic jurisprudence demonstrate that realism has long been embedded within Shiism. In Iran's foreign policy, this rationality is expressed through tactical flexibility. For instance, in nuclear negotiations or engagement with global powers, Iran has maintained its principles and red lines while using smart diplomacy to reduce threats and enhance national capabilities. This behavior is not a departure from ideals but rather a manifestation of the historical fusion of idealism and realism in Shiite thought.

Compared to classical realism, the Islamic Republic follows a form of "divine realism" that understands power, interests, and threats but interprets them within a divine and justice-oriented framework. While classical realism treats power as the ultimate goal of politics, Shiite thought sees power as a means to achieve justice and establish truth. Thus, foreign policy is not merely a field of power competition but also a domain of divine responsibility. This represents a conceptual transformation in international relations that Western theory has yet to fully comprehend.

Despite sanctions, military pressure, and extensive security threats, Iran remains an active and influential actor. This resilience results from the integration of faith and realism embedded in Shiite thought. Unlike Western realism, which is based on fear of death and annihilation, Shiite realism is grounded in belief in eternal life and divine responsibility—an assumption that fundamentally alters power equations.

Shiite thought, emphasizing justice, independence, resistance, and rationality, offers a new model of realism in the contemporary world. The foreign policy of the Islamic Republic, under this framework, balances ideological principles with hard international realities. This experience demonstrates that, contrary to dominant Western theories, religion is not an obstacle to political rationality but can be a driver of it and a source of durable power. The theory of "divine realism" elevates Iran's foreign policy from a state-centered behavior to a civilizational mission aimed at establishing global justice in the framework of monotheism.

Core Principles of the Theory of Divine Realism

1. **Intrinsic Link between Religion and Politics**
Divine realism does not separate religion from politics. Concepts such as Imamate, justice, jihad, and Mahdism directly guide foreign policy.
2. **Fusion of Divine Idealism and Classical Realism**
Neither pure idealism nor pure realism; it emphasizes a combination of faith, divine values, and pragmatic judgment in international affairs.
3. **Power as a Means, Not an End**
Unlike classical realism, which treats power as the goal, divine realism sees power as a tool for justice and truth.
4. **Multidimensional Definition of Security**
Security includes not only material survival but also identity, cultural independence, and spiritual security.
5. **Resistance Against Domination and Oppression**
Refusal to submit to global powers is a foundational principle.
6. **National and Transnational Religious Identity**
The Islamic Ummah is considered a meaningful historical-spiritual unit alongside the nation-state.

7. Rationality, Prudence, and Flexibility

Concepts such as expediency, *taqiyya*, and dynamic jurisprudence demonstrate flexibility in practice.

8. Dual Role of Religious Leadership

The Vali-e Faqih safeguards divine values while also determining strategic national and ummah-level interests.

9. Redefinition of Power

Power includes legitimacy, popular support, faith, and resistance—not only military or economic strength.

10. Civilizational Mission and Global Justice

The ultimate goal is not merely survival but establishing global justice under monotheism.

Comparison Table: Classical Realism vs Divine Realism

Topic	Classical Realism	Divine Realism (Shiite Thought)
Nature of Politics	Arena of power, competition, survival	Arena of divine responsibility and justice
Source of State Behavior	National interest and material security	Divine values, justice, defense of the oppressed + national interest
Role of Religion & Ethics	Instrumental; no independent role	Integral to politics and goal-setting
Purpose of Power	Power is the goal	Power is a means to establish justice
Ethics in Foreign Policy	Subordinate to material interests	Integral and guiding principle
Security	Territorial and material security	Material + identity + spiritual security
Unit of Analysis	Nation-state	Nation-state + Islamic Ummah
Approach to Great Powers	Balance of power	Resistance + rational diplomacy
View of Humanity	Utility-maximizing actor	Moral and divinely responsible being
Tactical Flexibility	Cost-benefit based	Based on expediency and preservation of principles
Crisis Behavior	Material cost calculation	Faith-based resilience
Leadership Role	National interest protector	Guardian of divine values and strategic interests
International Order	Anarchic and competitive	Unjust hegemonic system requiring resistance
Final Goal	Survival and power maximization	Survival + civilizational mission for global justice

2. Civilizational Challenge of the Islamic Republic of Iran to U.S. and Western Hegemony

The foreign policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran, from its inception to the present day, has been grounded in a continuous civilizational and identity-based discourse. Unlike classical models of international relations that reduce states to rational actors pursuing material interests, Iran's foreign policy is fundamentally shaped by a spiritual, religious, and revolutionary worldview. In this sense, Iran is recognized in the global political arena not only as a state, but also as a "civilizational project" aimed at redefining the international order. The essence of this project is opposition to Western hegemony and the construction of a just, multipolar order based on independence, justice, and human dignity.

Over the past three decades, the world has witnessed sustained efforts by the United States to maintain a unipolar global order. This system, built upon liberal democratic values, global capitalism, and cultural dominance, seeks to reshape independent identities and civilizations according to a Western model and gradually assimilate them from within. However, the Islamic Revolution in Iran represents a form of "civilizational protest" against this trajectory. This protest emerges from a redefinition of the relationship between power, morality, and spirituality in the international system. In Iran's revolutionary worldview, foreign policy is not merely a tool for increasing material power, but also a means of advancing global justice and confronting modern forms of colonialism.

Western hegemony rests on three pillars: military dominance, economic superiority, and cultural influence. The Islamic Republic of Iran has sought to offer an alternative model in each of these domains. In the military sphere, Iran has developed indigenous defensive capabilities and supported the Axis of Resistance as a form of opposition to foreign occupation and intervention. In the economic sphere, despite extensive sanctions, it has pursued a strategy of resistance economy and self-sufficiency as an alternative to dependence on the Western-led global economy. In the cultural and intellectual

sphere, the discourse of the Islamic Revolution—emphasizing human dignity, national independence, and rejection of domination—has posed a fundamental challenge to Western paradigms.

At the regional level, this discourse has materialized through the formation of the Axis of Resistance; a framework that goes beyond a political alliance and represents the solidarity of nations resisting colonialism and domination. This paradigm has challenged the Western security architecture based on military presence and demonstrated that nations can reclaim their security and identity without reliance on external hegemonic powers.

At the theoretical level of international relations, Iran's foreign policy offers a fundamental critique of dominant theories such as realism and liberalism. Realism views power solely in material and military terms and fails to account for spiritual power. In contrast, Iran defines power as a combination of faith, justice, identity, and popular legitimacy. Likewise, Western liberalism—which frames international order through institutions and economic cooperation—has in practice become an instrument for consolidating the dominance of Western states and corporations. Against this, Iran advances the concept of a "just global order" in which nations coexist based on their own cultural and civilizational values without imposed Western uniformity.

The challenge posed by Iran to the West is not merely political or economic, but fundamentally civilizational and epistemological. Western civilization is based on material anthropocentrism and secularism, whereas the Iranian-Islamic civilization is grounded in monotheism, justice, and the integration of ethics with power. Thus, the confrontation between the two represents a clash of worldviews: one that reduces humans to consumers within a global market, and another that views them as divine vicegerents on earth. This fundamental difference lies at the core of the civilizational tension between Iran and the West.

However, Iran does not seek the destruction of the West or isolation from the world. Rather, it seeks to transform international relations from a framework of domination into a framework of justice. Through active diplomacy—from engagement with global powers to participation in regional organizations such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and BRICS—Iran aims to contribute to the formation of a multipolar and ethically grounded world order. This approach has transformed Iran from a passive actor in international relations into an active civilizational agent.

The West, particularly the United States, has adopted a hostile stance toward this discourse. Sanctions, political pressure, psychological operations, and even military threats have been used as tools to contain Iran and limit the spread of its resistance narrative. However, decades of experience have shown that external pressure has not weakened this discourse; rather, it has reinforced internal cohesion and identity. Iran has become a model of independence and self-reliance through its indigenous capacities, human capital, and ideological commitment.

In recent years, with the relative decline of U.S. and Western power, the global environment has become more receptive to alternative discourses. The rise of China as an economic power, Russia's reassertion in geopolitics, and the emergence of organizations such as BRICS indicate a shift of global power from

West to East. Iran, positioned at the intersection of Eastern civilizations and the Islamic world, plays a strategic role in shaping this new order. The “Look to the East” policy, central to Iran's recent foreign policy orientation, is not a shift of dependency but a continuation of revolutionary independence.

Simultaneously, Iran seeks to project a distinct cultural and civilizational identity. In response to Western Islamophobia, it promotes a discourse of “rational and justice-oriented Islam,” attempting to integrate reason, spirituality, and social justice. This intellectual and cultural dimension of Iranian foreign policy has gained increasing resonance among nations in Latin America, Africa, and Central Asia, many of which share historical experiences of colonialism.

Ultimately, the foreign policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran is not limited to narrowly defined national interests. It represents the historical will of a nation striving to restore its civilizational status and redefine the global order. It seeks not the negation of international engagement, but the negation of domination. By emphasizing justice, independence, and spirituality, Iran aims to establish a new balance in the international system in which no power can impose its values on others. This is what can be described as the “civilizational challenge of Iran to U.S. hegemony”—a difficult yet historic path that constitutes Iran's enduring civilizational mission.

3. Sermon 27 of Nahj al-Balagha; The Defensive Doctrine of the Islamic Republic of Iran

The teachings of Sermon 27 of *Nahj al-Balagha* emphasize principles such as “preemption,” “striking the enemy within its own territory,” “avoiding passive defense on one’s own soil,” “jihad as a source of dignity and security,” and “active deterrence.” This sermon is not merely an ethical exhortation, but a strategic text that speaks in religious language while operating through a political-military logic. Imam Ali (peace be upon him) warns that a people who wait for the enemy to attack them in their own homes are inevitably reduced to humiliation. Therefore, the foundation of any defensive doctrine must be based on the understanding that war cannot be managed through passivity; rather, threats must be neutralized at their inception and the enemy must be engaged on its own ground before it can organize an attack.

Iran operates in a highly complex security environment characterized by multi-layered threats. The adversary does not approach solely through conventional military means at the borders, but rather seeks to erode the power of the Islamic Republic through cyber, media, economic, intelligence, and even biological domains. Consequently, adopting a purely defensive doctrine would effectively mean falling into the enemy’s designed battlefield. What emerges from Sermon 27, however, is a call for a “hybrid offensive-deterrent strategy.” A strategy that, by combining hard and soft power, jihadist spirit, and modern technology, reverses the equation of threat.

In the military dimension, this doctrine requires maintaining and enhancing missile and drone capabilities. These capabilities enable preemptive strikes against enemy bases, depots, and command centers. Iran’s missile power is not merely a tool for border defense, but a strategic arm for transferring the battlefield into enemy territory. Alongside these capabilities, layered air defense systems, electronic warfare systems, and cyber capabilities must be integrated in a way that disrupts any hostile attack at its initial stage. Furthermore, active extraterritorial presence through a network of allied

forces and resistance groups expands Iran’s strategic depth and multiplies the cost of any hostile action for the adversary. In other words, Iran’s defense is not confined to geographical borders but is based on a wide regional security belt, where every point can become a site of preemptive engagement.

The experience of the 12-day and Ramadan wars demonstrated that Iran’s military doctrine requires revision in the field of strategic deterrence. Some of Iran’s adversaries rely on nuclear deterrence shields, which alters the regional security equation. Therefore, an important component of the future doctrine must be the strengthening of “symmetrical deterrence”; a form of deterrence that is not limited to missiles and drones, but also encompasses broader strategic capabilities. Possession of nuclear deterrence capacity can serve as a complementary element in the Islamic Republic’s overarching strategy to prevent any adventurism by adversaries who themselves possess such weapons.

