

Iran - Israel Conflict: ①

1. Historical Background:

The conflict between Iran and Israel is one of the most enduring and complex rivalries in the Middle-East. It has evolved through ideological clashes, proxy wars, nuclear threats and covert operations. The key events and their impacts are:

The 1979 Iranian Revolution: What Happened?

The Iranian Revolution led by Ayatollah Khomeini, overthrew the pro-Western Shah and established an Islamic Republic. The new regime viewed Israel as an illegitimate state and a tool of Western imperialism.

Consequences:

- Iran cut all diplomatic ties with Israel
- The new government adopted a strong anti-Israel stance, calling for its destruction and supporting Palestinian militant groups.
- Israel which has previously cooperated with Iran under Shah e.g. oil trade and military deals, now saw Iran as an existential threat.

The Iran-Iraq War (1980-1988); Israel Secretly Backs Iraq:

Why Israel Involved?

Israel saw Iran's revolutionary government as a major threat and wanted to prevent its expansion.

Israel Actions:

Weapons and Intelligence Support:

Israel supplied arms and intelligence to Saddam Hussein's Iraq to weaken Iran.

Osirak Nuclear Strike: 1981

Israel bombed Iraq's nuclear reactor, fearing Iran might later

use it for weapons development. (2)

Impacts:

- Iran viewed Israel's actions as direct aggression, deepening hostility
- The war prolonged regional instability with both Iran and Iraq suffering heavy losses.

Proxy Wars: Iran builds a network Against Israel (1990s - Present):

a. Lebanon (Hezbollah):

What Happened?

- Iran helped create and fund Hezbollah, a Shiite militant group in Lebanon.
- Hezbollah has launched rockets into Israel and fought wars against it (e.g. 2006 Lebanon war)

Proof:

- Iran supports Hezbollah to "wage armed struggle against Israel."
- UN reports confirm Iranian arms shipments to Hezbollah

b. Syria (Iranian Military Presence)

What Happened?

- Iran backed Bashar-al-Assad's regime in Syria's civil war
- It stationed troops and missiles near Israel's border leading to Israeli airstrikes.

Proof:

- Israel bombing of Iranian military facilities in Syria.
- IAEA and Western intelligence reports confirm Iran's military buildup

c. Yemen (Houthi Rebels):

What happened?

- Iran support the Houthis, who have fired missiles at Israel and Saudi Arabia

- ③
- This extend Iran's influence to Israel's southern flank

Proof:

- Iran's "Support for Houthi rebels".
- UN investigation have traced Iranian weapons to Yemen.

The Nuclear Standoff (2000-Present)

Iran's Nuclear program:

- Since the 2000s, Iran has enriched uranium, raising fears of nuclear weapons development.
- Israel sees this as an existential threat

Israel's Response:

Cyberattacks (Stuxnet, 2010):

A joint US-Israel cyber operation sabotaged Iran's nuclear centrifuges.

Assassinations:

Israeli agents allegedly killed Iranian nuclear scientists.

Threats of military strikes:

Israel has repeatedly warned it will bomb Iranian nuclear sites if necessary.

Proofs:

Israel view that "Iran's nuclear program is a serious security threat. (Countdown to Zero Day by Zetter, 2014).

Economic Sanctions and Diplomatic Isolation:

A. US Sanctions:

After the 1979 Hostage Crisis, the US froze Iran's assets and banned trade.

2010-2015 (Pre-Nuclear Deal)

- The US and European imposed oil embargoes, cutting Iran's exports by 50%.
- Iran's currency (rial) lost 80% of its value causing hyperinflation

⁽⁴⁾ **2018 (Trump's Maximum Pressure Campaign)**

- The US withdrew from the Iran nuclear deal (JCPOA) and reimposed sanctions.
- Oil exports dropped from 2.5 million barrels/per day (2017) to under 300,000 (2020).
- SWIFT ban: Iran was cut off from the global banking system, making trade nearly impossible.

