



By Fateh Sami, Independent Researcher and Academic

20/07/2026

Part two

From Military Conflict to Geopolitical Transition: Redefining Power, Resistance, and Global Order in the Middle East after the Iran–US–Israel Confrontation

The Iran–United States–Israel War: Objectives, Resistance and Consequences

1. The Strategic Objectives of the United States and Israel

The military attacks and interventions by the United States and Israel against Iran require a careful assessment of the motives, background and objectives underlying such actions. This crisis cannot be analysed merely as a limited military confrontation at the regional or international level. Rather, it forms part of a broader competition centred on regional security, the balance of power, Iran's

nuclear programme, geopolitical influence, the future of the Middle Eastern order, and Israel's expansionist policies. From the perspective of critics, Israel's nuclear capabilities, its decades-long occupation of Palestinian territories, and its repeated violations of United Nations resolutions are either overlooked or given less significance in many Western political and media assessments.

Within this framework, some of the most significant United Nations Security Council resolutions include:

- Resolution 242 (1967): Issued following the Six-Day War, it called for the withdrawal of Israeli forces from occupied territories and reaffirmed the principle that territory should not be acquired through war. Its full implementation remains disputed.
- Resolution 338 (1973): Called for the implementation of Resolution 242 and the commencement of peace negotiations.
- Resolution 497 (1981): Declared Israel's annexation of the Golan Heights legally null and void, a position rejected by Israel.
- Resolution 2334 (2016): Determined that Israeli settlement activity in the occupied territories violated international law, an assessment opposed by the Israeli government.

From the perspective of the United States, its policy towards Iran over the past several decades has centred on containing Iran's regional influence, restricting its nuclear programme and missile capabilities, supporting the security of its allies in the Middle East, and maintaining Washington's strategic position in one of the world's most geopolitically sensitive regions. Critics of these policies, however, argue that these objectives are rooted not merely in security concerns but also serve as a pretext for preserving American hegemony, maintaining an extensive military presence in the region, controlling energy transit routes, and protecting US geopolitical and economic interests. From this perspective, the deployment of numerous American military bases in the Arab states of the Persian Gulf cannot be explained solely in terms of defensive considerations; rather, it is viewed as part of Washington's long-term strategy to maintain its influence over one of the world's most important sources of oil and gas.

Recent credible reports indicate that two American service members were killed and another went missing in an Iranian missile and drone attack on positions used by US forces in Jordan. Four others were also wounded. The incident was confirmed by the US Central Command and reported by Reuters and the Associated Press.

The base in question is Muwaffaq Salti Air Base, located near Azraq. Legally, the base belongs to Jordan and is operated by the Royal Jordanian Air Force. However, the extensive operational presence and use of the facility by US forces, particularly for air and drone operations, has made it an important American military centre in the region. Accordingly, this Jordanian air base, with its extensive presence and use by American forces, came under Iranian missile attack.

In terms of its military significance, the attack is highly important. Azraq is located a considerable distance from Iran, and the targeting of a major facility used by American forces in Jordan indicates that, at least at this stage, Iran has been able to extend its missile pressure beyond the more proximate bases in the Persian Gulf. Recent reports indicate that Washington launched further attacks against targets in Iran following the deaths of its personnel.

Within the framework of realism in international relations, states generally formulate their foreign policies on the basis of the balance of power, the protection of national interests, and the prevention of the emergence of regional or global rivals (Mearsheimer, 2001). Many critics, however, argue that US policy towards Iran has gone beyond this classical framework and has, in practice, become linked to a strategy aimed at preserving American geopolitical predominance and preventing the emergence of any independent and influential power in the Middle East.

For Israel, the issue of Iran is primarily defined within the framework of national security and strategic threats. Over the years, Israeli leaders have identified Iran's nuclear programme, its missile capabilities and Tehran's relations with aligned forces in the region as among the country's most significant security threats. Critics of this approach, however, argue that while Israel presents Iran's nuclear programme as a threat to regional security, it maintains silence regarding its own nuclear capabilities—which it has never officially confirmed or denied—while simultaneously excluding its expansionist policies and military actions in the region from the same assessment. From their perspective, this approach represents a form of double standard in the interpretation of security threats.

