

Persian Gulf states understand logic of power well



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OPINION

I shall provide responses to three questions during this convocation: First, why did this conflagration assume a regional dimension?

Second, what shall be the security arrangements of the region in the aftermath of the war?

Third and most important, what shall be the nature of Iran's relations with the nations of the Persian Gulf and beyond, and what are the prospective scenarios?

First things first. In my estimation, there exists a singular, uncomplicated rationale: Iran refused to be a predetermined loser in a war that had targeted its existence, its history, and its civilization. Had this conflict not acquired regional proportions, Iran would have lost the war in advance. The nation's political and strategic decision-makers had already proclaimed this, correctly and with meticulous precision; among them was the martyred Leader, who stated, "should an act of aggression occur, the war shall become extensive and regional." Numerous rationales and pieces of evidence exist for the regionalization of the war. I shall cite several instances:

First, during past wars and prior confrontations, including Operation True Promise 1, Operation True Promise 2, and the 12-Day War, it was unequivocally demonstrated that American bases in the Persian Gulf and the Middle East — the Americans possess 15 bases in West Asia, 9 of which are permanent installations — were entirely involved in combat operations. These operations were not solely defensive nor merely for countering projectiles; radar and refueling capabilities were utilized. Iran had not yet crossed that historical threshold of launching a large-scale assault upon American bases situated within neighboring countries, except for one measured and entirely managed response to the American base at Al Udeid in Qatar and, prior to that, in 2020, to the Ain al-Asad base.

The 12-Day War compelled Iran, in its subsequent trajectory and within its prognostications for the next war, to arrive at a determination and to prepare an exceedingly precise target bank. This decision had been made in advance: should America and Israel attack, Iran would no longer heed the traditional pronouncements of its neighbors asserting, "we are not participants in this war" and "American bases are not offensive installations." Iran resolved not to accept this utterly fallacious and fictitious narrative and to assail those bases and, consequently, other American interests within the region.

Furthermore, after 47 years — nearly half a century — of contemplating the utilization of the Hormuz Strait leverage, Iran was compelled to employ this leverage. This was not a war wherein defeat would signify mere political loss; defeat in this war had no end. As Trump declared, they had targeted our identity, our civilization, and our existence.

This is a thoroughly objective rationale accompanied by corroborating evidence. During the Ramadan War as well, the Americans exhibited no reticence whatsoever in making public their utilization of Persian Gulf regional bases. Not only did they not deny this, but



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they also disseminated evidence, indications, and documentation that made it unequivocally clear these bases were engaged in the conflict. Among these was, on the 30th day of the war, CENTCOM's release of an image depicting a destroyed AWACS at the Sultan Air Base, located to the south of Riyadh. Prior to that, a rumor had arisen regarding our having struck five aerial refueling planes, and Trump tweeted that the planes "were not struck or destroyed". CENTCOM released another, quite astonishing, image: artillery fire from a desert area directed toward Iran. This image clarified that an assault upon Iran was being conducted with artillery from a location within the Arabian Peninsula. From a conceptual standpoint, furthermore, it is impossible to imagine that America would enter a war in West Asia while CENTCOM remained inactive and neutral. CENTCOM's area of responsibility stretches from the Indian Ocean to North Africa and the Mediterranean Sea. Were CENTCOM to remain neutral in America's wars within this region and refrain from utilizing its capabilities, there would exist no rationale for its presence.

Another conceptual indication is this: when you prepare for a war across five decades, the defensive and security strategy of Saudi Arabia and its allied nations within the Persian Gulf region had been designed based upon the perception of Iran as a threat and based upon waging war against Iran. The primary mission of the bases located in this region is Iran. Just as Iran, too, had prepared and equipped itself across five decades for the moment of war against Israel and America.