Secondary Sanction: Affecting other Countries

- The US threatened to punish any country or company doing businesses with Iran.
- Example: European firms (like Total and Peugeot) withdrew from Iran to avoid US penalties.

Impacts on Iran's Economy

- GDP shrank by 9.5% in two years (2018-2020).
- Inflation hit 50% in 2020, making food and medicine unaffordable for many.
- Unemployment rose, especially among youth (over 25%).

B. Diplomatic Isolation:

US-led Diplomatic Pressure:

- US and Israel lobbied the UN to condemn Iran's nuclear program.
- Arab Israeli normalization (Abraham Accords, 2020), Israel improved ties with UAE, Bahrain and others to isolate Iran in the Middle East.

Iran limited International support:

- Only a few allies remain (China, Russia, Syria, Hezbollah).
- Even traditional partners like India reduced oil imports due to US pressure.

Effect on Iran's Politics:

- Sanctions hurt ordinary Iranians leading to protests e.g. 2019 fuel riots, 2022 anti government demonstrations.

- However, the regime did not ⁽⁵⁾back down - instead, it accelerated nuclear activities e.g. enriching uranium to 60% purity, near weapons-grade.

Recent Escalation:

Assassination and Sabotage:

The killing of top Iranian nuclear scientist Mohsen Fakhrizadeh (2020) was blamed on Israel.

Drone Warfare:

- Iran supplies drones to Russia (used in Ukraine) and proxies like Hezbollah
- Israel has developed advanced air defenses to counter these threats

Proof:

News reports e.g. The New York Times confirm recent cover operations

2. Key Events leading to 2025 Ceasefire:

a. April-2024 Israel Attack on Iranian Consulate in Syria:

Event:

On 1 April, 2024, Israel conducted an airstrike on Iran's consulate in Damascus, Syria, killing seven senior officers of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) including a key figure in the Quds Force (responsible for overseas operations).

Casualties: 7 IRGC members

Iran's Response: Iran accused Israel and vowed retaliation calling it a violation of diplomatic premises under international law.

International Reactions:

The UN Security Council discussed the strike but failed to issue a collective statement due to disagreements (Russia condemned it, Western nations emphasized Iran's destabilizing regional role).

⁶ **b Iran's Direct Retaliation on Israel (13 April 2024):** **Attack Detail:**

Scale:

Iran launched 330 drones and missiles (120 ballistic missiles, 170 drones, 30 cruise missiles) from its territory - the first direct attack on Israel since 1979.

Interceptions:

99% were intercepted by Israel's Iron Dome, with support from the US, UK (RAF jets), France and Jordan.

Damage:

Minor damage to an Israeli airbase; one civilian severely injured.

Proxy Coordination:

Hezbollah (Lebanon) and Houthis (Yemen) launched simultaneous strikes.

Iran Justifications:

Framed as self defense under UN Charter Article 51, citing the consulate strike.

Global Condemnation:

- G7 including UK, US, EU labeled Iran's attack "escalatory" and call for restraint.
- UN Secretary-General Guterres urged de-escalation, warning of regional war risks.

c. US and UN Pressure to De-escalate:

US stance:

- President Biden affirmed ironclad support for Israel but opposed Israeli retaliation, urging focus on Gaza ceasefire talks.
- The US announced new sanctions on Iran's drone, missile programs e.g. 18 April 2024 designation.

UN Effort:

- Security Council meeting (14 April) saw no resolution but calls for restraint.

- Resolution 2728 (March 2024)^⑦ for Gaza ceasefire was reiterated as a framework

UK Role:

- Developed RAF jets for interceptions, opposed Israeli retaliation
- Sanctioned IRGC entities (25 April) and pushed for coordinated G7 sanctions

d. Backchannel Talks (2024-2025)

Mediators:

- Oman, Qatar and China facilitated indirect negotiations
- Oman, Qatar: Leveraged ties with both Iran and Western nations
- China: Advocated for political settlement citing Gaza ceasefire as a priority

Topics Discussed:

- Cessation of cross-border attacks e.g. Hezbollah-Israel exchanges
- Nuclear program limits (Snapback sanctions threat under JCPOA)
- Prisoner swaps and humanitarian aid to Gaza.

e. June-2025 Ceasefire Agreement:

Brokered By:

UN (with EU, Arab states) and backed by US quiet diplomacy

Key terms:

Military De-escalation:

Iran halted proxy attacks; Israel paused strikes in Syria/Lebanon.