On this basis, many critical analysts argue that Israel's objective is not merely to prevent Iran from acquiring advanced military or nuclear capabilities. Restricting the Islamic Republic's strategic capacity and preventing it from becoming a decisive regional power are also considered part of Tel Aviv's long-term strategy. From this perspective, weakening Iran's deterrent capabilities is regarded as a prerequisite for maintaining Israel's strategic superiority and advancing its regional objectives.

Critics of the maximum-pressure policies pursued by the United States and Israel, meanwhile, argue that economic sanctions, military threats and direct operations have not reduced tensions. Instead, they have created a cycle of mistrust, security competition and heightened regional risks. They contend that the experience of recent years has demonstrated that sustainable security in the Middle East cannot be achieved through military superiority or unilateral pressure. Rather, it requires inclusive political and security arrangements that take into account the security concerns of all regional actors.

During the presidency of Donald Trump, this policy entered a new phase following the United States' withdrawal from the 2015 nuclear agreement, the imposition of extensive sanctions and the intensification of political and economic pressure on Iran. Many critics argue that, in addition to the publicly stated objectives of the United States, this approach was also influenced by Israeli security concerns and the significant role of powerful pro-Israel lobbying groups within the American political system. Supporters of the policy, by contrast, maintain that Washington's decisions were based on US national security interests, support for regional allies and efforts to counter potential threats.

Ultimately, although the stated objectives of the United States and Israel have been described as reducing Iran's strategic capabilities, changing its regional behaviour and enhancing the security of their allies, critics argue that these policies have, in practice, contributed to weakening Iran's deterrence and creating more favourable conditions for the pursuit of Israel's geopolitical and expansionist objectives in the Middle East. However, developments in recent months raise a fundamental question: have military, economic and political pressures genuinely succeeded in achieving their intended objectives, or has the practical outcome of these policies, contrary to expectations, been the strengthening of deterrence, the deepening of the logic of resistance, the expansion of security competition and even an enhancement of Iran's strategic position in regional affairs?

2. Iran's Security Objectives and Perceptions

To understand Iran's behaviour in regional crises, it is not sufficient to examine only the country's military capabilities or foreign policy. It is also necessary to consider the historical, identity-based and security-related factors that shape its strategic decision-making.

From the perspective of the authorities of the Islamic Republic of Iran, national security is not limited to the protection of geographical borders. It is also closely connected to concepts such as political independence, preventing foreign influence, preserving national sovereignty and resisting pressure from major powers. This perception has been shaped to a considerable extent by Iran's several-thousand-year historical experience and, in the modern era, by factors including the intervention of foreign powers during the twentieth century, the 1953 coup against the government of Mohammad Mosaddegh, the Iran–Iraq War (1980–1988), and the developments that followed the 1979 Revolution.

In international relations scholarship, historical identity and a country's perception of threats play an important role in shaping its security behaviour. States do not act solely on the basis of material calculations; historical experiences, collective memory and perceptions of the security environment also influence their decisions (Wendt, 1992).

From Iran's perspective, the extensive US military presence in the region, economic sanctions, Washington's support for Israel and efforts to limit Tehran's regional influence are viewed as part of a long-term pressure campaign aimed at reducing Iran's strategic independence. According to this perception, maintaining defensive capabilities, developing deterrent capacities and establishing relations with regional and global actors are instruments for reducing vulnerability to external pressure.

By contrast, Iran views the aggressive actions of the United States and Israel not as defensive responses, but as efforts to expand regional influence and alter the balance of power in the Middle East. The American claim of self-defence and Israel's expansionist objectives stand in fundamental contrast to Iran's perception of the need to preserve its independence and develop deterrence. This difference in security perceptions is regarded as one of the principal factors contributing to the continuation of tensions among the parties involved.

History, National Identity and the Logic of Resistance

One important element in analysing Iran's behaviour is the role of history and national identity. Iran possesses a long civilisational heritage that has contributed to the formation of a strong sense of historical identity and the importance attached to political independence within Iranian society.