The economic dimension of this doctrine is no less important than the military one. Modern warfare is not limited to the physical battlefield; sanctions and financial pressure are also part of the enemy’s strategy. The teachings of *Nahj al-Balagha* regarding independence and self-sufficiency correspond to the policy of a “resistance economy.” Iran must be capable of enduring prolonged pressure, localizing its defense supply chains, and ensuring food and energy security as the backbone of sustained warfare. A resilient economy itself functions as a deterrent, as adversaries initiate war when they assess that sanctions and pressure can erode the target society from within. However, if economic resilience and social endurance are maintained, adversaries will face strategic hesitation.

From a cultural and social perspective, the sermon demonstrates that war is not merely a military phenomenon, but also an arena of identity and meaning. When Imam Ali describes jihad as one of

the gates of paradise, he is referring to the motivational and spiritual force that neutralizes material superiority. Within Iran's defensive doctrine, this translates into the promotion of a jihadist spirit, public education for resistance, and strengthening national-religious identity so that society remains resilient against psychological warfare and media operations. Contemporary experience shows that purely professional militaries without ideological and popular backing cannot withstand prolonged pressure. In contrast, societies that perceive war as a sacred duty are capable of resistance beyond their material capacity.

In the diplomatic sphere, Sermon 27 implies that Iran should not wait for anti-Iranian blocs to form. Instead, it must take initiative and shape alliances before its adversaries do. Active diplomacy is part of preemptive warfare. Creating economic interdependence with neighbors, using energy as a bargaining tool, and establishing an independent international narrative all constitute diplomatic offense rather than passive defense. Just as military warfare is more effective in enemy territory, political and media warfare must also be conducted within the adversary's informational space. Through smart diplomacy and psychological operations, Iran can target public opinion within hostile countries and thereby increase the cost of decision-making for war.

The outcome of this defensive doctrine is the transformation of Iran into a power that is not only capable of defending itself, but also able to convert threats into opportunities for expanding regional influence. The most important result is that the enemy is never able to bring war into Iranian territory, because it knows that the first spark of conflict will ignite consequences within its own domain. Deterrence here is not based solely on destructive capability, but on a combination of economic resilience, social cohesion, intelligence superiority, and offensive capacity.

Sermon 27 of *Nahj al-Balagha* presents a doctrine that defines defense not as waiting and passivity, but as "offensive deterrence." It is based on the principle that dignity and security are achieved through preemptive action, while humiliation and defeat result from passive confrontation within one's own territory. Iran's defense policy must therefore rest on three pillars: hard power for preemptive action, soft power for social and spiritual resilience, and intelligent power for managing diplomacy and hybrid warfare. Such a model is consistent with Iran's historical and cultural context, aligned with contemporary geopolitical realities, and capable of ensuring national survival in the face of escalating global threats.

Part II. Balance of Power

4. Reassessment of Deterrence

In the international system, the assassination of heads of state has historically been treated as an informal red line, the crossing of which is widely understood to signal the onset of war and the subsequent erosion of diplomatic norms and the legal architecture governing interstate relations. It is precisely for this reason that the assassination of the Supreme Leader of the Revolution by the United States—characterized here as a terrorist act—on the first day of war represents a fundamental inflection point in the deterrence doctrine of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Within deterrence theory, when an action is undertaken for the first time by a major actor and the consequences remain tolerable for the initiator, the credibility of deterrence is significantly undermined. In other words, once the United States has crossed the threshold of targeting the highest political authority of Iran, there is no structural guarantee that such an action will not be repeated in the future. The taboo surrounding such an act has effectively been weakened, reducing the perceived cost of repetition.

This development suggests that, within U.S. strategic calculations, the assassination of Iran's top leadership is no longer considered an unthinkable option but has been normalized as an operational instrument. The most dangerous implication of this shift is that even in the event of a diplomatic settlement, ceasefire, or formal agreement, the possibility of targeted assassination would remain present should U.S. interests shift or should a rapid alteration in Iran's internal power structure be deemed advantageous.

Once such an act has been carried out and partially normalized, its repetition becomes strategically easier to justify. As a result, political agreements at the micro level cannot, by themselves, guarantee physical security at the macro level unless a sufficiently strong deterrent mechanism exists to raise the cost of such actions for the United States.

At this juncture, it is essential to emphasize a structural distinction: the Islamic Republic of Iran is a formal, sovereign, and legally constituted state actor, unlike non-state or semi-state militant entities. The fundamental difference lies in governance requirements. A state depends on institutional stability, continuity of leadership, and centralized decision-making capacity. By contrast, non-state armed groups may operate under conditions of permanent insecurity, mobility, and decentralized survival logic.

A legitimate state, particularly one as geographically and demographically extensive as Iran, cannot function under conditions of perpetual emergency or leadership insecurity. If the head of state and senior executive authorities are forced to operate continuously under the threat of state-sponsored terrorism by the United States or its regional allies, the result is a structural governance crisis.

Permanent exposure to assassination threats degrades strategic decision-making, shifts governance into a defensive posture, and undermines developmental and economic priorities. Therefore, ensuring the security of the political leadership cannot rely solely on tactical protection measures such as physical security protocols or relocation strategies. It requires the elimination of the adversary's incentive to attempt such actions in the first place.

This distinction between tactical security and strategic deterrence is fundamental. Tactical security mitigates the impact of an attack; strategic deterrence prevents the attack from occurring altogether. For Iran's leadership to govern without existential insecurity, a security umbrella must exist that credibly convinces adversaries that any attempt to target senior leadership would result in disproportionate and unacceptable consequences.

Historically, the only mechanism that has reliably prevented direct attacks on the leadership of rival great powers is nuclear deterrence. The doctrine of Mutual Assured Destruction (MAD) establishes a condition in which the cost of initiating a catastrophic strike—including decapitation or leadership targeting—exceeds any conceivable strategic benefit. Once a state acquires nuclear capability, the threshold for aggression is fundamentally elevated.

In the case of the United States, operational restraint against strategic targets is typically conditioned on the expectation of unacceptable retaliation. Where such expectations are absent, deterrence stability deteriorates.

From this perspective, the assassination of Iran's leadership may, in short-term U.S. calculations, appear to generate strategic advantages such as internal destabilization or regime disruption. However, if such an action were to trigger an existential retaliatory response at the highest level of escalation, the costs would become prohibitive even for a superpower.

Accordingly, nuclear capability—within this analytical framework—does not function as an offensive instrument, but rather as a structural guarantee of regime security. It transforms assassination threats from a low-cost option into a high-risk strategic gamble.

The erosion of traditional deterrence norms following the precedent-setting act of leadership targeting demonstrates that earlier assumptions about red lines are no longer reliable. The United

States has effectively signaled that no political or religious boundary is inherently inviolable when perceived strategic interests are at stake, and that written agreements remain contingent on shifting priorities.

In such an environment of normative instability, only material and existential deterrence can establish credible boundaries of action. A capability that imposes catastrophic costs on any attempt at leadership decapitation becomes the only mechanism capable of restoring strategic predictability.

To move beyond a permanent state of emergency governance and chronic leadership insecurity, Iran's security paradigm would therefore need to transition toward a form of strategic deterrence capable of rendering assassination attempts structurally irrational. Only when adversaries conclude that targeting senior leadership would trigger consequences exceeding any conceivable benefit can such threats be neutralized at the systemic level.

Any alternative framework—whether relying on enhanced protective measures or diplomatic assurances—remains insufficient in the context of an adversary perceived as having already violated foundational taboos without enduring prohibitive costs.

Within this logic, strategic stability is achieved not through procedural guarantees, but through the credible imposition of existential risk.

5. The United States No Longer Has Any Options Left on the Table

In analyzing negotiations between Iran and the United States—particularly in the aftermath of the Ramadan War—the first point that deserves attention is the erosion of the effectiveness of the instruments of pressure upon which Washington has long relied. U.S. policy toward Iran has traditionally rested on two principal pillars: a complex, multilayered sanctions regime designed to cripple Iran's economic and productive capacity, and the persistent threat of military action, encapsulated in the well-known phrase, **“all options are on the table.”** For decades, these two instruments served as the primary sources of leverage at the negotiating table, intended to compel Iran to make concessions and retreat from its nuclear rights. Recent developments, however, suggest that this strategic equation has fundamentally changed. Over the years, the United States has exhausted virtually every category of sanctions at its disposal—from primary and secondary sanctions to banking and oil restrictions, sanctions against individuals and civilian institutions, and even limitations affecting humanitarian and medical goods.

When an instrument of coercion reaches the limits of its effectiveness, its capacity to generate additional pressure inevitably declines. Once a sanctioned state adapts to prolonged economic restrictions, the imposition of new sanctions produces diminishing returns. Having endured the most severe phases of economic warfare, Iran has developed a level of resilience at which sanctions no longer constitute a decisive variable in negotiations. By fully exhausting its economic coercive tools, the United States has effectively forfeited one of its two principal sources of leverage.

The more significant development, however, concerns the use of Washington's final instrument—the threat of military force. For years, the United States attempted to weaken Iran's political resolve by maintaining the credibility of military intervention. Ultimately, on the ninth of Esfand, Washington embarked upon a strategic gamble that, rather than altering the balance of power in its favor, resulted in the collapse of its long-standing **“all options are on the table”**

doctrine. The military attack on Iran represented, in effect, an acknowledgment that sanctions had failed and constituted a final attempt to preserve a declining American hegemony. When a great power employs its ultimate instrument of coercion and nevertheless fails to achieve its objectives, it reveals the limits of its own capabilities to the international community. By carrying out military action against Iran and failing to secure its strategic aims, the United States demonstrated the highest level of coercion available to it—and failed. That failure implies that Washington no longer possesses any credible new option with which to threaten Iran.

When a state deploys the full extent of both its economic and military capabilities and still cannot compel its adversary to submit, it has exhausted the tools upon which future coercion depends. Consequently, Iran's participation in negotiations with a country that has already played all of its cards should be accompanied by a complete redefinition of the rules of engagement. Taking into account all security and strategic considerations, Iran should negotiate from a position of superiority. The first step should be to establish complete control over the **information domain**. Before any negotiations begin, Iran should create mechanisms ensuring that it becomes the primary and authoritative source for reporting every stage, development, and outcome of the talks, thereby preventing the United States from shaping international public opinion through selective narratives or using media influence to impose unrealistic demands at the negotiating table. In bargaining, each party's leverage depends largely on the instruments it has not yet employed. Today, however, the United States has already played all of its major cards and has little remaining with which to threaten Iran.

One of Iran's most significant strategic achievements arising from the conflict has been the consolidation of its control over the **Strait of Hormuz**, the world's most critical energy chokepoint. The American military attack created conditions under which Iran, invoking the principle of self-defense, was able to strengthen its control over this strategically vital waterway to an

unprecedented degree. Iran no longer requires American recognition of its authority over the Strait. Sovereignty that is exercised effectively and sustained over time gradually becomes an established reality within the international system. With the passage of time, such authority acquires increasing legitimacy and ultimately evolves into an accepted geopolitical fact that external powers find increasingly difficult to challenge.

The United States' long record of violating its commitments must also be taken into account. Experience has consistently demonstrated that the American political system shows little inclination to fully and genuinely remove sanctions, even when the opposing party complies with its demands. For Washington, sanctions constitute a long-term instrument for containing rival powers rather than a temporary bargaining tool. Consequently, the belief that negotiations and concessions regarding strategic achievements can produce meaningful economic relief represents a serious strategic miscalculation.

