



A rocket launched from Lebanon to Israel over the border, amid ongoing cross-border hostilities between Hezbollah and Israeli forces, is intercepted on June 13, 2024.
● GIL ELIYAHU/REUTERS

Regardless, the disarray in decision-making within the joint war room of Israel and the United States, coupled with the absence of a clear path to end the war and, more crucially, the fears of widespread conflicts with the regional resistance forces, have placed the White House's efforts to defuse tensions with Lebanon in an uncertain timeframe.

Divided opinions in Israel

On the other hand, the discord between political and military factions in Israel presents a significant impediment to the prospect of war. While many Tel Aviv pundits and officials caution Netanyahu and his extremist cabinet members about the potentially devastating consequences of war for Israel, the latter group remains adamant about initiating another military confrontation. According to the latter group, Israel can no longer tolerate Hezbollah's near-daily rocket and drone launches from the borders. Moreover, the Israeli cabinet aims to return its citizens to their homes in the north before the commencement of the new school year in the fall.



Israeli firefighters work following rocket attacks from Lebanon, amid ongoing cross-border hostilities between Hezbollah and Israeli forces, near the border on its Israeli side, on June 13, 2024.
● AVI OHAYON/REUTERS

Numerous Hebrew analysts emphasize that attacking Lebanon jeopardizes the Zionist regime's continued existence. Avigdor Lieberman, in this context, acknowledges that Israel has fully diminished its deterrence capability, referring to the assassination of Imad Mughniyeh, Hezbollah's chief of staff, which went unanswered by the group in that case. In contrast, he says, the assassination of any Hezbollah member today provokes a fierce response. Retired Israeli army general Itzhak Brik shares a similar sentiment, asserting that if the Israeli army has failed to defeat Hamas, it will be unable to overcome Hezbollah, either. Undeniably, the October 7 attack has fundamentally altered Israel's perspective on external security threats. The Atlantic magazine advises Zionist leaders to reflect on history and recall that, even when Hezbollah was less powerful than it is today, Tel Aviv never achieved the victories its officials promised in past wars with Hezbollah. This American media outlet further references Amos Oz, a Zionist writer, who asserted in one of his books that Menachem Begin, the former prime

minister of the Zionist regime, believed he could once and for all clear out the region in his favor. Based on this misguided notion, he dispatched Israeli forces to Beirut with the aim of obliterating the Palestinian resistance. However, this war proved to be a strategic calamity for the regime. It led to the cancellation of the normalization agreement in Lebanon, strengthened Syria, and bolstered Iran's presence in Lebanon.

Reviving futile strategies

The White House's chaotic and convoluted situation has prompted pundits to prescribe a singular solution for the United States: severing the communication channels among resistance groups to prevent them from synergizing their power and to split their joint military actions. This proposal aligns with one of America's primary strategies, particularly after the resistance's triumph in the global war against Syria, which weakened America's foothold in West Asia and threatened Israel's deterrence. This strategy has entailed direct and indirect military assaults and leveraging political influ-

ence in various countries to pressure the resistance and hinder its expansion and empowerment in the region. However, the failure of these endeavors was laid bare by the unified resistance attacks on Israeli and American positions following Operation Al-Aqsa Storm, bewildering the West. Moreover, America's inability to forge a global coalition against Yemen and the lack of cooperation from countries, especially regional allies, coupled with the relentless attacks by the Yemeni resistance despite US-UK assaults on Yemen, underscore the ineffectiveness of America's strategies. Similarly, the resistance attacks from Iraq, despite strikes on their bases, continue unabated. The reiteration of these outdated and tested prescriptions by political circles is a testament to the failure of America's political schemes in the region. The US, self-proclaimed as the world's policeman, finds itself flustered by the might of the resistance and has lost its grip on the region. Thus, the most significant thing that the US, despite its lofty claims, is left with is its failure to provide "iron-clad" support to the Zionist regime.

US divide, rule no more

Washington's Persian Gulf allies embrace Iran



By Finian Cunningham

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OPINION

In a sign of major geopolitical realignment, Saudi Arabia and other Persian Gulf Arab states sent warm congratulations to Iran on its newly elected President Masoud Pezeshkian.

Saudi King Salman welcomed the news of Iran's election winner last weekend and said he hoped that the two Persian Gulf nations would continue developing their relations "between our brotherly people". That olive branch from Saudi Arabia to Iran is an unprecedented diplomatic development — one that will trigger alarms in Washington whose primary goal in the Middle East has been to isolate Iran from its neighbors.



Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman (R) delivers a speech at the Jeddah Security and Development Summit (GCC+3) on July 16, 2022, as US President Joe Biden listens.
● SPA

There were similar cordial official messages from Kuwait, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Oman, and Bahrain. Together with Saudi Arabia, these oil-rich states comprise the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). There is much talk now of the Persian Gulf Arab bloc normalizing relations with its Persian neighbor. For his part, President Pezeshkian — a heart surgeon by profession — says he wants to prioritize peaceful regional relations.