Analysing this issue does not imply either approval or rejection of Iran's domestic or foreign policies. Rather, understanding the behaviour of a political actor

requires attention to factors beyond purely military calculations. States and nations generally do not make decisions solely on the basis of short-term costs and benefits; their perceptions of identity, security and historical experience also influence those decisions.

The concept of “resistance” occupies an important place in Iran’s political discourse. From the perspective of its proponents, resistance is an instrument for preserving independence and preventing domination by foreign powers. Critics of this approach, however, argue that a policy of resistance can impose significant economic and political costs on society and may sometimes hinder the pursuit of diplomatic solutions. Nevertheless, when hostile forces impose their will through coercion and bullying, resistance and the development of deterrence should, from this perspective, be regarded as essential for Iran.

Resistance can therefore be examined not only as a military concept but also as a political and identity-based one. Its significance lies in demonstrating why external pressure does not always produce the behavioural changes sought by those applying it.

Divergent Security Perceptions

One of the principal roots of the crisis involving Iran, the United States and Israel lie in their differing definitions of security.

For the United States and Israel, security is defined largely in terms of limiting Iran’s strategic capabilities, reducing Tehran’s regional influence and preventing potential threats.

For Iran, security is more closely associated with preserving independence, preventing foreign intervention and maintaining the ability to deter its adversaries.

These divergent perceptions have meant that an action taken by one side to enhance its own security may be perceived by the other as a threat—a phenomenon known in international relations as the “security dilemma” (Jervis, 1978).

Under such conditions, any increase in a country’s defensive capabilities can generate concern on the part of its opponent and create a cycle of mistrust and competition.

From this perspective, the crisis involving Iran, the United States and Israel are not merely the result of disagreement over a single issue. Rather, it is the product of competing conceptions of security, power and regional order.

3. Deterrence, Resistance and the Real Outcomes of War

One of the central concepts in the analysis of contemporary military crises is deterrence. Deterrence refers to a state's ability to prevent an adversary from taking action by creating foreseeable and significant costs. In international relations theory, deterrence is not limited to the possession of weapons or military capabilities; it also depends on the adversary's perception of potential costs, political will, the credibility of threats and the ability to maintain domestic cohesion (Schelling, 1966).

In the crisis involving Iran, the United States and Israel, all three parties have sought to establish some form of deterrence. The United States and Israel have attempted to constrain Iran's strategic behaviour through military superiority, economic sanctions, political pressure and threats to use military force. Iran, in turn, has sought over more than four decades to increase the cost of any military action against it by developing missile capabilities, expanding its network of regional relations and emphasising its ability to respond.

This situation demonstrates that deterrence in the contemporary world does not depend solely on absolute military superiority. A country may possess superior technology and military equipment, but if it is unable to alter the political will of its opponent, it has not fully achieved its strategic objective.

The Difference Between Military Victory and Strategic Victory

One of the most important issues in assessing modern wars is the distinction between operational success and strategic success.

At the operational level, one side may be able to strike specific targets, destroy infrastructure or reduce the military capabilities of its opponent. At the strategic level, however, the central question is whether these actions have succeeded in producing a lasting change in the opponent's political behaviour, security calculations or power structure.

The experience of contemporary wars has shown that the gap between these two levels can be considerable. A military operation may be successful in the short

term, yet if it fails to produce sustainable political outcomes, the final result may differ significantly from the original objectives (Fukuyama, 2006).

In the case of Iran, the central issue is therefore not simply the extent of military damage or the success of particular operations. The more fundamental question is whether military pressure has succeeded in achieving the declared political objectives.

If the objective of an operation is to change the behaviour of a government, weaken its political structure or establish a new order, the assessment of success must extend beyond the battlefield. Other factors—including domestic cohesion, political legitimacy, social support, economic capacity and external relations—also play a role in the final outcome.

Resistance as a Political Factor

Resistance in the crisis involving Iran, the United States and Israel do not refer solely to military confrontation; it also has political, social and identity-based dimensions.

From the perspective of supporters of a policy of resistance, the ability to continue political activity and preserve independence in the face of external pressure is an indication of strategic success. They argue that the principal objective of external pressure has been to compel Iran to make fundamental changes in its domestic and foreign policies. Accordingly, the preservation of the political structure and the continuation of its core policies may be regarded as a form of successful resistance.