Even if the United States were formally to commit itself to lifting sanctions, it would likely introduce new legal and technical barriers that would prevent Iran from receiving tangible economic benefits. Under current circumstances, where Washington lacks any remaining credible and effective means of coercion, Iran occupies a position of relative strength. Once the United States resorted to military force and failed, it eliminated the final and most significant instrument through which it sought to intimidate Iran. That outcome has created an opportunity for Iran to consolidate an emerging strategic order without concern for future military threats. Under such conditions, Iran should not appear as the party in need of negotiations. Instead, it should impose stringent conditions that place the burden of response upon the United States. Diplomatic flexibility is meaningful only insofar as it formally consolidates Iran's achievements on the ground rather than providing a defeated adversary with an opportunity to recover and regroup.

What has been secured on the battlefield is considerably more valuable than deferred diplomatic promises. Military achievements constitute tangible realities that determine the balance of power, whereas negotiations frequently provide an arena for rhetoric and attempts to recover through diplomatic commitments what has already been lost in the field. At present, the United States is not in a position to dictate terms, since it can neither intensify economic pressure beyond its existing level nor organize an effective military threat that has not already failed.

Iran's influence over the Strait of Hormuz and its ability to affect global energy flows substantially increase the country's geopolitical weight within the emerging multipolar order. Such strategic influence does not require formal recognition by a declining power in order to attain legitimacy. As this reality becomes increasingly entrenched over time, it is likely to gain broader international acceptance. Indeed, many states have already adjusted to the region's evolving geopolitical landscape and are seeking engagement with Iran as a major regional actor.

Accordingly, Iran's negotiating strategy should rest upon the principle that diplomacy serves as an instrument for compelling the opposing side to acknowledge new strategic realities rather than as a mechanism for compromising fundamental principles. The achievements secured through the Iranian nation's endurance in war and under sanctions should not be surrendered through an agreement lacking credible guarantees and concluded under media pressure. Within the emerging international order, Iran should define the agenda and shape the strategic narrative, ensuring that its adversaries cannot obtain through diplomatic promises what they failed to achieve through military confrontation and economic pressure. From the perspective of political realism, power remains the decisive factor in international affairs, and Iran now seeks to present itself as possessing that power at its highest level.

6. War as Opportunity

Historical analysis of global politics shows that enduring peace and international or regional orders have always emerged from the ashes of major wars. In international relations, war is not merely understood as a destructive phenomenon; rather, it functions as a structural accelerator that breaks deadlocks and paves the way for a redefinition of the balance of power and the establishment of a new order. The existing structures of the current global order, which are the product of World War II and the subsequent Cold War era, are in a condition where no peaceful political action is capable of producing fundamental change in their underlying layers. It is precisely at this point that war, despite all its human and material costs, becomes the only path for the redistribution of power and the construction of a new security architecture. If we examine history, we find that no international order has collapsed without a major war, and no replacement structure has been legitimized without consolidation through battlefield victory; from the Treaty of Westphalia to the post-Cold War order following the fall of the Berlin Wall, all have been products of war. Fundamentally, structural changes in the international system, such as shifts in power and the formation of a new order, occur only and exclusively after war—such as the establishment of Iranian sovereignty over the Strait of Hormuz, which the third imposed war created the opportunity for. From this perspective, a war imposed by the declining U.S. hegemony on the Islamic Republic of Iran is a unique historical opportunity—or more precisely, a strategic blessing—for Iran to exit the imposed order and emerge as a new pole of power capable of redesigning global geography and politics.

Geopolitics and structures of power in the world are rigid and static by nature, and only under the pressure of a full-scale war do they melt and become capable of reconfiguration. Power structures in the world have a strong tendency to preserve the status quo, and existing international institutions are designed in such a way as to protect the interests of established powers. Therefore, the redistribution of power from West to East and the emergence of independent new powers necessarily require the

breakdown of these structures, which is only possible through war. The war imposed by the United States against Iran is, in fact, an admission of Washington's inability to subjugate Iran through soft and semi-hard instruments, and this military action is the final nail in the coffin of an order that sought to marginalize Iran. With the outbreak of such a war, the global power structure—built for decades on the basis of American military and economic superiority—would collapse, creating a vacuum that only actors with willpower and hard power can fill.

This war provides an opportunity for Iran to utilize its strategic tools, including control over energy chokepoints, the Axis of Resistance, and its missile and drone capabilities, in order to change the rules of the game. It must be noted that some geopolitical transformations, such as changes in spheres of influence, the collapse of old military alliances, and the emergence of new security coalitions, are inherently post-war phenomena and can only materialize and stabilize after war and its conclusion. War removes diplomatic formalities and imposes the raw reality of power upon the world. In this context, Iran must design its strategy based on the understanding that the new global order is being born from the battlefield. The new security architecture that emerges after this confrontation must not be centered on Western-dominated institutions; rather, this war provides the opportunity for indigenous and regional structures derived from Iran's real power to replace imposed frameworks.

The necessity of war for such transformations stems from the fact that great powers never voluntarily relinquish their privileges and only concede when confronted with military defeat or deadlock in hard confrontation. Therefore, this imposed war accelerates the process of U.S. decline, which under normal conditions might take many years. At this historic juncture, Iran, using its unique capabilities, can raise the cost of remaining in the old order so high for the United States and its allies that the system will naturally move toward collapse. This is

the golden moment in which the international system transitions from unipolarity to multipolarity.

It must not be forgotten that the stabilization of any new order requires both a narrative of victory and a material reality on the ground—both of which emerge only from war. The current imposed war transforms Iran's latent capacities into actual ones and demonstrates to the world that the United States is no longer the central decision-making pole of global affairs. Global power transitions have always been accompanied by pain and destruction. Despite the negative moral and material perception of war, the reality is that in the face of an imposed war from the United States, Iran has no choice but self-defense. Iran should not view this imposed war merely as a threat; rather, it must be seen as an opportunity and a gateway toward a post-American world. Through this war, Iran must dismantle the rules of the liberal order and construct parallel economic, military, and legal structures, consolidating them under its strategic power.

The international dimensions of this imposed war and its vast global consequences have the potential to fundamentally transform the geometry of global

power. Therefore, Iran must fully utilize this strategic opportunity to achieve and consolidate its strategic objectives. The structural changes that will occur at the end of this war will never be achievable for Iran through negotiation tables alone. These include, for example, sovereignty over the Strait of Hormuz, the expulsion of foreign forces from the region, the end of dollar hegemony, and formal recognition of Iran's sphere of influence as an irreversible international reality. These are outcomes that can only be achieved and stabilized in conditions of war or immediately after it, due to the collapse of previous structures and the necessity of establishing a new order.

Therefore, Iran must use this imposed war as an opportunity to finalize its transition from an American-dominated world order. By imposing its will on the battlefield, it can establish a new order in which the geography and history of this land return once again to their natural and civilizational position. This war is a historic opportunity for the consolidation of national power at the global level.

7. Threat Balancing

Despite liberal claims about institutionalism, the international system remains fundamentally grounded in the logic of coercive power. The United States and Israel have consistently escalated the level of perceived threat against Iran through crippling economic sanctions, the targeted assassination of scientific elites, explicit military threats, and systematic efforts to isolate Iran diplomatically. In such a context, expecting Iran to rely on international organizations and legal norms, in a posture of optimism, as the primary guarantor of its security amounts to strategic naïveté.

Within international relations—particularly in the realist tradition—no concept is more fundamental and non-negotiable than survival. States, regardless of their official rhetoric, ultimately behave as rational units in an anarchic system that lacks a central authority capable of guaranteeing security. In such an environment, security is neither granted nor guaranteed; it is constructed through power, deterrence, and threat balancing. From this perspective, advocating for a policy of threat balancing by the Islamic Republic of Iran toward the United States and Israel is a logical outcome of a realist understanding of Iranian security. It implies abandoning liberal illusions and accepting the raw logic of power—ironically the same logic that dominant powers apply while expecting moral restraint from others.

The theory of “balance of threat,” developed by Stephen Walt, is a significant refinement of classical balance-of-power theory. According to this framework, states balance not only against power but against perceived threat, which is composed of four primary variables: military capability, perceived intentions, geographic proximity, and historical behavior. Applying these criteria to the United States and Israel in relation to Iran yields a maximized threat assessment. Both actors have a documented history of using force, conducting preemptive operations, and violating the sovereignty of other states, while their declared and operational intentions toward Iran remain explicitly hostile. Under such conditions, failure to construct a

countervailing balance of threat constitutes a strategic miscalculation.

In this framework, threat balancing refers to the creation of credible and tangible costs for the adversary—costs that deter the United States and Israel from pursuing pressure-maximization strategies. Deterrence is effective only when the threat is both credible and undeniable, and is perceived by the opponent as feasible and costly. The adversary must believe not only in the capability to act but also in the willingness to do so if necessary. The credibility of deterrence does not arise from verbal declarations alone; it is produced through the interaction of real capability (military and economic), demonstrated political resolve, and established behavioral history. If any of these elements is absent, credibility collapses. A state that repeatedly retreats under pressure, even if it possesses significant latent capability, will have its deterrent power discounted. Therefore, deterrence without demonstrated resolve is an illusion. This approach argues that short-term costs associated with escalation are, in comparison to the long-term costs of structural passivity, more tolerable and strategically rational.

The core issue is that the regional order envisioned by the United States and Israel is one in which Iran must either become a compliant and controllable actor or remain under continuous pressure as a permanent threat. Therefore, threat balancing is not merely an optional policy choice but a structural necessity for preserving sovereignty and strategic independence. Policies based solely on unilateral de-escalation, unconditional trust-building, or integration into an externally designed order cannot produce sustainable security. Such approaches often incentivize further coercion by reducing the tangible costs of hostile behavior for the opposing side.

Threat balancing should not be reduced to its military dimension alone. It must be understood as a multi-domain strategy encompassing military, technological, regional, political, and even normative dimensions. In this sense, deterrent power is not limited to hard capabilities but also

includes the ability to generate uncertainty for adversaries, increase decision-making costs, and expand the range of consequences associated with hostile actions.

A key factor in this framework is perception management and signaling. If Iran is perceived in U.S. and Israeli strategic calculations as predictable, controllable, and ultimately vulnerable, the probability of hostile action increases. Conversely, if the signal conveyed is that any aggression will trigger uncertain and costly consequences, even highly assertive actors are compelled to reassess their strategic calculations.

The United States and Israel are not merely seeking tactical behavioral adjustments from Iran; their strategic objective is the containment or gradual erosion of Iran's capacity as an independent regional actor. This objective is pursued through a combination of economic pressure, psychological warfare, military threats, and targeted assassinations of scientists and military commanders. Consequently, any signal of hesitation or weakness is interpreted as validation of this pressure strategy, thereby encouraging escalation. Effective counter-strategy therefore requires altering the adversary's cost-benefit calculus, which is not achievable without establishing a credible balance of threat.

Moreover, given the open and comprehensive support provided by the United States and Israel for internal unrest and their alleged role in organizing disruptive elements, a symmetrical logic of deterrence implies that Iran must possess the capacity to impose reciprocal costs on domestic stability within adversarial states. From this perspective, any internal instability in Iran would entail corresponding instability within Israel,

thereby imposing operational burdens on its security apparatus and increasing the costs of escalation management.

