

Q no:- Critically examine the implications of the Israel-Iran conflict on regional peace and stability in the Middle East, especially in the wake of Israel's allegations that Iran is accelerating its nuclear enrichment beyond peaceful thresholds. In what ways does the involvement of the United States as strategic backer of Israel further complicate regional sectarian and geopolitical fault lines? How do these developments shape Pakistan's strategic calculations—particularly along its western border and in its Gulf diplomacy?

1- Introduction:

The Israel-Iran conflict—fueled by Israel's persistent allegations that Iran is advancing nuclear enrichment beyond peaceful purposes—has triggered instability in the Middle East and heightened regional strategic anxieties. The United States' role as a strategic backer of Israel deepens sectarian rifts and geopolitical fault lines, compelling states like Pakistan to recalibrate their strategic posture. Against this backdrop, Pakistan's policy responses—especially along its western frontier and in Gulf

diplomacy — reflects a delicate balancing act among defense readiness, economic resilience, and soft-power diplomacy.

2- Allegations of Israel ~~on~~ ^{on} Iran in light of nuclear enrichment beyond peaceful thresholds -

a- Strategic Destabilization Due to Nuclear Ambiguity.

→ Israel's — allegations that Iran has crossed peaceful nuclear enrichment thresholds have destabilized the strategic equilibrium in the Middle East. The 2025 Israeli strikes on Iranian nuclear sites (Natanz and Fordow) are examples of pre-emptive military doctrines replacing diplomacy.

b- Erosion of Arms Control Regimes.

→ The JCPOA collapse in 2018 and US withdrawal under the Trump administration revived years of unchecked Iranian nuclearization.

"Multilateralism is the first casualty of distrust"

— Zbigniew Brzezinski

"Iran had enough enrichment^{ed} uranium for 9 nuclear bombs"

(- B. Netanyahu)

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- c- Sectarian Mobilization and Proxy warfare
The Israel-Iran conflict intensifies sectarian polarization, with supporting Hezbollah and Houthis, while Sunni Arab state increasingly align with Israel under the Abraham Accords. This proxy war dynamics fuels instability in Iraq, Syria, and Yemen.
"Hybrid warfare weaponizes sectarian identity."
- Frank Hoffmann.

3- Implications of Israel-Iran conflict on regional stability and peace.

- a- Security dilemma and escalation:
The conflict aggravates the regional security dilemma. Israel engage Iran in pre-emptive and cyber air strikes.
→ Israel's April 2024 air strikes on Iran's consulate in Damascus prompted direct Iranian retaliation.
- b- Proxy war expansion:
Non-state actors like Hezbollah, Houthis and Shia militias in Iraq, Yemen, and Syria are weaponized by Iran.

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→ Israel leverages Mossad-led covert operations.

⇒ In 2023, Houthi drone attacks disrupted UAE and Saudi-oil infrastructure.

c- Geo-strategic Imbalance:

US arms deal, intelligence support and diplomatic cover for Israel in power Tel-Aviv disproportionately.

→ \$3.8 billion in US military aid to Israel; US shielded Israel during ICC war crime allegations.

d- Undermining Multi-lateral Peace Framework:

US unilateralism weakens existing global peace mechanism like JCPOA and UN security council diplomacy.

⇒ Trump withdrawal from JCPOA 2018 led Iran to resume enrichments.

"American partiality in the Middle East peace process is the greatest threat to its credibility as a global peace maker."

- Fareed Zakaria -

→ "Iran dangling in the typhoon of 5th generation war"

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4- Role of US as Israel's strategic backer in Israel-Iran conflict-

a- Diplomatic shielding at intl. forums-

→ US regularly uses its veto power at UNSC to block resolutions critical of Israel's actions against Iran or its allies.

→ In Oct 2023, during the Gaza conflict US vetoed a UN resolution calling for humanitarian ceasefire.

b- American strategic Patronage and Regional Imbalance-

The U.S. military-industrial backing of Israel, including advanced F-35s, missile defense systems (Iron Dome), B2 bomber and intelligence sharing, has emboldened Israeli offensives. This tilt reinforces an imbalance of power in the Levant.

c- Promotion of Anti-Iran regional alliances-
Abraham Accords signed in 2020

→ UAE, Bahrain, Sudan & Morocco
→ Isolating Iran.

d- Militarization of the Gulf and Maritime pressure-

US naval presence in the Gulf region supports Israel's extended deterrence while containing Iranian threats to maritime security.

⇒ In April 2024, US deployed two aircraft carriers to the Persian Gulf following Iranian threat to close the Strait of Hormuz.

e- Strategic deployment of Air bases in the Middle East for quick intervention-

US maintains a network of forward operating air bases across the Middle East.

Bases in Jordan, Iraq, (Dhahranⁱⁿ, UAE) (Al-Udeid in Qatar) and etc.

5- Pakistan's strategic calculations amid Israel-Iran rivalry-

a- Border security and strategic depth challenges:

Iran's internal instability, border militia activity, and spillover risks from the Israel-Iran conflict threaten Pakistan's western frontier.

"Strategic depth is a buffer of stability, not just geography."

-Generalled Iqbal

- b- Diplomatic Tightrope b/w Gulf, Iran & West
 Pakistan should maintain delicate relations with KSA and UAE while balancing cultural and religious proximity to Iran. Islamabad avoids overt alliances and prefers "strategic neutrality", a key tenet of its evolving Gulf diplomacy.

"Diplomacy is managing contradiction without rupture."

-Henry Kissinger-

- c- Hedging Between U.S.-led West and China-Russia Bloc.

with Iran leaning toward China and Russia, and the U.S. cementing ties with Israel and the Gulf, Pakistan should maintain a hedging strategy - deepening CPEC while cautiously engaging Tehran and managing Western expectations.

"Hedging is realism's adoption to uncertainty."

-Evelyn Goh-

d- Role as a potential Mediator -
 Given its non-recognition of Israel,
 yet cordial ties with all stakeholders,
 Pakistan is suited to act as a
 backchannel mediator b/w Muslim
 countries and Iran. Such engagement
 enhances Islamabad's soft power.

"Neutrality is not passivity;
 it is diplomatic positioning."
 — Kofi Annan.