Critics of this view, however, argue that prolonged resistance to external pressure can impose significant economic and social costs and may limit opportunities for development and international engagement.

From an analytical perspective, resistance cannot be assessed solely through military criteria. Just as military power alone does not guarantee political victory, a country's ability to withstand pressure, maintain cohesion and continue its policies is also part of the strategic calculation.

The Real Outcomes of the Crisis: Beyond Conflicting Narratives

One of the most difficult challenges in analysing wars and political crises is determining the “real outcome”, because different parties generally assess success according to different criteria.

One side may define success as reducing the military capabilities of its adversary, while the other may define success as preserving its independence, preventing regime change or continuing its policies.

For this reason, assessing the crisis involving Iran, the United States and Israel require simultaneous examination at several levels:

- The military level: the degree of success or failure of military operations;
- The political level: the ability to influence the behaviour or decisions of the opposing side;
- The strategic level: the long-term impact on the regional and global balance of power.

From this perspective, one side may achieve gains at the military level while facing limitations at the political and strategic levels. Similarly, the other side may avoid military defeat while continuing to face significant economic and political costs.

The final outcome of the crisis therefore cannot be assessed solely on the basis of the number of attacks, the extent of damage or the propagandistic reports issued by the parties. It must instead be examined within the broader framework of power, legitimacy, resistance and the transformation of the regional order.

4. Domestic Consequences in Iran, Israel, and the United States

The war and crisis involving Iran, the United States, and Israel have had significant consequences not only at the military and geopolitical levels but also for the domestic structures of all three parties. Modern wars are not determined solely on the battlefield; their effects on the economy, public opinion, political legitimacy, social cohesion, and the relationship between the state and society are also essential components of the overall consequences of a crisis.

From this perspective, examining the domestic consequences of the war in Iran, Israel, and the United States provides a more comprehensive assessment of the costs and outcomes of the conflict. These consequences have not been identical across the three societies, as each country has a different political structure, economic situation, historical experience, and public perception of security.

4.1. Domestic Consequences in Iran

In Iran, the war and external pressures have continued under circumstances in which the country was already facing serious economic difficulties resulting from sanctions, the depreciation of the national currency, inflation, and restrictions on trade. The escalation of military confrontation has increased economic uncertainty and placed additional pressure on the daily lives of ordinary people.

Recent reports indicate growing public concern about the economic future, rising prices of essential goods, and declining employment opportunities. Some reports have quoted Iranian citizens describing sharp increases in food prices and worsening economic conditions following the escalation of attacks and instability (Reuters). At the same time, the large public attendance and apparent solidarity at the funeral ceremony of Iran's leader, reportedly attended by more than twenty million people, have been interpreted by observers as an indication of solidarity among a significant segment of Iranian society in response to what they regarded as aggression by Israel and the United States. This social reaction also suggests that a significant number of Iranians view the economic difficulties and hardships caused by the crisis as a direct consequence of pressure, sanctions, and military actions imposed by the United States and Israel against their country.

Nevertheless, the domestic consequences of the war in Iran cannot be analysed solely in terms of economic pressure. War can generate two contrasting dynamics simultaneously. On the one hand, economic hardship and insecurity may increase social dissatisfaction; on the other, external attack may strengthen feelings of national defence, territorial integrity, and national independence among sections of society.

These two dynamics can coexist. Opposition to certain domestic policies of the government does not necessarily imply support for foreign military intervention or acceptance of political change imposed through external military action. In many societies, national independence and the defence of the country can acquire an importance of their own, including among groups that may be critical of government policies.

For this reason, assessing the domestic consequences of the war in Iran requires a distinction between several different factors: economic conditions, the level of public support for or dissatisfaction with domestic policies, perceptions of external threats, and public reactions to foreign military intervention. One of the central difficulties in analysing Iran is precisely that these factors cannot easily be reduced to a single conclusion.

Politically, war may also increase the prominence of national security in public discourse and political decision-making. Under conditions of external threat, governments generally seek to strengthen national cohesion and mobilise society against the perceived external danger. Critics, however, may argue that a state of war should not become a justification for suppressing social demands, restricting political space, or neglecting domestic problems.