For decades, since the Iranian revolution in 1979, the Persian Gulf Arab states have viewed the Islamic Republic with deep suspicion and hostility. For one thing, there is the sectarian tension between Shia Islam, as professed mainly by Iran, and the Sunni Islam that dominates the Persian Gulf Arab states.

There is also the visceral fear among the Arab monarchies that the revolutionary politics espoused by Iran might infect their masses, thereby threatening the rigid autocracies and their system of hereditary rule. The fact that Iran holds elections stands in stark contrast to the Persian Gulf kingdoms ruled by royal families. So much for President Joe Biden's mantra about the US supposedly supporting democracy over autocracy.

The United States and its Western allies, in particular, the former colonial power Britain, have exploited the tensions in the Persian Gulf to exercise a divide-and-rule policy. The British are past masters at playing the sectarian game in all their former colonies from Ireland to Myanmar and everywhere in between, including the Middle East.

Taking a leaf out of that imperialist playbook, Washington has historically fuelled fears of Iranian expansionism. This has ensured Saudi Arabia and its Persian Gulf neighbors remain under US "protection," which is vital for maintaining the petrodollar system that underpins the American dollar as the international reserve currency. Without the petrodollar privileges, the US economy would implode.

Secondly, the Persian Gulf is an eye-watering huge market for American weapons exports, from overrated Patriot air defense systems to overpriced fighter jets.

In short, the policy of the US and its Western allies was and is to promote a Cold War in the Persian Gulf between the Arab states and Iran.

The schismatic animosity cannot be overstated. The Arab monarchies

were habitually paranoid about Iran infiltrating their societies. Saudi Arabia and the other Sunni rulers conducted severe repressive policies towards their Shia populations. In 2010, an explosive exposé by Julian Assange's WikiLeaks organization showed the then-Saudi ruler King Abdullah pleading with the United States to launch military attacks on Iran. The Saudi monarch described Iran as "the head of the snake" and he implored the US to decapitate the Islamic Republic.



Iran's acting Foreign Minister Ali Bagheri Kani (R) shakes hands with Bahraini Foreign Minister Rashid Al Zayani in Tehran, on July 23, 2024, on the sidelines of the Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD) summit.
● mfa.gov.ir

Fast forward to the present Saudi ruler, King Salman, a half-brother of the deceased Abdullah, who is now calling for fraternal relations with Iran — as are other Persian Gulf Arab states. Saudi heir to the throne, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, also extended his congratulations to Iran's new president and went further to propose regional security cooperation. The Saudi heir reportedly told President Pezeshkian: "I affirm my keenness on developing and deepening the relations that unite our countries and peoples and serve our mutual interests."

This is an astounding turnaround for positive relations. Crown Prince MbS was the main instigator of Saudi's disastrous war on Yemen in 2015, which was prompted by his fear of Iran's alliance with the Houthis in Saudi's southern neighbor following the landmark international nuclear deal with Tehran.

Saudi Arabia and the Persian Gulf Sunni states were also instrumental in pursuing the US-led covert war for regime change in Syria against Iranian ally Bashar al Assad. That proxy war effort was a defeat for the US side after Russia and Iran stepped in to defend Syria.

What's happening here is a major geopolitical realignment. Russia,

Iran, China, and others have put a decisive marker down, spelling the end of US and Western hegemony.

It is clear that the US-led so-called "rules-based global order" is nothing more than a dead-end scam imposed on the rest of the world. All empirical evidence shows that the primary enemy of international peace and security is the US hegemon and its Western vassals.

The US-instigated proxy war against Russia in Ukraine is recklessly pushing the world to the abyss of a nuclear catastrophe. Elsewhere, in the Middle East with the Western-backed Israeli genocide in Gaza and the relentless belligerence of NATO in the Asia-Pacific toward China, it is increasingly evident what is the source of international conflict and chaos — US-led Western imperialism.

The Persian Gulf Arab leaders may not be reacting out of democratic sensibilities. But they must surely know that the writing is on the wall for American hegemony and its destructive death wish to survive at all costs. The world is changing dramatically to a new multipolar order where the majority of nations are trying to come to a peaceful coexistence.

Last year, China brokered a historic

rapprochement between Saudi Arabia and Iran. All of these parties know that the US disorder of hegemonic Cold War division is unsustainable and ultimately self-defeating for those who adhere to it.

The Saudis know that the Eurasian economic engine is driving the world economy, and the embrace of the Global South of a multipolar order is hammering nails into the coffin of Western hegemony.

Saudi Arabia and the other Persian Gulf Arab states are signing up as new members of the Shanghai Cooperation Council, which also includes Russia, China, Iran, India, and Pakistan, among others.

King Salman and other Arab leaders are finally realizing that Uncle Sam's patronage is like putting a loaded gun to your head. As that old American war criminal Henry Kissinger once reputedly remarked with his trademark cynicism: being an enemy of the US can be dangerous, but to be an ally of Uncle Sam is absolutely fatal. The days of Washington and its Western minions playing divide and rule are over because they have discredited themselves irreparably.

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