Threat balancing also carries an important identity and discursive function. As a state challenging a dominant hegemonic order and advancing a resistance-oriented discourse, Iran faces sustained pressure from the United States and the broader Western system intended to serve as a deterrent example to others. In such an environment, continuous retreat erodes not only material capabilities but also symbolic capital and strategic credibility. Loss of credibility can initiate a self-reinforcing cycle of increasing external pressure. Therefore, threat balancing also functions as a mechanism for preserving strategic credibility and preventing the normalization of coercion.

Ultimately, threat balancing against the United States and Israel rests on the premise that security in the international system is produced through the capacity to impose costs and generate mutual deterrence, rather than through reliance on liberal optimism about institutional guarantees. By emphasizing self-reliance, strategic autonomy, and the activation of all dimensions of national power, this approach transforms Iran from a reactive actor into a proactive one capable of reshaping the rules of engagement—making hostility against it increasingly costly and less attractive. Although this strategy carries inherent risks, it is, in comparative terms, argued to be less costly than long-term passivity or one-sided trust, and more conducive to sustaining sovereignty, security, and strategic survival in a structurally hostile environment.

8. Balance of Destruction and Economic Deterrence

Contrary to the common assumption that Iran's energy infrastructure constitutes an exposed vulnerability and an easy target in wartime, Iran's modern deterrence architecture is based on the principle that any damage inflicted on these facilities would trigger a cascading chain of insecurity and reciprocal infrastructural destruction. In this framework, the survival of the global economy is structurally tied to the survival of Iran's own economic system. Iran has, in effect, constructed a "balance of destruction" in which the cost of any attack on its energy installations is externalized beyond its borders and transformed into an existential crisis for the broader capitalist system and global industrial order.

Accordingly, any strike against Iran's refineries or pipelines would immediately be met with extensive attacks on oil and gas fields, pumping stations, and energy infrastructure belonging to Israel and other adversarial or allied regional states aligned with the United States. This approach—essentially a form of symmetrical deterrence within asymmetric warfare—confronts the United States with the reality that damaging Iran's infrastructure would translate into the collapse of regional energy economies and, consequently, severe disruption across financial markets and industrial systems in both the United States and Europe.

To understand this logic, one must recognize the networked nature of the global energy system. Disruption in one node rapidly propagates across the entire structure. Iran has transformed this systemic vulnerability into a lever of strategic power. As a result, the stability of global energy flows is now inseparably linked to the stability of Iranian energy infrastructure, because any attack on it would activate operational plans aimed at targeting regional energy lifelines. These extend beyond the Strait of Hormuz and include oil and gas fields, pumping stations, pipelines, and export terminals across the Persian Gulf, the reconstruction of which could take years.

The credibility of any deterrent rests on the credibility of the threat itself. Through demonstrated

missile and drone capabilities, Iran signals that threats against regional energy infrastructure are not rhetorical but operationally actionable. The United States and its allies are therefore compelled to understand that any attempt to paralyze Iran's economy through military means would effectively amount to triggering widespread destruction of regional energy systems, with downstream consequences including global economic shock and structural instability in dollar-based financial hegemony. In this sense, the balance of destruction redefines energy from a purely economic commodity into a strategic defensive instrument under conditions of "armed peace."

Iran's economic deterrence strategy is rooted in a structural understanding of global supply chains. Advanced economies are highly sensitive to energy volatility, and large-scale disruption of oil production sites would translate into systemic and potentially prolonged crises. The key distinction between earlier deterrence paradigms and the current one lies in the shift from focusing on transit disruption to targeting production nodes themselves. This transition fundamentally alters deterrence dynamics, as adversaries are no longer able to guarantee safety even through naval dominance in the Persian Gulf. Instead, they must contend with the vulnerability of inland and distributed energy infrastructure across allied states.

By shifting the balance from maritime chokepoints to production infrastructure, Iran effectively transforms a potential weakness into a strategic strength, establishing a paradigm in which its own security becomes structurally intertwined with regional and global economic stability. In this framework, Iranian energy facilities are no longer perceived as isolated targets but as components embedded within a wider system of mutual vulnerability.

From this perspective, Iran reaches a strategic threshold in which the destruction of its own energy economy would render it strategically irrational to preserve the energy security of others. This "either for all or for none" logic directly challenges US

interests, given Washington's reliance on stable global energy prices and the economic stability of allied states. Large-scale destruction of regional energy infrastructure would generate both price shocks and structural supply deficits that cannot be easily substituted, thereby amplifying global systemic risk.

Consequently, Iran's deterrence architecture constructs a reciprocal security logic: the protection of its own energy infrastructure becomes a prerequisite for the protection of regional and global energy systems. This transforms Iran into a central node within the international energy order, where any escalation against it is inherently linked to broader systemic consequences. In such a configuration, policymakers are forced to consider

that any attack on Iranian infrastructure would not be a localized military action but a systemic economic event affecting global markets.

Ultimately, Iran's strategy integrates military capability, energy geography, and global economic interdependence into a unified deterrence framework. By embedding energy infrastructure within a structure of reciprocal vulnerability, Iran creates a condition of enforced strategic restraint. This results in a form of coerced stability in which the costs of escalation outweigh any potential gains, thereby anchoring deterrence not in abstract norms, but in concrete and system-wide economic consequences.

Part III. Hard Power and Strategic Deterrence

9. Iran and the Strategic Necessity of Acquiring Nuclear Weapons

Today's world is complex, unstable, and fundamentally governed by the logic of power and coercion. Although international institutions such as the **United Nations** and the **International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)** were established to preserve international peace and security, in practice they operate under the considerable influence of major powers, particularly the United States. In such an environment, states possessing stronger deterrent capabilities enjoy greater security, greater strategic autonomy, and stronger bargaining power. Within this context, maintaining a credible deterrent—including nuclear deterrence—is no longer merely an option but a strategic necessity for survival and national development.

Any analysis of Iran's nuclear dossier must acknowledge that Iran has borne substantial costs over more than two decades in pursuing its nuclear program without obtaining its corresponding strategic benefits.

International sanctions—from **United Nations Security Council** resolutions to unilateral sanctions imposed by the United States and Europe—have placed severe pressure on Iran's economy at various stages. These sanctions were imposed not because Iran possessed nuclear weapons, but merely because of the suspicion that it might eventually acquire them. Alongside economic pressure, Iran has also faced direct and indirect security threats, ranging from the assassination of nuclear scientists to military attacks by the United States and Israel during the Twelve-Day War. Despite these pressures, Iran has continued to adhere to its policy of not producing nuclear weapons. By contrast, a country such as North Korea, possessing nuclear weapons, has remained largely immune from comparable military threats while facing significantly fewer sanctions than Iran.

From a strategic perspective, when a country bears the costs associated with a nuclear weapons

program without obtaining the deterrent and bargaining advantages that accompany it, it finds itself in a position of strategic inefficiency. Such a situation weakens its standing both domestically and internationally. If a nation is destined to endure sanctions and external threats regardless, it would be preferable to obtain genuine deterrence in return. One must recognize that the rules of the international system are determined not by justice but by power. If Iran seeks to remain an independent, resilient, and influential regional actor, it must fully appreciate the price of power and demand tangible strategic returns for the costs it has already incurred. One such return, from this perspective, would undoubtedly be the acquisition of a credible nuclear deterrent capability.

Iran is located in one of the world's most volatile regions. Its borders are shared with countries that either possess nuclear weapons themselves or host military bases belonging to extra-regional powers. Israel possesses dozens of nuclear warheads, has never joined the **Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)**, and has never accepted international inspections by the **IAEA**. Nevertheless, Western governments have remained largely silent regarding its nuclear arsenal while continuing to provide advanced military assistance. Likewise, the United States maintains numerous military bases surrounding Iran and has maintained a direct military presence throughout the region, representing a persistent security concern from the author's perspective. Under such circumstances, reliance solely upon conventional military capabilities, without a stronger strategic deterrent, is presented as insufficient to guarantee Iran's security.

The concept of **nuclear deterrence** rests upon the principle that the cost of military aggression against a nuclear-armed state becomes prohibitively high for any potential attacker. This principle has repeatedly been demonstrated in relations among major powers. For example, despite enduring

territorial disputes and historical hostility, India and Pakistan have not engaged in a full-scale war since both became nuclear powers. The reason is mutual deterrence. Similarly, although North Korea remains politically isolated and heavily sanctioned, its possession of nuclear weapons has led the United States and its allies to refrain from military action while instead pursuing negotiations. Such examples are presented as evidence that possessing nuclear capabilities—even without employing them—can contribute to the long-term security of a state.

Power in international relations extends beyond military strength alone; it also encompasses influence over decision-making, the ability to impose one's will, and leverage in negotiations. States possessing nuclear weapons generally command greater respect at the negotiating table because their counterparts recognize their capacity to alter strategic calculations if necessary. The experience of the **Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA)** demonstrated that even Iran's civilian nuclear program increased its diplomatic leverage. From the author's perspective, possession of nuclear weapons would further expand Iran's diplomatic room for maneuver.

The contemporary international order is characterized by discrimination and exclusivity. Nuclear-armed states have effectively established an exclusive club that seeks not only to prevent additional members from joining but also to preserve its dominance through economic, political, and military pressure upon others.

Throughout the nuclear negotiations—and particularly during the **JCPOA** process—Iran consistently found itself in the position of having to prove its innocence. It repeatedly faced accusations from Western governments and, in an effort to demonstrate the peaceful nature of its nuclear program, accepted numerous concessions, reduced enrichment levels, deactivated centrifuges, and permitted unprecedented inspections by the **IAEA**. Nevertheless, the opposing parties not only failed to fulfill their own commitments but continued to increase pressure. According to the author, the most recent example of this approach was the activation of the snapback mechanism by the three European

countries following the Cairo Agreement. Should Iran acquire a military nuclear capability, this argument contends, the strategic equation would fundamentally change, shifting Iran from a defensive posture to one of greater leverage and initiative.

In any negotiation, the party offering the more valuable concession generally receives greater compensation. When Iran does not possess nuclear weapons, the principal concession available is a commitment not to acquire them. If, however, Iran already possessed nuclear weapons, the argument presented here is that the concession would instead become a sovereign decision regarding their future status or use—a concession regarded by the author as considerably more valuable. This, it is argued, would compel Western governments to offer substantially greater concessions in return.

Successful diplomacy is ultimately founded upon power. From the perspective advanced in this text, nuclear weapons would not be intended for actual use but rather for creating a strategic security umbrella and strengthening Iran's diplomatic position in defense of its national interests. In a world where negotiations favor the powerful—and where military attacks may occur even during diplomatic negotiations—Iran, according to this argument, should possess genuine instruments of power to safeguard its interests. Only then, it is contended, could Iran negotiate with major powers from a position of equality rather than weakness.

National security is inherently relative, fragile, and dependent upon credible deterrence. Iran exists within an environment characterized by numerous actual and potential threats. While Iran's peaceful nuclear program is widely regarded within the country as a legitimate national right, this text argues that current circumstances require that right to evolve further. From the author's perspective, acquiring nuclear weapons is presented as necessary not only for preventing war but also for strengthening Iran's regional position, strategic autonomy, and national dignity. The future, it concludes, belongs to nations capable of defending themselves rather than those that rely upon the promises of others.

10. The Enduring Legacy of a Commitment

Iran's nuclear file is far more than a technical or legal dispute; it is fundamentally a strategic issue tied to the long-term security of the Iranian state. When discussing international commitments, policymakers are in effect defining the boundaries of strength and vulnerability for future generations. Any permanent commitment—such as an irreversible pledge never to develop nuclear weapons—could be interpreted as permanently restricting the strategic options available to future Iranians in the face of unforeseen security challenges. The history of international relations demonstrates that stability is neither permanent nor guaranteed. In a region as volatile as West Asia, the security environment may evolve in ways that render today's deterrence frameworks insufficient.