Gaza Link:

Ceasefire tied to hostage releases and aid access

(building on UNSCR 2728)

Sanctions Relief:

Partial easing for Iran in exchange for nuclear program transparency

Outcome:

Reduced regional tensions but no long term resolution on core issues e.g. IRGC status, nuclear program.

3. Nature of Conflict: ⁸

a. Ideological and Religious Roots

Iran's Anti-Zionist Stance:

- After the 1979 Islamic Revolution, Iran's new regime under Ayatollah Khomeini adopted a hardline anti-Zionist ideology, framing Israel a "Western Colonial Implant" and an existential enemy of Islam.
- Iranian Leaders, including Supreme Leader Khomeini have repeatedly called for Israel's destruction labeling it a "cancerous tumor"
- The revolution replaced the Pahlavi monarchy's pragmatic ties with Israel (1950-1979) with ideological hostility, severing diplomatic relations.

Israel's Survival Doctrine:

- Israel perceives Iran's revolutionary rhetoric and support for militant groups as an existential threat
- The 2006 Lebanon War (Hezbollah's attack) and Iran's nuclear program intensified Israel's security concerns.
- Israel's military Doctrine emphasizes preemptive strikes (e.g. 1981 Osirak reactor bombing in Iraq) and deterrence against Iran

b. Proxy Dynamics

Iran's Proxy Network:

Hezbollah (Lebanon):

Iran's primary proxy, armed with ~150,000 rockets (2024 estimates).

Hezbollah 2006 war with Israel killed ~1200 Lebanese and 165 Israelis.

Hamas and Islamic Jihad (Gaza):

Iran provides funding (\$100 Million + annually) and weapons escalating conflicts like 2023 Hamas attack on Israel, (e.g.

April 2024 strikes) extend Iran's reach.

Syria and Yemen:

IRGC advisors and Houthis missile attacks on Israel e.g. April 2024 strikes extend Iran's reach.

Israel's Counter-Aliances:

Abraham Accords (2020):

Normalized ties with UAE, Bahrain and Morocco, isolating Iran.

Covert Gulf cooperation:

Intelligence sharing with Saudi Arabia against Iran e.g. 2019

Abqaiq oil facility attacks blamed on Iran.

c. Cyber and Intelligence war

Cyber attacks:

Stuxnet 2010:

US-Israeli cyberattacks destroyed ~1000 Iranian centrifuges, delaying nuclear progress.

Iranian Retaliation:

Attacks on Israeli water systems (2020) and hospitals (2023).

Assassination and Sabotage:

• Israel targeted Iranian nuclear scientists e.g. Mohsen Fakhrizadeh, 2020.

• Iran IRGC plotted kidnappings of Israeli diplomats (2023 UK Counterterrorism reports)

d. Nuclear threat Perception

Iran's Nuclear Program

Pre-2015:

Enriched uranium to 20%, nearing weapons-grade 90%.

JCPOA: 2015

Capped enrichment at 3.67%; lifted in 2018 after US withdrawal

Post-2018:

Iran enriched uranium to 60% (2024), reducing breakout time to weeks

Israel Response:

Military threats:

Repeated warnings of strikes on Iranian facilities e.g Natanz, Fordow

Diplomatic pressures:

Lobbied against JCPOA revival, citing Iran's regional aggression.

4. Causes and Triggers of the Conflict

a. Reasons for Israeli Attacks on Iran

Attacks of Israel:

- Mostly carried out by Jet fighters (F-35, F-16 which are American aircrafts) and bombers.

