



Article Type: Research paper

## Gaza Crisis and the New Regional Order in West Asia: A Strategic Analysis of Iran's Role in the Region's Security Dynamics

\*Elham Keshavarz Moghaddam<sup>1</sup>, Alireza Moghtadaei<sup>2</sup>

1. Assistant Professor of International Relations, Department of International Relations, Faculty of Law and Political Science, University of Tehran, Tehran, Iran.

2. Ph.D. Candidate in International Relations, Department of International Relations, Faculty of Law and Political Science, University of Tehran, Tehran, Iran.

### Article Info.

Received: 23/02/2025

Accepted: 18/05/2025

Available Online: 09/07/2026

### Extended Abstract

The Gaza crisis, particularly following the "Al-Aqsa Storm" operation in October 2023, has become a turning point in regional developments, having wide-reaching effects on the security and geopolitical dynamics of the region. Evidence suggests that, prior to the Gaza crisis, Iran, as a key player in West Asia, had played a significant role in maintaining and reproducing the regional security order through supporting resistance groups, adopting deterrence policies, multilateral diplomacy, and balancing power. However, the Gaza crisis, with its expansion into Syria and Lebanon and the widespread use of hybrid warfare strategies, has reshaped the structure and nature of the regional order. This war not only escalated the historic conflicts between Palestinian resistance and the Israeli regime but also, by enhancing the role of new tech-

**Elham Keshavarz Moghaddam, Ph.D.**

**Address:** Assistant Professor of International Relations, Department of International Relations, Faculty of Law and Political Science, University of Tehran, Tehran, Iran.

**E-mail:** E.keshavarz@ut.ac.ir

### How to Site:

keshavarz moghadam,E and Moghtadaei,A . (2026). Gaza Crisis and the New Regional Order in West Asia: A Strategic Analysis of Iran's Role in the Region's Security Dynamics. *The Fundamental and Applied Studies of the Islamic World*, 7(4), 53-56.



Authors retain the copyright and full publishing rights.

Published by Iranian Association of Geopolitics. This article is an open access article licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0)

nologies (such as drones and information warfare), has introduced a new phase of complexity and power shift in the regional order.

The Gaza crisis, while disrupting the regional power balance, has posed a serious challenge to Iran's geopolitical strategies for preserving its position. The crisis, by altering the regional power balance and increasing political and security pressures, has placed the Islamic Republic of Iran at risk of a new encirclement in a coalition of rival forces, in what can be described as "strategic isolation." The continued Gaza crisis, accompanied by new complexities and developments, particularly the use of advanced technologies and hybrid warfare strategies, seems to require Iran to shift from traditional methods to new strategic approaches.

This research is significant in its ability to offer a deeper understanding of the power shifts in the region that have emerged after the Gaza crisis, which are markedly different from the past. It provides new insights into Iran's security and diplomatic strategies and explores the country's approaches to maintaining national security and determining the security order in the region. Furthermore, identifying effective tools and mechanisms for addressing new threats contributes to the study's importance, as it helps Iran's foreign policy escape the security trap of crisis cycles (the siege crisis). The novelty of this research lies in addressing the gap in prior studies by analyzing the impact of the Gaza crisis on the regional order in West Asia and Iran's role in reproducing this order. It also examines the long-term consequences of the Gaza crisis on regional power dynamics and Iran's future foreign policy strategies.

#### Research Questions

1. How has the Gaza crisis impacted the power dynamics, roles of regional actors, and the structure of the security order in West Asia?
2. What security, diplomatic, and economic strategies can Iran adopt to preserve and enhance its regional position in the new regional order?

#### Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

To explain and analyze the situation of the regional order during the Gaza crisis and Iran's new strategies in addressing regional crises, the strategic ra-

tionality theory of John Mearsheimer, which falls under the theory of offensive realism, can be used. This multi-layered theoretical framework is designed to provide a comprehensive analysis of the structural changes in Iran's foreign and security policies in the region and how they adapt to new crisis conditions.

Mearsheimer's strategic rationality is based on explanatory frameworks, including:

1. The need to redefine rationality in complex crisis situations.
2. Focusing on active deterrence through "smart power."
3. The distinction between risk and uncertainty in conflict situations.
4. Avoiding the maximization of benefits in crisis and conflict situations.

#### Research Methodology

This research is based on the paradigm of offensive realism and is applied in nature. It uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive-analytical method, utilizing library-based and documentary techniques.

#### Research Findings

- The Gaza crisis and Iran's multi-layered security strategy
- The power shift during the Gaza crisis
- Iran's overall capabilities and new threats
- The hidden cycle of regional actors' actions
- The expansion of hybrid warfare and its impact on changing the nature of conflicts against Iran

#### Reproduction of Regional Order and Possible Strategies for the Islamic Republic of Iran

Considering the regional changes, the Islamic Republic of Iran must move beyond traditional strategic frameworks and adopt new multi-layered strategies. These strategies should focus on combining hard, soft, and smart power and using hybrid warfare tools and flexible diplomacy to manage regional crises. In other words, to control the regional order based on a precise understanding of power relations and to change the cycle of power and the regional order, Iran's new role and the design of a new deterrence system are essential. Given the regional transformations, it is clear that Iran must move from linear deterrence systems to non-linear deterrence, allowing all countries to apply this control system in complex and asymmetric environments.

## Conclusion

This research, with its comprehensive approach and effort to accurately understand the current status of the region and security relations, clarifies how the Gaza crisis has impacted the regional order and what the best crisis management decisions for Iran are. Findings highlight that, for the first time, threats have reached Iran's internal security layers and its core. In such a situation, achieving maximized benefit through strategic rationality is undesirable, and Iran must focus on creating absolute benefits and optimal conditions. Moreover, prioritizing economic issues for regional countries and focusing on development under political stability leads to a transformative power dynamic, whereas Iran, due to its different understanding of threats and severe economic sanctions, continues to view power dynamics through military security relations. Despite Israel's attempts to bring competition and conflict into non-military, informational, and technological fields, the Islamic Republic responded with military operations that provided deterrence and confrontational capacity. This decision, based on strategic rationality, aimed to adopt strategies that allowed Iran to maintain its ability and capacity in the military arena. However, the general capabilities shift, the expansion of hybrid warfare, and its impact on the nature of conflicts against Iran is a significant event that could limit Iran's role, especially as the Gaza crisis revealed that Israel has been able to create a long-term implicit security regime through a common threat of Iran in the region. This becomes critical when regional powers are silent and passive in the face of Tel Aviv's actions, placing them in a hidden balance with Israel. In such a scenario, Iran must adopt smart policies to strengthen the resistance axis and prevent new security alliances against itself.

**Key words:** Gaza Crisis, Strategic Rationality, Hybrid Warfare, Security Regimes, Networked Deterrence.

## Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest in conducting this research study.