No government has the moral or political authority to permanently deny future generations the means of exercising their right to self-defense against circumstances that cannot yet be anticipated. Looking a century ahead, one can imagine an international system in which today's political order has collapsed, new powers have emerged, and strategic stability depends primarily upon nuclear deterrence. In such a scenario, if Iran's neighbors—whether current partners that later become competitors, or existing rivals that evolve into direct adversaries—possess nuclear weapons while Iran remains permanently prohibited from acquiring them, the country could find itself in a position of strategic vulnerability. Within the logic of international politics, weakness often serves as an incentive for coercion rather than a guarantee of peace.

National security is inherently dynamic and cannot be permanently confined by the political calculations of any single historical period. Predicting the strategic, military, and technological landscape of the year 2126 is impossible. Nuclear weapons may by then have become as commonplace as other categories of military capability, making their possession appear indispensable for maintaining strategic equilibrium. If present-day Iran were to undertake an irrevocable commitment extending indefinitely into the future,

it would effectively exchange the long-term security of future generations for short-term political or economic relief. Such an exchange is fundamentally unequal, because economic losses can eventually be recovered, whereas strategic vulnerability created by irreversible limitations may prove impossible to reverse.

From another perspective, attention should also be given to the flexibility embedded within Iran's Islamic jurisprudential and political tradition. The Supreme Leader's fatwa declaring nuclear weapons religiously impermissible has been presented as a response grounded in contemporary ethical considerations and current strategic circumstances. At the same time, within Shi'a jurisprudence, secondary rulings (*ahkam thanawiyah*) are traditionally understood to be contingent upon public interest (*maslahah*) and the preservation of the Islamic community. Should the survival of society ever face an existential threat, and should nuclear deterrence become the sole effective means of protecting millions of lives against nuclear-armed adversaries, proponents of this view argue that considerations of preserving life could assume overriding importance. From this perspective, an irrevocable international legal commitment extending indefinitely into the future could constrain the country's ability to respond to fundamentally different strategic realities.

A century from now, the region may experience an extensive nuclear arms competition among neighboring states. If Iran had permanently relinquished the possibility of acquiring comparable capabilities, it could become increasingly vulnerable to pressure from nuclear-armed powers. International politics demonstrates that alliances and rivalries are rarely permanent. Friendly neighbors can become competitors, and competitors may become adversaries. Consequently, many strategic theories emphasize that military capability—rather than political intentions alone—constitutes the principal foundation of deterrence, stability, and national survival. From this perspective, a permanent commitment never to acquire nuclear weapons could be viewed as a

commitment to accepting long-term strategic asymmetry. Supporters of this argument maintain that preserving strategic options is itself an element of national resilience.

The experiences of countries such as Ukraine and Libya are frequently cited by advocates of stronger deterrence as examples illustrating the perceived risks of relinquishing strategic capabilities in exchange for international assurances. From this viewpoint, security ultimately depends upon credible power rather than political guarantees alone. Restricting future defense options at the highest strategic level may therefore expose future generations to heightened insecurity in a world where neighboring nuclear powers may no longer be constrained by legal or ethical commitments. Long-term statecraft, according to this perspective, requires balancing present-day economic considerations with the strategic uncertainties of future centuries. Accordingly, any negotiated agreement should preserve sufficient flexibility to allow future governments to reassess national security policies as international conditions evolve.

Iran, under this line of reasoning, should avoid creating a permanent structural vulnerability that

could place future generations at a lasting strategic disadvantage. Stable balances of power generally require the existence of comparable strategic capabilities among competing actors. Advocates of this position therefore argue that if the international community genuinely seeks nuclear disarmament, such disarmament must be universal, reciprocal, and verifiable, rather than reinforcing an international order in which some states permanently retain nuclear arsenals while others remain indefinitely excluded. The responsibility of preserving the nation is understood as a trust inherited from previous generations and entrusted to those yet to come. Passing that trust forward while permanently limiting the country's future strategic options, they argue, would represent a failure of that responsibility. In an increasingly uncertain international environment, national security should be designed to remain adaptable to every conceivable strategic scenario—including one in which nuclear capabilities become widespread. Within this framework, enduring peace ultimately depends upon maintaining credible deterrence and preserving strategic flexibility for future generations.

11. Hormuz Trigger Mechanism

International relations have always been defined by the tension between “international law and legal norms” and “realism and the logic of power.” The experience of negotiations with the United States has also demonstrated that relying on legal mechanisms and even multilateral agreements such as the JCPOA is ineffective when dealing with a state that does not comply with its commitments. In a context where the United States treats negotiations and agreements as political tools or leverage instruments, international law only becomes meaningful when backed by a powerful guarantee. From this perspective, the concept of the “Hormuz Trigger Mechanism” can be understood as a mechanism representing a shift from ineffective legal complaints toward the use of a powerful geopolitical instrument; because the only language understood by the U.S. regime is the language of power and maximum cost imposition, and the Strait of Hormuz is precisely the instrument capable of achieving this objective.

In the Hormuz Trigger doctrine, we are dealing with a form of structural deterrence in which the Strait of Hormuz functions as the enforcement guarantor of all Iran’s international agreements. Unilateral withdrawal from agreements or the reinstatement of sanctions has historically carried no cost for the United States, but the Hormuz Trigger fundamentally alters this equation. Under this framework, any breach of U.S. commitments—whether economic or political—will no longer be referred to joint commissions or international organizations, and its impact will be directly imposed on the pulse of global energy flows. If the other side’s commitments remain merely on paper, Iran’s response must occur at a level that shakes both the United States and all its strategic allies and energy supply chains. In this sense, the Strait of Hormuz becomes more than a maritime passage; it becomes a strategic punitive instrument that responds to any breach of agreement with intolerable cost.

This approach effectively creates an operational snapback mechanism. In the JCPOA, the snapback mechanism was a legal procedure for restoring

sanctions; under this approach, Iran replaces the legal snapback with an operational snapback. Accordingly, decision-making and enforcement are no longer in the hands of international institutions but in Iran’s control. The fundamental difference is that in the JCPOA’s legal snapback, Iran awaited the approval of a hostile and unjust structure, whereas in this operational snapback, Iran is both judge and executor. When Iran declares that the Strait of Hormuz functions as a trigger, it effectively warns the United States that any violation of commitments will immediately activate a direct field response from Iran without the need for any international authorization. This places the United States in a position where it must choose between compliance or accepting the risk of disrupting global energy flows.

A key element in this doctrine is the concept of automatic activation of the Hormuz Trigger. One of the weaknesses in political interactions is the delay in decision-making or political bargaining, which gives the adversary hope that small concessions or empty promises can prevent a strong response. However, the Hormuz Trigger doctrine is based on eliminating bargaining. Iran’s response to a U.S. breach is not merely a political decision requiring lengthy consultations; it is executed as an immediate and automatic military order. In simple terms, if a violation of agreement or new sanctions are imposed by the United States, closure or disruption of the Strait is triggered automatically and without intermediary processes. This transformation from a legal response to an automatic operational mechanism creates a credible deterrent in the adversary’s perception. The United States must understand that the Hormuz Trigger is a conditional system with no grey zone for maneuvering.

From a geopolitical perspective, the Strait of Hormuz functions in this doctrine as a global energy shutoff switch. The United States, within the current global order, exerts systemic pressure on countries through control of the dollar and banking systems. In response, Iran can apply counter-pressure through the Hormuz Trigger; meaning that if the United States can halt a country’s financial flows

with a directive, Iran can halt global energy flows with an operational command. The Hormuz Trigger is therefore presented as the only tool capable of ensuring that U.S. breaches of agreements are no longer cost-free. This influence over global energy flows forces the United States, in every decision, to consider Iran's position and the status of the Strait of Hormuz, knowing that any violation could trigger an economic shockwave in global markets, the cost of which would be borne by the United States and all its allies.

Regarding the operational structure of the Hormuz Trigger, responses must be proportional to each adversary action. For instance, failure to unfreeze Iranian assets would automatically lead to disruption in the passage of U.S. vessels. If sanctions are reinstated, the response escalates to temporary closure of the Strait for major U.S. allies, and in the case of military attack, the response would escalate to full closure. Structuring responses in this way ensures that the adversary cannot predict or manage Iran's reaction. In the Hormuz Trigger doctrine, Iran links transit security to the behavior of the opposing party; meaning that the right of passage through this strategic waterway becomes dependent on compliance with commitments and respect for Iran's national sovereignty.

The Hormuz Trigger is more than a military threat; it is presented as a tool for disciplining the United States. The message of this doctrine to the world is that Iran does not seek closure of the Strait, but

whether an agreement is reached and violated by the United States, or no agreement is reached and hostile actions continue, the Hormuz Trigger will be activated automatically. This places Persian Gulf, Asian, and European countries—major energy producers and consumers—in a state of urgency, compelling them to pressure the United States to comply with agreements. Through this mechanism, Iran turns the global system into a lever of pressure against the United States and shifts the cost of non-compliance onto Washington and its allies.

Control over the Strait of Hormuz would transform Iran's position in the emerging global order—from a country under sanctions pressure to a state capable of influencing the entire global energy supply chain with a single strategic move. Therefore, the Hormuz Trigger is both a pressure tool and a guarantee of stable security; because security only exists when the adversary is certain that any action will be met with a swift and severe response. This doctrine marks the end of "hope-based diplomacy" and the beginning of power-centric diplomacy, where U.S. commitments are tied to an operational guarantee linked to the Strait of Hormuz, leaving no escape from the cost of non-compliance. It must be noted that the Hormuz Trigger is not only designed to enforce agreements; it must remain a permanent threat, even in the absence of any agreement, ensuring immediate activation in response to sanctions or military aggression.

12. The “Hormuz Sanctions”: Strategic Rebalancing and the Seizure of Iranian Assets

The issue of Iranian state assets being frozen or confiscated by third-party governments under U.S. directives is a matter that, from a strategic standpoint, cannot remain without response. Any failure to react risks normalizing a pattern of behavior that may be replicated by other actors in the future. States such as the United Arab Emirates and Qatar, which have been involved in restricting access to Iranian financial resources, often justify their actions by citing U.S. pressure and the risk of secondary sanctions. Implicitly, however, this reflects a clear cost calculation: compliance with Washington is perceived as less costly than honoring financial obligations toward Iran.

In international relations, when actors operate within a competitive environment, altering behavior requires increasing the cost of maintaining the status quo. If these states perceive that freezing Iranian assets carries no meaningful strategic or material consequences—and may even yield approval from the United States—they will have no incentive to reverse their actions voluntarily.

Accordingly, the only viable mechanism for restoring these assets is the creation of a countervailing pressure equilibrium, in which the cost of maintaining asset freezes exceeds the cost of potential U.S. retaliation. Within this framework, Iran’s most significant geostrategic instrument—the Strait of Hormuz—emerges as a central lever of influence.

As one of the most critical maritime chokepoints in the global energy and trade system, the Strait of Hormuz represents a structural point of vulnerability for regional economies. When regional or extra-regional states prioritize alignment with U.S. directives over Iran’s financial rights, they effectively anchor their own economic security within the broader architecture of American coercive policy.

In response, Iran’s strategic logic would entail a form of symmetrical counter-pressure. If such states

restrict Iran’s financial access under external coercion, Iran would, in turn, impose constraints on their access to the Strait of Hormuz—the most vital corridor for their commercial and energy exports. In this sense, the Strait functions not merely as a waterway, but as a strategic asset capable of being operationalized within an economic deterrence framework.