Targeted Sites of Iran:

- Israel targeted 300 different inside sites of Iran nuclear sites including Asgahan, Natanz and Fordow.
- Target missile System of Iran

(i) Air Defense Systems

Israel targeted air defense system of Iran including S-200, S-300 missiles.

Ballistic Missiles:

Target the ballistic missiles including , and Hypersonic missiles of Iran.

(ii) Air Bases:

Israel targeted the air bases of Iran from where they fly jet aircrafts.

(iii) Oil and Gas:

Israel targeted the oil and gas fields of Iran which they used to provide energy and electricity.

(iv) High Profile officials:

Israel targeted the Iran's high profile officials including Jearnoulis, Army chiefs, nuclear scientists.

Reasons:

1. To Sabotage the US-Iran nuclear talks

Israel has historically opposed the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), the 2015 nuclear deal between Iran and world powers (P5+1). Israel attacks on Iran nuclear facilities aim to:

Prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons:

Israel views Iran's nuclear program as an existential threat.

Undermine Diplomatic Efforts:

By provoking Iran or demonstrating its nuclear program's vulnerability, Israel seeks to derail negotiation that could ease sanctions on Iran.

Pressure the US to maintain hardline policies:

Israel prefers maximum pressure (sanctions, isolation) over diplomacy, fearing a weaker deal would allow Iran to eventually develop nukes.

The JCPOA (2015-deal)

(i) Negotiation:

Iran agreed to limit its nuclear program e.g. reduce enriched uranium stockpiles, modify Arak reactor) in exchange for sanctions relief.

(ii) Key Provisions:

Nuclear Restrictions:

Iran capped nuclear enrichment at 3.67%, reduce centrifuges and allowed IAEA inspections.

Sanctions Lifted:

US, EU lifted oil, banking (42 billions dollars reserved) and trade sanctions.

Sunset clauses:

Some restrictions expire after 10-15 years, a major Israeli concern.

⁽¹³⁾ **Opposition of deal by Israel:**

Belief Iran would cheat:

Israel argued inspections were insufficient to prevent covert weapons development.

Sunset clauses:

After 10-15 years, Iran could ramp up enrichment legally.

Regional Rivalry:

A stronger Iran empowered by sanctions relief could fund proxies like Hezbollah.

US Withdrawal and Collapse of talks:

2018:

Trump abandoned the JCPOA, reimposing sanctions

2021-2023:

Biden attempted to revive talks, but Israel lobbied against concessions and conducted sabotage (e.g. attacks on facilities, cyber ops).

Obama called JCPOA a "Historic deal"

Barack Obama hailed the 2015 JCPOA as a historic achievement because:

Diplomatic Breakthrough:

- It was the first major agreement between Iran and the US/West since the 1979 Revolution.
- Ended decades of hostility through negotiations rather than war.

Nonproliferation Success:

Severely restricted Iran's nuclear program (capped enrichment at 3.67%, reduced centrifuges, modified Arak reactor to prevent plutonium production).

Unprecedented IAEA Inspections:

IAEA inspections including snap checks ensure transparency.

Avoided War:

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Obama argued the alternative was military conflict which could destabilize the Middle East.

Sanctions Relief for compliance?

- Iran got economic benefits (oil exports, banking access) only if it followed the rules.
- Obama believed this would encourage Iran over time.

Multilateral Support:

Backed by UN Security Council (Resolution 2231) and Key Powers (EU, Russia, China).

Trump called JCPOA a Historic Blunder

Donald Trump withdrew from the JCPOA in 2018, calling it the "worst deal ever" and a "historic blunder," because:

- Sunset clauses allowed future nuclear expansions.

After 10-15 years, key restrictions expire, letting Iran legally ramp up its program.

No Restrictions on Missiles or regional activities:

The deal only covered nuclear issues, not Iran's ballistic missiles or support for groups like Hezbollah.

Weak Inspections and Secret Site Deal:

Trump claimed Iran hid nuclear activities e.g. IAEA's PMD investigation was limited.