The domestic impact of the war on Iran is therefore multidimensional. External pressure can impose severe economic and social costs, while foreign military attacks may simultaneously strengthen national sentiment and reinforce the perceived necessity of defending national independence. The ultimate consequences will depend on the duration of the conflict, the scale of the damage, the performance of the government, and society's ability to manage economic and social pressures.

4.2. Domestic Consequences in Israel

In Israel, the war with Iran occurred in a context in which Israeli society had already been affected by years of conflict in Gaza, Lebanon, and other regional theatres. Consequently, the central domestic question was not merely whether military operations had achieved their immediate objectives, but also whether escalating confrontation had strengthened Israel's long-term security.

Israeli public opinion regarding the outcome of the war has not been uniform. Several surveys conducted at different stages of the conflict have indicated that a significant proportion of Israeli society has questioned the extent of the military and political success achieved by the operations. In a June 2026 survey conducted by the Institute for National Security Studies, 37 per cent of respondents believed that Iran had won the war, 43 per cent considered the conflict inconclusive, and only 15 per cent regarded Israel as the victor. The same survey found that 68 per cent of respondents believed Israel might once again be forced to resume hostilities with Iran within the following year (INSS).

These figures suggest that even in a society where security threats occupy a central position in public policy, military action does not necessarily produce a widespread perception of victory. Sections of society may support military action while simultaneously questioning its ultimate results, the costs of war, and the country's future security.

Other surveys have also revealed significant political and social divisions within Israel. A study by the Pew Research Centre found that a majority of Israeli Jews

considered Israel's decision to attack Iran to have been the right one, while the views of Arab citizens of Israel were significantly different. This divergence illustrates how war can also deepen existing social divisions (Pew Research Centre).

Politically, the continuation of the war may have a direct impact on the future of the Israeli government and its leaders. Questions concerning political responsibility, the government's performance, the security and economic costs of the war, and Israel's relationship with the United States may all become major subjects of domestic debate. Under such circumstances, the government may seek to emphasise military achievements, while its opponents focus on the costs of the conflict, the failure to achieve all declared objectives, or the possibility that insecurity has increased rather than diminished.

The war may therefore contribute not to lasting domestic consensus but to deeper disagreement over the definition of victory, the effectiveness of military power, and the future direction of Israeli security policy. This issue becomes particularly significant if society begins to believe that military operations, rather than ending the threat, have increased the likelihood of renewed conflict.

4.3. Domestic Consequences in the United States

In the United States, the war with Iran has generated a different set of domestic consequences. Unlike Iran and Israel, which are directly engaged in the regional conflict, the impact of the war on American society is transmitted primarily through military expenditure, the economy, energy prices, domestic politics, and broader debates about the global role of the United States.

One of the most significant issues is the financial cost of war. Rising military expenditure at a time when American society is already facing inflation, increased living costs, and pressure on public finances may intensify political debates about government priorities. Major financial proposals to fund the war with Iran, including a proposed \$95 billion package in Congress, indicate that the continuation of the conflict has become a serious budgetary and political issue in the United States (AP News).

Rising energy prices represent another important consequence. Any escalation of the crisis in the Middle East can affect global oil and gas markets and place additional pressure on transportation costs, food prices, and household expenses. Recent reports have also indicated that rising fuel prices can become a domestic

political issue and influence public assessments of government performance (Axios).

At the political level, the war may intensify the divide between two broad perspectives within American society. One views an extensive American military presence in the Middle East as necessary to protect US interests and national security. The other argues that the United States has repeatedly paid heavy costs for foreign wars without fully achieving its long-term political objectives.

This disagreement is not confined to the major political parties. It can also be observed among the public, experts, media organisations, and within the parties themselves. The central question is whether American security is genuinely enhanced by expanding military intervention in the Middle East, or whether such policies ultimately create additional economic and security costs for the United States itself.