The result of such a strategy would be the creation of tangible costs for third-party states. Economies such as those of the UAE and Qatar are heavily dependent on uninterrupted maritime trade and energy flows. Any disruption to their shipping routes through Hormuz would generate immediate and severe economic consequences. Under such conditions, the incentive structure shifts: the economic cost of maintaining frozen Iranian assets would outweigh the perceived political cost of defying U.S. pressure.

This approach is not intended to be limited to Persian Gulf states alone. Any country participating in the freezing of Iranian financial assets under unilateral U.S. directives—outside the framework of recognized international judicial mechanisms—would, in principle, be subject to similar constraints regarding access to strategic maritime corridors.

From a legal perspective, the confiscation or freezing of sovereign assets without multilateral judicial authorization and based solely on the directives of a third-party state constitutes a violation of established principles of international law. Consequently, Iran’s response is framed not merely as retaliation, but as an attempt to restore balance within an asymmetric enforcement structure.

Within this paradigm, the Strait of Hormuz is not simply a geographic passage but a form of geostrategic capital. Its utility extends beyond commerce into the realm of deterrence and bargaining power.

The introduction of such a mechanism would fundamentally alter how Iran is perceived by counterpart states. Rather than viewing Iran as an actor reliant solely on diplomatic protest mechanisms, it would be recognized as a state capable of imposing direct and material constraints on the economic lifelines of other actors. In such a configuration, coercive pressure becomes reciprocal.

This shift in perception is central to deterrence logic. By linking financial rights to maritime access, Iran effectively creates a structured cost-imposition framework in which economic behavior toward Iran is no longer without consequence. The objective is not merely restitution of assets, but the establishment of a precedent in which participation in asset freezes becomes strategically unattractive.

Under such conditions, affected states would be compelled to reassess their exposure to risk and potentially seek negotiated arrangements to restore access to critical maritime routes in exchange for the release of Iranian funds.

To be effective, this mechanism would need to be institutionalized as a procedural doctrine of economic-security linkage: any state engaging in the restriction of Iranian sovereign financial assets would, as a matter of policy, face constraints on its access to strategic maritime corridors.

In contemporary international political economy, economic power is deeply intertwined with geostrategic positioning. The use of geographic chokepoints as instruments of financial and political leverage represents one of the most consequential forms of asymmetrical statecraft.

Within this framework, Iran's utilization of the Strait of Hormuz would function as both a corrective mechanism and a deterrent signal. It would communicate that participation in externally driven financial coercion carries systemic costs that extend beyond bilateral relations with Iran.

Ultimately, this approach constitutes a form of symmetrical economic warfare, in which Iran leverages its geographic centrality to counterbalance financial coercion by external actors and their intermediaries. The strategic objective is twofold: the recovery of frozen national assets and the redefinition of the cost structure associated with participation in anti-Iranian economic measures.

In doing so, Iran would reinforce its position as a decisive geopolitical actor in the region while simultaneously altering the incentive structure governing third-party compliance with external sanction regimes.

Part IV. Redefining Diplomacy

13. Offensive Diplomacy

In critiquing policy approaches based on restraint in diplomacy, one must highlight a deep gap between internal perception and international interpretation—one that has imposed substantial costs on national interests. This analysis focuses on diplomacy in order to explain why being a “well-behaved” or compliant actor in the international system does not lead to moderation in adversarial behavior; instead, in a system governed by power and coercion, such behavior functions as an implicit invitation for further pressure.

In international relations, the operative language is cost-balancing. Any action outside this framework—especially one grounded in restraint, magnanimity, or ethical accommodation—is translated within the adversary’s decision-making calculus as weakness, lack of capability, and absence of resolve. The assumption that failure to respond symmetrically will be interpreted as goodwill or a future opportunity for reconciliation is one of the most damaging misconceptions, as it undermines deterrence stability. In a realist environment, attempting to behave as a “good international citizen” yields no strategic reward; it merely reduces the cost of applying pressure and encourages more ambitious coercive designs by the adversary.

One of the clearest historical illustrations of this logic is the JCPOA experience and the events following the U.S. withdrawal from the agreement. At that time, Iran adopted a posture of restraint for an extended period after the unilateral U.S. exit, maintaining compliance in the hope of moral legitimacy and European compensation. However, the outcome demonstrated a different dynamic: the United States, observing this lack of immediate reciprocal escalation, concluded that Iran lacked the will or capacity to impose costs in return. Rather than encouraging compliance by the other side, restraint contributed to the emergence of the “maximum pressure” doctrine. In effect, Iranian

restraint was interpreted as confirmation that coercive measures were effective and that further escalation would be cost-free. A symmetrical and immediate response to the initial violation might have altered this calculus, but the attempt to preserve the image of a responsible actor instead lowered the perceived cost of aggression.

When a state refrains from proportional diplomatic retaliation, it effectively signals fear of escalation. Another example can be found in responses to targeted assassinations and sabotage operations on Iranian soil. In many cases, policymakers relied on “strategic patience” to avoid falling into escalation traps or undermining diplomatic positioning. However, the interpretation by adversaries—particularly Israel and the United States—was the opposite: restraint was read as fear of retaliation. This perception contributed to an escalation trajectory, from targeted killings of nuclear scientists to senior military commanders, and ultimately to a direct strike on top-tier leadership in later stages of confrontation. Instead of preserving stability, restraint gradually expanded the adversary’s perceived safe operating space, increasing the scope of permissible aggression.

Delays, ambiguity, and asymmetry in diplomatic responses reinforce this perception. In several instances, responses to hostile claims were either delayed, overly general, or indirect, reducing their signaling effectiveness. Likewise, even after formal agreements intended to reduce tensions, repeated rhetorical escalation from opposing actors has often been met with limited strategic response, reinforcing the perception of asymmetry in resolve. As a result, the adversary recalibrates upward its expectations in every negotiation, assuming that pressure yields concessions without proportional cost.

The belief that restraint generates moral credit in international politics is largely illusory.

International relations do not operate on moral accounting; they operate on a memory of costs and vulnerabilities. Adversaries do not reward prior restraint in subsequent crises. Instead, they use it as a benchmark for measuring tolerance thresholds. This dynamic systematically erodes deterrence and places the restrained actor in a permanently reactive position.

This approach is often driven by concern over international isolation. There is a widespread assumption that forceful responses lead to condemnation and diplomatic marginalization. Yet empirical patterns in global politics suggest otherwise: powerful actors that assert their interests decisively are often respected—even if criticized—whereas actors that fail to defend themselves become strategically irrelevant. Isolation is not

typically the result of assertive behavior; it is more often the consequence of perceived incapacity.

To correct this structural imbalance, diplomacy must shift from excessive restraint toward what can be termed **offensive diplomacy**. This does not imply initiating conflict; rather, it entails ensuring that hostile actions are met with clear, immediate, and credible costs. When adversaries understand that diplomatic aggression will be met with decisive counteraction, their incentive structure changes, leading to greater caution and compliance with basic diplomatic norms. In this framework, diplomacy is no longer a passive exercise in goodwill signaling, but an active instrument for shaping adversary behavior through credible deterrence.

14. The label “antisemitism”: Israel’s tool for legitimizing crimes and suppressing critics

The Jewish religion is one of the divine religions, and Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) is its prophet. However, the behavior of Zionist groups and the State of Israel, which is accompanied by occupation and killings, has no connection to the Jewish religion. Zionism, as a purely political–military and criminal sect, seeks only to achieve its own objectives and does not adhere to any moral or religious values. This text, while emphasizing the distinction between Judaism and Zionism, reminds us that criticism of Zionism and the violent behavior of Zionists has nothing to do with respect for the sacred religion of Judaism and its great prophet.

One of Israel’s constant tactics is to accuse its opponents of “antisemitism.” This label not only serves a propaganda function but also acts as a defensive shield, protecting the regime from accountability for its crimes. Through this tactic, Israel portrays any objection to occupation, settlement expansion, the killing of civilians, or human rights violations as hostility toward a people or a religion, thereby constructing artificial legitimacy for itself.

One of the main pillars of the Zionist narrative is the portrayal of the “eternally victimized people” image. It emphasizes that Jews have always been oppressed throughout history. History is narrated in a way that suggests Jews have constantly been victims of discrimination and oppression, with no factor other than the blind prejudice of nations contributing to this situation. This selective historical narrative allows Israel to justify its present-day crimes under the shadow of “past suffering.”

This claim is more of a historical instrument for reproducing a discourse of victimhood than an objective reality. Looking back through history, we see that in different regions and periods, Zionists have repeatedly come into conflict with the majority of societies. The important point is that these conflicts have not been limited to a single nation, geography, or era, but have occurred both in Europe

and Asia. Such a wide scope suggests that the roots of this persistent hostility should be sought in behavioral patterns and socio-economic relations of Zionist groups, rather than in blind prejudice alone.

In a 2013 speech at the United Nations General Assembly, Benjamin Netanyahu recounted an incident from his grandfather in Europe. Netanyahu said: “One cold day in the late 19th century my grandfather Nathan and his younger brother Judah were standing in a railway station in the heart of Europe. They were seen by a group of anti-Semitic thugs who ran towards them waving clubs, screaming ‘death to the Jews.’ My grandfather shouted to his younger brother to flee and save himself, and then stood alone against the raging mob to slow it down. They beat him senseless, left him for dead, and before he passed out, covered in his own blood, he said to himself: ‘What a disgrace... The descendants of the Maccabees lie in the mud, powerless to defend themselves.’ He promised himself that if he lived, he would take his family to the Jewish homeland and help build a future for the Jewish people. I stand here today as Israel’s Prime Minister because my grandfather kept that promise.”

Netanyahu presented this narrative as historical evidence of the “persecution of Jews” in order to justify the policies of the current regime. However, one must ask: at that time neither the Islamic Republic existed nor did Muslim countries play any role in this event—so what factor caused such hatred even in Europe? If this violence were truly rooted in “blind prejudice,” why has it repeatedly occurred in different historical periods and contexts across various societies?

The answer is clear. As historical observation shows, certain economic, political, and social behaviors of Zionists have contributed to such conflicts. In other words, these hostilities are not random or baseless, but rather the result of exclusionary practices, undue influence in power structures, and domination-oriented approaches in

social and economic relations pursued by Zionist groups. The fact that Zionists have repeatedly faced negative reactions and hostility in different geographies and historical periods suggests that everything cannot be reduced to “blind prejudice” or “ethno-religious hatred.” If hostility toward a group is repeated across time and place, the most logical explanation is that its causes must be sought in the behavior of that group itself.

The Israeli regime has well understood that the West, especially after World War II and the Holocaust narrative, is burdened with historical guilt toward Jews. Therefore, whenever Israel is criticized for occupying Palestinian territories, killing civilians, or violating human rights, it immediately invokes this historical wound to trigger an emotional reaction from governments and public opinion in the West. The label “antisemitism” functions as a trigger that reactivates this historical guilt, as if all nations are eternally obliged to remain

silent in the face of Zionism simply because Europe once wronged Jews.

This mechanism allows Israel to operate on two levels: on one hand, it commits occupation and mass killing; on the other, it portrays itself as a victim and silences any criticism by labeling it “antisemitism.”

The label “antisemitism” is therefore a tool used by Israel to suppress truth and conceal the aggressive nature of its actions. If Zionists have historically been repeatedly met with public hostility, this is less a proof of eternal victimhood and more an indication of problematic behavioral patterns within Zionist practices that have consistently triggered similar reactions across different societies and eras. Consequently, Zionists cannot use the narrative of historical victimhood as justification for their contemporary crimes.