Sanctions relief funded Iranian Aggression:

Trump argued the \$100B+ in unfrozen assets boosted Iran's military and proxies.

Belief in maximum pressure strategy

Trump thought crushing sanctions would force Iran to surrender or collapse.

(14)

2. To dismantle nuclear capabilities of Iran was the primary objective of Israeli Attacks:

- Israel carry out multiple strikes on Iran nuclear facilities, mostly strikes on Natanz and Fordow nuclear sites
- Israel does not have the capability to dismantle Iran's nuclear enrichment because the nuclear enrichment is deeply undergrounded about 60 to 80 feet.
- The undergrounded nuclear reactors could only be possible to hit, with bunker busting which Israel lacks.

Destructions of Nuclear Reactors of Iran

- Donald Trump, J.D Vience and Secretary of the state have claimed that Israel has completely eradicate the nuclear reactors of Iran
- The Army Chief claimed that the nuclear reactors are severely damaged.
- Tehran claimed that only the entry and exit point of the nuclear reactions are damaged.
- The chief of IAEA claimed that not even a single nuclear sign of nuclear reactors occur from Natanz and Fordow because :
 - Either the uranium enrichment shifted to other places
 - The structure is entacked
 - It could only be possible to go the inspection team to sites of nuclear reactors but after attacks of Israel Iran do not allow the IAEA inspection team.

3. Internal Political Pressure:

No-Confidence votes and Domestic fractures

In June 2025, opposition in the Knesset pushed a no-confidence vote aiming to dissolve Parliament - triggered by divisions over conscripting ultra-Orthodox men amid the Gaza war. The motion failed narrowly but underscored profound strains within Netanyahu's coalition, particularly with far-right and ultra-Orthodox factions.

Perceived mismanagement of Gaza: Unending War

- Internal dissent has grown alongside public criticism: ultra-Orthodox parties objected to conscription, left-wing and centrist MPs blamed Netanyahu for dragging Israel into a prolonged war in Gaza.
- Protests at home criticise the deteriorating humanitarian situation and opposition members warn his military approach is extending the Gaza conflict unnecessarily.

Jewish Hostages still not Released

- As of June 2025, around 55 Israeli captives remain in Gaza. Hostages families have taken to the streets - Tel Aviv saw major protests demanding action. They openly accuse Netanyahu of neglect or using their plight for political cover.
- These protests, some involving general strikes, directly challenge Netanyahu's leadership and intensify pressure to reach a hostage - ceasefire deal.

QatarGate - Qatar funded influence operations

A major scandal emerged in early 2025: two aides of Netanyahu were arrested for allegedly accepting payments from Qatar to boost its image in Israel, ahead of ceasefire negotiations.

- 18
- Netanyahu later admitted (via the cabinet) Israel allowed Qatari funding to flow through Gaza to Hamas - around \$30 million per month since 2018 - To divide Hamas from the Palestinian authority.
 - Critics hail this as national security compromising "foreign influence" by a hostile actor.

Global Reputation Tarnished by Gaza Conduct

UN agencies, Human right groups and international courts have criticized Israel's Gaza campaign, accusing it of disproportionate civilian harm.

European leaders and diplomats - Germany included - have publicly distanced themselves, with some warning current operations exceed acceptable bounds in combatting terrorism.

European and US Elite Disapproval

Protests have spread to Europe and the U.S; major cities like Rome, Berlin and Washington have seen large-scale, ongoing rallies against Netanyahu's Gaza policy. This had created diplomatic friction and pressure from Western allies.

Domestic Protest Surge in Israel

Massive protests - hundreds of thousands strong - have occurred repeatedly in Israel since October 2024. Organized by hostage families and civic groups, critics accuse Netanyahu of delaying a deal for even political leverage.

These demonstrations have included general strikes affecting airports and services, posing existential challenges to his government mandate.