The war also reopens domestic debate about the relationship between the United States and Israel. Supporters of the US-Israel alliance regard support for Israel as part of America's security commitments and strategic interests. Critics, by contrast, raise questions about the financial costs of the relationship, the danger of the United States being drawn into wider wars, and the extent to which the policies of foreign allies may influence decision-making in Washington.

The domestic consequences of the war in the United States therefore extend well beyond increased military expenditure. The crisis may affect public confidence in the government's foreign policy, presidential approval, electoral debates, the cost of living, and the definition of America's global role. Rising energy prices and economic pressure, particularly when combined with the substantial costs of war, may reduce public support for continued military intervention (Axios).

4.4. Summary of Domestic Consequences

The domestic consequences of the war in Iran, Israel, and the United States are not identical, but all three societies face a common question: Are the costs of war proportionate to its political and security outcomes?

In Iran, economic and social pressure is intertwined with questions of national independence and reactions to foreign intervention. In Israel, disagreement over the extent of military success and the future of security policy has become an important domestic issue. In the United States, the costs of war, energy prices, and the country's role in the Middle East have intensified debates about foreign policy and national interests.

From this perspective, a war can be considered politically successful only when its achievements remain defensible within the country itself. If war leads to rising economic costs, deepening social divisions, and declining public confidence, even military achievements may fail to translate into lasting political success.

Domestic consequences are therefore an inseparable component of assessing the real outcomes of the crisis involving Iran, the United States, and Israel. Military power on the battlefield is only one element of the equation; political durability, economic resilience, and social acceptance also play a decisive role in determining the ultimate outcome of a war.

5. Regional and Geopolitical Consequences of the Crisis

The crisis involving Iran, the United States, and Israel is not confined to relations among the three principal actors. Its consequences can be observed across the Middle East and, more broadly, at the level of the international system. This is because the Middle East has long possessed significance extending far beyond its geographical boundaries due to its strategic location, energy resources, major global trade routes, and central role in international security.

Any change in the regional balance of power can affect energy markets, maritime security, relations among major powers, and the future direction of the international order.

5.1. Regional Security, the Energy Equation, and the Response of Middle Eastern Powers

One of the most significant consequences of the crisis concerns the security of the Persian Gulf. The region is of vital importance not only to the states bordering it but also to the global economy, as a substantial proportion of the world's energy flows through this strategic corridor.

Any escalation of tensions between Iran and the United States, or between Iran and Washington's regional allies, can generate concerns about the security of maritime routes, energy costs, and global economic stability.

From this perspective, security in the Persian Gulf is not merely a military issue; it is also an economic, commercial, and geopolitical concern. For this reason, many global powers, including those not directly involved in the region's political disputes, closely monitor developments in the area.

The crisis involving Iran, the United States, and Israel has also affected the strategic calculations of regional states. Middle Eastern countries have adopted different approaches to the crisis according to their respective security, economic, and political interests.

Some Arab states, while concerned about Iran's regional influence, have simultaneously sought to prevent further military escalation, recognising that widespread instability could undermine their economic security and domestic development.

Other regional actors, meanwhile, have sought to play a more active role in diplomacy and in balancing their relations with different global powers. This trend indicates that regional states are no longer merely passive participants in the policies of major powers; they have increasingly become active actors in shaping the future of the Middle East.

The crisis involving Iran, the United States, and Israel cannot be analysed entirely in isolation from other conflicts in the Middle East. The question of Palestine, the situation in Gaza, the role of Hezbollah in Lebanon, developments in Syria, and the war in Yemen are all components of a complex network of regional security competition.

From the perspective of Israel and the United States, Iran's regional network of partners and allies is regarded as a major security concern, as it could serve as a source of regional pressure in the event of further escalation.

Iran and its partners, by contrast, view these relationships as part of a broader deterrence strategy in response to external pressure.

Without taking these regional interconnections into account, any analysis of the crisis limited to bilateral relations between Iran and the United States would remain incomplete.

5.2. The Changing Balance of Power and the Role of Global Powers in the Future Middle Eastern Order

Another important dimension of the crisis is its connection to broader transformations in the international system.

In the past, many Middle Eastern crises were analysed primarily within the framework of competition between the United States and its regional allies and rivals. In recent years, however, the role of China, Russia, and other emerging powers has expanded.