15. The Negotiation Deadlock

One of the most common assumptions among political analysts is that any military conflict will ultimately end at the negotiating table because of its rising costs, making diplomacy the only viable path toward a ceasefire or lasting peace. This perspective views war and negotiation as two sides of the same coin, arguing that every war eventually concludes with a political settlement. However, an examination of the nature of the confrontation between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the United States suggests that applying this framework merely perpetuates a defective cycle of war–ceasefire–negotiation. Within this cycle, negotiations are never intended to resolve the underlying causes of conflict. Rather, from this perspective, the United States uses negotiations primarily to manage tensions temporarily, rebuild its capabilities, gain time, or politically and economically exhaust Iran. Consequently, what is often portrayed as the end of war through diplomacy is, in reality, only a military pause that prepares the ground for the next round of confrontation. Looking back at previous negotiations between Iran and the United States, one finds that disagreements were never fundamentally resolved; instead, each round of talks provided Washington with an opportunity to redefine and adjust its strategy toward Iran. This pattern suggests that relying on negotiations as a path to resolution simply accepts the continuation of a recurring cycle in which war never truly comes to an end.

The frequently repeated argument that negotiations are necessary to end war does not apply, according to this perspective, to the conflict between Iran and the United States because a conflict rooted in fundamental existential and ideological differences cannot be resolved through diplomatic instruments. A war that, in this view, emerged despite prolonged negotiations cannot be ended by the same mechanism. This raises an essential question: if negotiations were truly an effective means of resolving disputes between the two sides, why did they ultimately culminate in war? The answer offered is straightforward: when negotiations fail at the level of fundamental principles, armed conflict begins. Consequently, a war that follows the failure of diplomacy cannot reasonably be expected to end

through the very instrument that previously proved ineffective.

It is therefore crucial to distinguish between the cessation of military operations and the resolution of underlying political disputes. Many agreements merely stop the exchange of fire while leaving the political and ideological roots of conflict untouched. In the case of Iran and the United States, the disagreement is portrayed not as a simple dispute over interests or policy preferences that can be resolved through compromise or political bargaining, but as a structural and foundational conflict involving competing conceptions of power, sovereignty, justice, and the international order. When disagreement exists at the level of first principles, negotiations can only succeed if one side abandons its core principles and accepts complete submission. Since, from this viewpoint, the Islamic Republic remains committed to its foundational principles while the United States continues to pursue strategies aimed at changing Iran's political structure, any negotiations conducted under these conditions merely reproduce the same deadlock that existed before the outbreak of conflict.

Accordingly, any attempt to return to the negotiating table while these fundamental contradictions remain unresolved serves only to prolong the recurring cycle of war–ceasefire–negotiation. Under such circumstances, negotiations become not a solution but part of the opposing side's broader strategy to prevent Iran from achieving a fully effective deterrent posture or altering the strategic balance. To break this cycle, it is argued that both the hard and soft dimensions of confrontation between Iran and the United States can only end when the conflict reaches a decisive and final outcome—one that leaves no further room for negotiation.

From this perspective, the Islamic Republic of Iran is currently in a position to capitalize on existing circumstances by pursuing a strategy that seeks to end this confrontation once and for all, rather than accepting another repetition of the same cycle. Such

an outcome, it argues, cannot be achieved through negotiations or agreements that may later be violated. Instead, it depends upon fundamentally altering the balance of power in such a way that the opposing side no longer possesses either the capability or the willingness to initiate renewed conflict or coercive pressure.

It is further argued that the foundational beliefs and principles of a political system are not appropriate subjects for negotiation. Whenever negotiations are conducted over core principles, the result is presented as either complete capitulation or the eventual resumption of conflict, because fundamental principles themselves are viewed as non-negotiable. Consequently, those who claim that negotiations can resolve the fundamental differences between Iran and the United States are, from this perspective, seen as misunderstanding the nature of those differences and perpetuating the same approach that has repeatedly resulted in the failure of short-term agreements over recent decades.

According to this line of reasoning, the only viable way to escape the cycle of war–ceasefire–negotiation is for Iran to strengthen its capabilities to the point where both military and non-military confrontation become prohibitively costly for the United States. The current period of instability is therefore portrayed as a strategic opportunity for the Islamic Republic to move beyond a reliance on ceasefires and negotiations toward what is described as a decisive and lasting conclusion to the conflict. Such a conclusion, it argues, can only be achieved through a transformation of the balance of power so significant that negotiations become unnecessary, while strategic realities themselves deter any future aggression from the outset. In this framework, the path out of the recurring cycle is not further diplomacy but the establishment of an overwhelming deterrent posture, where confrontation ends through the acceptance of strategic realities rather than through negotiated compromise.

Part V.Strategic Outlook

16. From the Hormuz Ultimatum to the Emergence of an Iran-Centered Order

The American-Zionist aggression against Iran is neither a limited strike nor a classical war for territorial concessions. This war is a historical turning point in the evolution of the international order, challenging the very structures of the 20th century. In classical theories of international relations, wars are typically viewed as tools for achieving a new equilibrium or recalibrating the balance of power, ultimately culminating in negotiations, peace treaties, or sustainable ceasefires. But the present battle possesses a nature that cannot be concluded with a mere signature; it goes far beyond that, fundamentally transforming the essence of power in the world. This war is an arena of confrontation between two opposing wills—one seeking to preserve unipolar dominance and the waning hegemony of the West, and the other a revolutionary will, born from the heart of the modern Iranian-Islamic civilization, aspiring to end the era of neocolonialism and establish divine justice in the global order.

The undeniable truth is that even up to this very moment of the war, the international system has witnessed a fundamental redefinition of security concepts. The Islamic Republic of Iran stands as the only actor that, independently and without reliance on conventional defense pacts with Eastern or Western superpowers, has confronted the American war machine and the Zionist regime, successfully shattering the myth of Western technological invincibility. This steadfastness has demonstrated to the entire world that the era of American hegemony has ended and a new model of powerful agency, based on absolute political independence, has been born.

The collapse of American hegemony does not merely signify military defeat; it signifies the demise of the global governance system through which the U.S. has run the world for decades. In truth, what has transpired in this war is the passing

of a great historical turning point, in which Iran has emerged simultaneously as a defensive power and a global-level security-producing pole. It must be said that the "Hormuz Ultimatum" was a real and serious warning from Iran that was ignored, but its realization proved that the balance of power in the region has fundamentally shifted, and the era of others making decisions for the region is over. Iran's dominance over the vital artery of the Strait of Hormuz and the retreat of American forces from the region to the world have shown that the era of security guaranteed by outsiders is finished, and any order seeking to remain stable in this geography must be defined on the axis of Iran's will. This new reality is transforming all coalition-building equations in the international system; countries that once saw their security under America's protective umbrella are now, witnessing America's incapacity to protect its own interests and those of its allies against Iran's crushing blows, undertaking a fundamental revision of their political and security doctrines. This revision will create a rift within the Western bloc while simultaneously shaping new strategic alignments around the axis of Iran's power in the region.

Trump now faces a fatal paradox; continuing the war means the complete erosion of America's remaining military credibility, while accepting the reality of Iran's power would effectively sign the end of the American superpower era. By intelligently managing this battle and inflicting devastating blows on the enemy's centers of gravity, Iran has demonstrated that true power lies not in technology and astronomical military budgets, but in the strength of faith and the will of a nation. This war has proven that Iran has reached a stage where it can single-handedly overturn the imposed order of the last century and pave the way for the birth of a truly multipolar world.

The conclusion of this battle is not a mere traditional ceasefire. The ultimate outcome of this war is the establishment of a "new political-security system" in which Iran plays a pivotal role as the backbone of stability in West Asia and a decisive actor in global equations. This new order will not allow a return to the pre-war era. Today's powerful Iran has both safeguarded its geographical borders and redefined the boundaries of the "possible" in global politics.

Analyzing the dimensions of this fundamental transformation at the global level is impossible without considering the collapse of the economic and security structures that for decades were based on the supremacy of the dollar and the U.S. naval fleet. Indeed, the complete control of the Strait of Hormuz by Iran's armed forces has obliterated America's global credibility; for this superpower claimed that safeguarding the free flow of energy and securing international waterways was its inherent and exclusive duty. America's failure to reclaim this vital artery signifies the devaluation of the West's strategic assets and the collapse of financial markets previously built upon security guaranteed by the Pentagon. In this war, the realist and liberalist theories of international relations—written on the basis of balance of power and Western-dominated international institutions—no longer possess the capacity to explain the existing reality; because Iran, relying on its inner strength and revolutionary faith, has introduced a variable into the equation that does not fit into the enemy's material calculations.

The damages inflicted upon the military apparatus of the Zionist regime and America during this period are so profound that their reconstruction in the short term is impossible, and this has shifted the balance of terror in favor of the Axis of Resistance. Now, it is no longer about "deterrence"; today, it is about the "imposition of will." Iran has shown in this war that it can manage the battlefield in such a way that the enemy feels insecure even in its own occupied territories. This process has led to the birth of a new

power bloc in the East, centered on Iran, and other global powers such as China and Russia, witnessing this unparalleled authority, are inevitably compelled to redefine their relations with Iran as a decisive strategic partner.

Trump is now grappling with a bitter reality; he who sought to bring Iran to its knees at the negotiating table through military pressure, now finds himself in a position where he must seek a dignified exit from a crisis that has shaken all pillars of American power. But the truth is that the new world order is born, and in this order, Iran, as a "civilizational pole," dictates the conditions. This civilizational victory marks the endpoint of the Western-centric paradigm and the dawn of an era of sovereignty for independent nations. With the consolidation of the Iran-centered order in the region, henceforth no equation will be formulated without seeking Iran's approval and coordination. Therefore, the withdrawal of American forces from regional bases and the resulting power vacuum must be immediately managed by Iran. This means the new political-security order of the region will be based on endogenous security, with no place for extra-regional actors.

The Ramadan War proved that Western hard power pales in comparison to Iran's revolutionary soft and hard power, and Iran has relegated American hegemony to the dustbin of history. This is the true meaning of a global revolution that began on the battlefields, has penetrated the depths of political theory, and has changed the world forever. Now, all old diplomatic equations and security pacts are obsolete, and the world is adapting to the reality of a "Powerful Iran"; a nation that, by standing firm against the greatest military power in history, has proven that the victory of blood over the sword and faith over technology is not just a slogan—it is the inviolable truth of history.

17. The United States and the Challenge of Containing China

An examination of the United States' strategic behavior in the third decade of the twenty-first century reveals a fundamental transformation in its national security paradigm, shifting from counterterrorism to what is now defined as "great power competition." Within this framework, the central preoccupation of Washington's strategic community is the comprehensive containment of China, which has emerged not merely as an economic rival, but as a serious contender for the reconfiguration of the international order itself.

From a structural realist perspective, the survival of U.S. hegemony depends on control over the "critical arteries" that sustain the rival power's economic system. At the top of these arteries lies global energy and hydrocarbon flows. The United States has clearly recognized that China's economic trajectory is constrained by a structural vulnerability: its dependence on imported energy.

Consequently, Washington's grand strategy has increasingly been oriented toward securing physical and political influence over strategically significant energy-producing regions, with the objective of effectively controlling the "flow valve" of China's economy. In this logic, disruption or conditional access to energy corridors becomes a tool for placing Beijing in a permanent state of strategic uncertainty.

Accordingly, both the Middle East and Venezuela—home to the world's largest hydrocarbon reserves—have become central theaters of geopolitical competition. Here, U.S. military presence and political intervention are not primarily designed to satisfy domestic energy needs, but rather to prevent rival powers from gaining unconstrained access to these resources and to preserve leverage in global bargaining structures.