(19)

Amid this constellation of pressures, the Iran strikes appear to be a strategic pivot: boosting security credentials, unifying coalition and momentarily redirecting critical attention from Gaza.

b. US Attacks / Support to Israel

Attacks:

- Trump said that resume talks with Iran and then target the nuclear sites.
- US attacks on Iran with B2-bomber and bunker buster on Fordow and Natanz because:
 - Targeted the nuclear reactors of high enrichment places because of Iran's nuclear enrichment depth of about 60 to 80 feet.
- The Chief of IAEA claimed that the Iran's nuclear facilities are in mountains because I was taken to sites that depth was half of missile.

Reasons:

i. The American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC):

What is AIPAC:

A powerful bipartisan pro-Israel lobbying group based in Washington, with a mission to influence U.S. Congress on policies beneficial to Israel.

Influence on Iran policy:

- AIPAC has consistently pushed for "crippling sanctions" and a firm stance on Iran, especially targeting its nuclear program.
- Political Action Committee funding surged after October 2023, contributing tens of millions to pro-Israel lawmakers -

13
Solidifying congressional support that backstopped Trump and Netanyahu.

Netanyahu and Trump leveraged it:

- Historically, Netanyahu has addressed AIPAC to lobby directly to US lawmakers - aligning US policy with Israeli security goals.
- Though no "smoking gun" document exists, this institutional lobbying environment helped shape public and political support in Washington for assertive actions like striking Iran's nuclear sites.

ii. Christian Zionism and Evangelical Influence

Who they are:

Evangelicals who believe the establishment and expansion of Israel fulfill Biblical prophecy and are necessary for the second coming.

Their role in pushing Trump:

- Influential pastors like Jack Graham, Robert Jefferess and John Hagee publicly backed Trump strikes on Iran, framing them as morally and biblically mandated.
- Their statements tied US military actions to prophecy, with Fleming rhetoric like resisting "evil forces" and clearing the way for Apocalyptic fulfillment.

Impact on Trump personality:

- Trump's core base includes millions of evangelical voters who see support for Israel - notably, actions against Iran - as critical. He has said, "Christians love Israel more than Jews," reflecting his links with consistency.
- Figures like Mike Huckabee invoked divine guidance in advising strikes, reinforcing religious momentum behind military actions.

iii. Tramp's ⁽¹⁹⁾ Personal Ties and Identity

Family and Faith connections:

- Trump's Son-in-law, Jared Kushner, is Jewish. His daughter Ivanka converted to Judaism - forming a direct familial bond to Judaism and Israel.
- Though direct evidence linking this to Iran action is lacking, these ties enhance her personal affinity for Israel's position.

Personality and Political Style:

- Trump's bold, personalistic leadership favors decisive gestures and strong alignments with allies like Israel - even when political risky.
- Analysts point to evangelical encouragement and AIPAC lobbying reinforcing his preference for direct action against Iran.

5. Objectives behind US and Israeli Attacks on Iran

The military strikes by the US and Israel on Iran were not isolated acts of aggression but part of a broader geopolitical strategy.

a. To dismantle Iran's Nuclear Reactors

Strategic Rationale

Prevent a Nuclear-Armed Iran:

Both the US and Israel view Iran's nuclear program as an existential threat.

Delay "Breakout Time":

Destroying enrichment facilities (Natanz, Fordow) sets back Iran's ability to produce weapons-grade uranium.

Evidence:

- The New York Times (2025) reports confirmed Israeli F-35 strikes on Fordow damaging centrifuges.
- US intelligence assessed that Iran's breakout time was reduced to weeks before the attack.
- Foreign Affairs (2024) argued that Israel sabotage campaign have been ongoing since 2010 to slow Iran's nuclear progress.

b. Send a strong message to Middle-East:

Do not join BRICS

Strategic Rationale

Counter China and Russia Influence:

BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa) is expanding with Iran, Saudi Arabia, and UAE joining in 2024.

Economic Warfare:

The US seeks to undermine de-dollarization efforts by BRICS nations.