China, because of its energy needs, extensive economic relations, and efforts to expand its diplomatic role, has a strong interest in maintaining stability in the region. Russia, meanwhile, regards the Middle East as an important arena for maintaining its broader global influence because of its security and geopolitical interests.

The expansion of economic and political cooperation among a number of non-Western states, including through frameworks such as BRICS, reflects the gradual movement of the international system towards a broader distribution of power (Nye, 2011).

This development, however, does not signify the immediate end of American influence. The United States continues to possess an extensive network of alliances, advanced military capabilities, and considerable economic and political influence. Nevertheless, the emerging conditions indicate that decisions concerning the future of the Middle East are no longer determined by a single power alone.

The crisis involving Iran, the United States, and Israel is therefore part of a broader question concerning the future of the regional order:

Will the Middle East continue to be structured primarily around the dominance of a single external power, or will it move towards a more pluralistic balance among global and regional powers?

The answer to this question will depend on several factors:

- the ability of regional powers to engage in dialogue and manage their disputes;
- the role of major powers in either escalating or reducing tensions;
- the condition of the global economy and energy markets;
- domestic developments within regional states; and
- the effectiveness of diplomacy in relation to military alternatives.

One of the important lessons of recent crises is that lasting security cannot be achieved through military superiority alone. Any regional order that lacks political legitimacy, social acceptance, and effective diplomatic mechanisms will remain vulnerable to instability.

6. Conclusion of Part Two

The crisis involving Iran, the United States, and Israel has demonstrated that twenty-first-century conflicts cannot be analysed solely as military confrontations between states. This crisis represents, simultaneously, a security, political, identity-based, and geopolitical competition rooted in divergent understandings of power, security, independence, and regional order.

On the one hand, the United States and Israel have sought to constrain Iran's strategic behaviour through political, economic, and military pressure and to preserve a security balance favourable to their interests in the region. On the other hand, Iran has interpreted these pressures as threats to its independence, sovereignty, and national security, and has emphasised the development of deterrent capabilities and resistance to external pressure.

The analysis of this crisis demonstrates one of the central challenges in international relations: the difference between the ability to exercise power and the ability to achieve lasting political outcomes. Military power can strike specific targets, impose costs, and alter short-term balances of power. However, transforming such achievements into lasting political change requires broader factors, including legitimacy, historical understanding, economic capacity, political management, and social acceptance.

The crisis has also demonstrated that resistance cannot be examined solely within a military framework. In many cases, resistance is a combination of political, social, identity-based, and security-related factors. A country's ability to preserve internal cohesion, maintain its policies, and withstand external pressure is itself part of the strategic equation in the contemporary world.

At the domestic level, the crisis has produced different consequences for each of the three societies. In Iran, the central issue has been the relationship between national security, economic pressure, and political legitimacy. In Israel, debates concerning security, the costs of war, and the effectiveness of military solutions have continued. In the United States, meanwhile, Middle East policy remains the subject of debate concerning costs, national interests, and the role of foreign alliances.

At the regional level, the crisis has once again demonstrated that the Middle East is no longer merely an arena of competition dominated by a single external power. The growing role of regional and global powers, including China and Russia, reflects the gradual movement of the regional system towards a more complex and competitive structure.

The central lesson of Part Two is that, in the contemporary world, genuine victory cannot be measured solely by destructive power or military success. Lasting success is achieved only when power can be translated into a legitimate political order, social stability, and long-term security.

Historical experience has also demonstrated that Israel has repeatedly continued to violate United Nations Security Council resolutions and other positions adopted by international institutions without complying with them. Consequently, even if agreements are reached or new resolutions are adopted, there is no guarantee that such commitments will be implemented in practice, particularly in the absence of effective and impartial mechanisms to ensure their enforcement.

Ultimately, the crisis involving Iran, the United States, and Israel raises once again the fundamental question posed in Part One of this article:

Can power, without an understanding of human, historical, and political limitations, create a lasting order?

History demonstrates that power, however great, can produce lasting results only when it is accompanied by an understanding of social realities, a sense of moral responsibility, and the capacity to create legitimacy.

End of Part Two