Washington understands that if China secures stable and autonomous access to external energy sources beyond U.S. control, Western economic instruments of pressure would lose much of their effectiveness. For this reason, efforts to control Venezuelan oil, alongside sustained dominance in the Persian Gulf,

function as two interconnected arms of a single geopolitical strategy.

Venezuela, possessing the world's largest proven crude oil reserves, represents a potential alternative supply hub for China within the Western Hemisphere. As such, sanctions regimes and political pressure aimed at regime change in Caracas can be interpreted as part of a broader strategy to deprive Beijing of a reliable energy partner.

On the other side, the Persian Gulf—due to its proximity to East Asian maritime routes—constitutes the most critical node in China's energy security architecture. By maintaining military installations around the Strait of Hormuz and the Arabian Sea, the United States signals to Beijing that the security of its energy imports remains subject to American strategic oversight.

In essence, control over oil serves as an instrument through which Washington can increase the economic costs of China's rise and constrain its evolution into a fully autonomous military-political superpower. Military power without secure energy supply becomes strategically limited in prolonged systemic competition.

Thus, the United States employs oil not merely as a commodity, but as a structural instrument of geopolitical coercion. In doing so, it effectively buys time to manage its relative decline while preventing the emergence of alternative centers of global power. Any regional attempt to escape this framework is met with forceful political and economic countermeasures.

Beyond military geography, this strategy is embedded within a deeper financial architecture in which oil functions as a pillar of dollar hegemony. The linkage between global energy markets and the U.S. dollar—established in the post-1970s "petrodollar" system—has allowed Washington to sustain structural monetary dominance.

Under this system, global demand for oil translates into global demand for dollars, enabling the United

States to finance persistent fiscal deficits while maintaining monetary centrality. China's gradual move toward energy transactions denominated in yuan represents not only commercial diversification, but a direct challenge to the foundations of American financial power.

From this perspective, Venezuelan and Middle Eastern oil are not merely energy assets; they are strategic levers in preserving the integrity of the petrodollar system. Any independent energy alignment between resource-rich states and China threatens to erode this structure, and consequently, the broader architecture of Western financial dominance.

As a result, Washington's sanctions policies and extraterritorial financial measures can be interpreted as mechanisms designed to prevent the formation of an alternative energy-financial bloc centered around Beijing.

Within this framework, oil is transformed into a "strategic weapon" rather than a tradable commodity. Control over supply routes, production centers, and export infrastructure becomes a means of shaping the global balance of power.

From a geopolitical standpoint, U.S. strategy in the Middle East has therefore evolved from that of a traditional supplier of security to that of a "manager of critical chokepoints." Despite becoming a major energy producer itself, the United States continues to prioritize control over the Persian Gulf due to its centrality in global supply chains linking Asia's major economies.

By sustaining military presence and political influence in these regions, Washington seeks to prevent the emergence of an independent Eastern energy-security architecture. Such an architecture would significantly reduce the strategic leverage of the United States over China, India, and Japan.

This logic transforms energy security into a geopolitical instrument through which Washington can impose constraints on China's industrial expansion. The objective is not merely to compete

economically, but to structurally slow the rise of a peer competitor.

In the language of offensive realism, this reflects a response to relative hegemonic decline. The United States increasingly relies on "security externalization," using energy infrastructure control as a means of strategic coercion rather than economic efficiency.

At the same time, China has pursued a contrasting model based on economic integration and infrastructure connectivity, most notably through initiatives such as the Belt and Road framework. This divergence reflects a deeper paradigmatic conflict between coercive control and cooperative interdependence.

The resulting geopolitical contest is particularly visible in the Middle East and Latin America. While U.S. investment prioritizes military basing, arms transfers, and intelligence infrastructure, China focuses on ports, rail networks, refineries, and long-term industrial partnerships designed to embed mutual economic dependence.

From Washington's perspective, such connectivity threatens to neutralize its traditional instruments of influence, particularly those based on instability management. Consequently, efforts are made to fragment potential energy corridors that could link Chinese demand with stable supply networks.

However, this strategy encounters a significant structural constraint in the form of the Islamic Republic of Iran. In this evolving configuration, Iran functions not merely as an energy producer, but as a systemic disruptor within the U.S.-led order.

By aligning its energy exports and strategic positioning with Chinese demand, Iran effectively undermines the coherence of containment strategies aimed at Beijing. Energy cooperation between Iran and China signals the emergence of alternative logistical and financial pathways that bypass U.S. oversight.

Ultimately, Washington's insistence on maintaining control over global energy flows reflects a broader

attempt to delay the consolidation of a post-unipolar order. The strategic competition over oil is therefore not a conventional commercial rivalry, but a systemic struggle over the future architecture of global power.

Within this context, emerging alignments among independent actors—particularly Iran, Russia, and China—indicate the gradual formation of a counter-systemic geography of resistance. In this configuration, energy is increasingly redefined not as an instrument of domination, but as a foundation

for alternative models of development and sovereignty.

The era of naval-based energy diplomacy as a primary tool of global control is progressively eroding. Contemporary efforts to preserve such mechanisms may, paradoxically, accelerate the consolidation of alternative alliances aimed at restructuring the global energy order beyond Western-centric constraints.

18. Shameless Like the IAEA

The International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA) seemingly endless investigations and case-building against Iran cannot be understood merely as a routine technical or legal process. Rather, they have evolved beyond a political approach into a component of the West's broader strategy of structural pressure against the Islamic Republic of Iran. Since the emergence of Iran's nuclear dossier, the IAEA has never fully acknowledged Iran's extensive transparency measures or recognized the peaceful nature of its nuclear program. Equally significant has been the Agency's silence regarding the military attacks by the United States and Israel on Iran's nuclear facilities and its failure to condemn them. This silence demonstrates that, despite its formal mandate, the IAEA has in practice functioned as a political actor aligned with Western powers. An institution that does not even consider it necessary to condemn military attacks against the nuclear facilities of an NPT member state cannot credibly claim neutrality while, at the same time, demanding that Iran continue to comply with the JCPOA and the NPT and allow inspectors (whom Iranian officials often characterize as spies) access to bombed nuclear sites. Viewed from this perspective, it becomes clear why Iran's relationship with the IAEA has become a repetitive cycle of Agency demands, Iranian cooperation, and ever-expanding new demands.

Iran's experience suggests that trusting the IAEA has been a strategic mistake. Over the years, Iran has repeatedly demonstrated goodwill by voluntarily providing documentation, granting access beyond its formal obligations, and ultimately accepting the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). Yet these confidence-building measures never resulted in the closure of its nuclear file. Instead, each act of transparency became the basis for new questions, new allegations, and, according to Iranian officials, the transfer of technical information and the identities of Iranian nuclear scientists to hostile governments. The Agency's conduct over the past two decades has consistently shown that whenever Iran has made concessions or expanded cooperation, the outcome has not been reduced pressure but rather broader demands and additional resolutions

adopted against Iran by the Board of Governors. In effect, from Tehran's perspective, the party that grants concessions becomes trapped in a cycle of endless concession-making because the absence of effective deterrence encourages the Agency to escalate its demands.

Extensive cooperation also failed to reduce political pressure or sanctions. Iran voluntarily implemented the Additional Protocol, accepted snap inspections, reduced uranium enrichment levels, and limited its stockpiles. In return, however, neither the IAEA nor Western governments fully implemented their own commitments. This experience, according to this line of argument, demonstrates the need to fundamentally reconsider Iran's relationship with the Agency and even its continued membership in the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Such reconsideration does not necessarily imply irrational confrontation, but rather the establishment of a more realistic, conditional, balanced, and cost-benefit-based relationship. Iran must recognize that unilateral goodwill and confidence-building have become instruments of pressure against itself.

The reality, from this perspective, is that Iran's nuclear issue is no longer merely technical—or even political—but has become a test of Iran's willingness to defend its national red lines. Each new IAEA request may appear technical in form, yet is viewed as part of a broader struggle over national sovereignty, independent decision-making, and the right to scientific development. Western governments, in this interpretation, seek to achieve through legal and monitoring mechanisms what sanctions, military threats, and war have failed to accomplish: limiting Iran's scientific capabilities, constraining its deterrence capacity, and slowing the development of strategic technologies. Consequently, any retreat from established red lines is interpreted as a signal of weakness that encourages further pressure, whereas steadfast resistance is regarded as reinforcing Iran's status as an independent state possessing advanced nuclear technology.

Despite years of sanctions, political pressure, and the assassination of nuclear scientists, Iran has continued to cooperate with the IAEA because it maintains that its nuclear activities are peaceful and that it has nothing to conceal. Yet, from Tehran's viewpoint, the Agency's response has consisted of expanding demands, politically framed reports, repetition of unverified allegations, and reliance on intelligence claims originating from the United States and Israel. Therefore, the fundamental objective of the Agency is seen not as discovering the truth but as managing and constraining Iran's power within what is perceived as an unequal international order. Under this interpretation, even complete compliance with today's demands would simply generate new demands tomorrow because the ultimate objective is not to close Iran's nuclear file but to sustain long-term pressure on the Islamic Republic.

The Agency's reports, frequently viewed by Iranian officials as consistent with American policy narratives, have further undermined its claims of impartiality. Throughout the years, IAEA reports on Iran's nuclear program have been criticized in Tehran as resembling political statements issued by the White House or the U.S. Department of State rather than objective technical assessments. According to this perspective, such alignment is not accidental. The Agency's financial structure, political pressure from Western governments, the process of selecting its Director General, and the influence of Western media have collectively transformed it into an institution whose institutional survival depends upon alignment with major powers. Within such a structure, politically independent countries such as Iran inevitably face stricter scrutiny and more politicized treatment. Consequently, expecting neutrality from an organization embedded within the existing global power structure is viewed as unrealistic.

Against this background, Iran is argued to require a fundamentally new model of engagement. Unlimited cooperation without meaningful guarantees is regarded as neither rational nor sustainable. Given that cooperation with the IAEA and continued membership in the NPT have, in this view, failed to deliver tangible security benefits or

meaningful scientific cooperation—and considering that the Agency did not condemn military attacks on Iranian nuclear facilities—it is argued that Iran should withdraw from the Treaty. At the same time, it must make clear that the security of its nuclear facilities constitutes an absolute national red line, and that any military threat or attack represents a fundamental violation of international law that cannot be ignored.

Decisions regarding Iran's future relationship with the IAEA therefore extend far beyond diplomacy alone. They are viewed as central to managing Western pressure, preserving national sovereignty, and ensuring the long-term development of Iran's strategic capabilities. Iran seeks to demonstrate that its cooperation has always been voluntary rather than the product of weakness or external coercion. For this message to be credible, however, domestic decision-making must remain unified, national red lines must be clearly articulated, and every instance of excessive pressure must receive a firm and unequivocal response.

Ultimately, the future of Iran's relationship with the IAEA is presented as a defining test. Can Iran transform this relationship from one characterized by reactive engagement into one based on conditional, respectful, yet assertive cooperation? According to this perspective, the answer will determine whether the cycle of investigations and political pressure continues or comes to an end. History, it argues, demonstrates that only those states willing to defend what they perceive as their legitimate rights maintain respect and influence within the international system. If Iran wishes its nuclear program to remain secure, sustainable, and capable of continued development, it must, in this view, adopt a strategy of active resistance grounded in realism rather than one founded primarily on optimistic confidence-building.



THE ONLY WAY TO NEUTRALIZE HOSTILITY
IS TO BECOME STRONGER