Evidence:

Al Jazeera (2025):

Reported that Saudi Arabia hesitated to finalize oil trade in Yuan after US warnings.

US officials privately warned Gulf states that security partnerships could weaken if they aligned with BRICS.

Dawn News (2024):

Pakistan faced pressure from the US to avoid deepening ties with Iran after joining BRICS.

c. Message to the World: China and Russia Won't Defend Allies But U.S Will

Strategic Rationale ⁽²⁾

Demonstrate US commitment:

Contrast American military resolve with Russia / China
reluctances to engage directly in conflicts e.g. Ukraine, Taiwan.

Deterrence Against Axis of Resistance:

Show Iran's Allies that Washington backs Israel unconditionally.

Evidence:

The New York Times (2025)

- U.S. official leaked intelligence suggesting China urged Iran to avoid escalation after the strikes.
- Russia supplied air defenses but did not retaliate militarily, reinforcing perceptions of limited commitment.

Foreign Policy (2024)

China's responses to Israeli strikes was muted, focusing on diplomatic statements rather than actions.

4. Controlled Chaos and Strengthening Israel's Regional Dominance

Strategic Rationale

Divide and Rule:

Keep middle Eastern states dependent on US / Israel:

Security

Normalize Israel's Hegemony:

Weaken's Iran "Axis of Resistance" (Hezbollah, Hamas) to expand Israeli influence.

Evidence:

Al Jazeera (2025):

Saudi-Israeli normalization talks resumed after Iran was weakened.

UAE swiftly expanded security ties with Israel post-strikes.

6. Iran Has become ²³weaker : Key factors and weaknesses

Iran's geopolitical has declined in recent years due to weakened proxies, shifting alliances, military vulnerabilities, and intelligence failures.

a. Weakening of Iran's Proxies in the Middle East:

Hezbollah (Lebanon):

Financial Crisis: 2023-2024

Hezbollah struggled to pay fighters due to Iran's reduced funding (sanctions, economic crisis).

Public Backlash:

Lebanese protests against Hezbollah grew after the 2020 Beirut explosion and economic collapse.

Houthis (Yemen):

Saudi-Iran Rapprochement: 2023

Saudi and Iran restored ties, reducing Houthi support.

US-Saudi Strikes: 2024

Increased airstrikes degraded Houthi missile capabilities.

Iraqi Militias:

Pro-Iran factions like Kataib Hezbollah faced arrests after attacks on U.S. bases.

b. Damascus Shifts from Pro-Iran to Pro-Saudi Arabia

Sudden geopolitical shifts:

Saudi-Syria Normalization: 2025

After years of civil war, Syria (Assad regime) began distancing

- (23)
- from Iran due to Saudi financial incentives
- Saudi Arabia pledged \$5B in reconstruction aid - contingent on reducing Iranian influence.

Iran Loses Strategic Depth:

Syria's was Iran's key land bridge to Hezbollah, losing Damascus weakens supply routes.

C. Direct Attack on Iran Exposed Its Military Weaknesses

Iran's Military Vulnerabilities

A. Weak Air Force:

Outdated Air force:

- Iran relies on 1970s-era US F-14, and Russian MiG-29s, unable to compete with Israeli F-35 stealth jets.
- Many Iranian drones were shut down by Israel's Iron Dome and U.S. Patriot Systems.

B. Mossad's Intelligence Dominance:

Assassination and Sabotage

- In 2020, Mohsen Fakhrizadeh killed via AI-assisted remote gun.
- In 2024, Mysterious explosions at Isfahan missile facilities linked to Mossad.

Cyber Attacks:

Stuxnet (2010), Duqu (2021) and recent Natanz blackouts crippled nuclear progress.

7. China and Russia Failed to Defend Iran against US-Israel Strikes

Despite being Iran's ⁽²⁴⁾ key allies, China and Russia, did not militarily intervene during recent US-Israeli attacks on Iranian nuclear and military sites.

A. China's Calculated Non-Intervention Economic Priorities Override Military Commitments

Trade vs War:

China imports 1 million barrels of Iranian oil daily but avoids direct conflict with the US to protect its \$700B trade relationships.

No military Alliance:

The China-Iran 25 year cooperative Agreement (2021) focuses on economics, not defense. Beijing never promised military protection.

Fear of Secondary Sanctions

US Financial Leverage:

China's banks (e.g. ICBC, Bank of China) fear dollar sanctions if they openly back Iran.

Limited Arms Sales:

China sold drones to Iran but refused advanced missile tech to avoid US retaliation.

Diplomatic Warning from U.S

Leaked U.S. Intel (NYT, 2025):

- Biden administration warned Beijing that supporting Iran militarily would trigger harsher tech embargoes.
- China's response, "Exercise restraint" - a clear signal of non-interference.

b. Russia's Strategic Limitations **Overstretched in Ukraine**

Military Exhaustion:

Russia has lost 300k+ troops in Ukraine and cannot afford a Middle Eastern front.

Air Defense Shortage:

Russia prioritized sending S-400 Systems to Ukraine, leaving Iran vulnerable.

Reluctance to Provoke Israel

Israel - Russia Understanding

- Netanyahu and Putin maintained backchannel communications to avoid direct clashes.
- Russia did not activate Syria's S-300 during Israeli strikes on Iran.

Energy Market Calculations

Competing Oil Interests:

Russia profits from high oil prices caused by Middle East tensions but won't fight for Iran.

8. Global and Regional Impacts of Conflict

A. Global Impacts:

i. Arms Industry Expansion

The conflict fuels the global arms trade, dominated by Tier 1 Powers (US, Russia, China, France, Germany), which control 76% of arms export (SIPRI, 2024). The US alone accounts for 40% of global arms sales, with demand driven by Middle Eastern allies like Saudi Arabia and the UAE.

The modern conflicts are engineered ecosystem where war is a deliberate market strategy to sustain the military -

ii. Economic and Energy Disruption:-

The war exacerbates global energy instability, as the Middle East remains a critical oil supplier. Energy is weaponized with "pipeline disputes and fuel embargoes", triggering economic coercion.

iii. Algorithmic Media Warfare:

- The conflict is not just fought on the ground but through - Symbolic warfare - media narratives, cyberattacks and algorithmic manipulation. Social media platforms amplify fear and polarization, shaping global public opinion.
- Western and Russian narratives around Ukraine serve as a parallel, where algorithmic domination polarizes audiences.

iv. Refugee Crises and Humanitarian Fallout

Past interventions (Iraq, Syria, Libya) have led to mass displacement, with "one of the largest refugee crisis since WWII". The Iran Israel conflict risks repeating this, straining Europe's social and political systems.

v. Strategic Hypocrisy and Managed Chaos:

Superpowers "tolerate authoritarian regimes" to sustain proxy conflicts. Iran's regime is kept intact to justify military alliances and arms sales, while Israel's existential threat narrative ensures Western support.

b. Regional Impacts

i. Middle East Destabilization

The conflict perpetuates "controlled chaos" in the region, with Gulf states (Saudi Arabia, UAE) purchasing arms to counter Iran, while Iran uses proxies (Hezbollah, Houthis) to exert influence.

ii. Proxy warfare ⁽²⁹⁾ and Fragmentation

Yemen's civil war is cited as an example of strategic blowback, where arming factions led to prolonged conflict. Similarly, Syria's war was prolonged by external interventions.

iii. Humanitarian Catastrophes

Ethical collapse in Iraq, Syria and Libya, where interventions caused shattered states, famine, and refugee crises. The Iran-Israel conflict risks similar fallout.

iv. Gulf States Militarization

Saudi Arabia and the UAE import most of their arms from the U.S and Europe, citing the Iran threat. This militarization deepens regional rivalries.

v. Unpredictable back / blowback:

Chaos often escapes the script, citing Afghanistan (where US-backed Mujahideen later formed Al-Qaeda) and Libya (where NATO intervention led to Sahel instability).