When four parties — namely, America, Israel, the Arab nations, and Iran — prepare for the moment of war across five decades, inevitably that war shall occur, as indeed it did. Notwithstanding the fact that, across two or three stages, it was tested whether this war could be kept contained. Following Israel's attack upon our consulate in Damascus in 2024, which elicited Iran's response; following the assassination of Ismail Haniyeh and the assassination of Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah, again a contained war was tested, and ultimately we arrived at the 12-Day War and subsequently the Ramadan War. Hence, a five-decade-long preparedness existed, and this preparedness eventually culminated in confrontation. Another rationale that rendered

this war inevitable is the profound asymmetry and the chasm between the security and military strategies of the two sides of the Persian Gulf. To the degree that, across the past five decades, we have moved toward autonomy in security and toward indigenous, independent military strategies, our neighboring nations have moved toward dependency to the same degree.

Concurrent with this security and military asymmetry, a severe economic asymmetry also took shape. The sanctioning of Iran coincided with the accumulation of wealth on the other side of the Persian Gulf, and each side considered the other's assets as its own. Iran justifiably believed that what transpires on the opposite shore regarding economic matters is a direct consequence of sanctions and the unrighteous exploitation by its southern neighbors because they possessed not the slightest regard for the interests of their neighbor. A salient example is the shared gas field with Qatar: had Iran not been under sanctions, such unilateral accumulation of wealth on the opposite shore would not have occurred.

Another point is that Iran has consistently felt that, to its south, along the southern littorals of the Persian Gulf, it possesses no beneficial neighbors. Oman is an exception; Oman has been a wholly respectable and beneficial neighbor to Iran, and Iran has likewise been beneficial to Oman. Regarding the other neighbors, however, even during periods devoid of tension, it was peculiar that no benefit whatsoever came to Iran. We have had two or three renewals of relations

with Saudi Arabia, but each time they advanced only to the point where they felt reassured of not sustaining harm. In the 2023 Beijing Agreement as well, it became entirely evident that Saudi Arabia's objective in that agreement was to remain immune, in the event of war — which had become probable since 2023 — due to political relations.

Therefore, when Iran decided to respond to the attacks by America and Israel and to strike the bases, it harbored no concern whatsoever regarding the jeopardization of any specific interests. The sole neighbor that might have been conceived as assisting Iran in economic matters was the United Arab Emirates, which constituted our third or fourth economic partner. However, Iran's commercial relations with Dubai had taken shape at a time when Abu Dhabi did not play the destructive role it assumes today. Subsequently, the sanctioning of the Emirates' aggressive policy and betrayal. Over the past two years, the Emirates has secured from all of its friendly nations, including China and Russia, statements against Iran's territorial integrity and has intensified pressure within international community concerning the three islands. But Iran, from a certain point onward, decided to set aside these considerations.

Region's security arrangements after war

A discourse frequently reiterated in various circles is that the Persian Gulf Arabs have realized that American bases do not provide security and that they might distance themselves. Qatar has articulated these discussions with greater explicitness. In my estimation, however, no alteration shall occur in the dependency of the Persian Gulf Arab nations upon America because no alternative exists.

The bases currently situated in the region, many of them were initially established for other missions: the Sultan Air Base in 1990 to contain Iraq; the Al Udeid base in Qatar following an explosion at the Al Kharj base and due to Saudi-Qatari rivalry; the Kuwaiti bases are products of the war and the liberation of Kuwait. Subsequently, however, their primary mission became enmity toward Iran, and our neighboring nations exercised no control whatsoever over America's missions.

The first doubts regarding the utility of these bases arose during the 12-Day War, when the Israelis attacked Hamas leaders in Qatar and the Al Udeid base did nothing. The Qataris again referred the matter to the Americans.

These nations find themselves in an exceedingly difficult position. The absolute losers of this war were the Persian Gulf Arab nations. Their military strategy led them into the war; American bases did not defend them, and America did not even consult with them regarding the decision to go to war or to declare a cease-fire. They lack the option of independence because, fundamentally, a national ethos or an independence movement has never existed within these countries. Their independence is the product of an agreement among great powers, and they have always relied upon an external force; even for fear of one another.

The scenarios before them are constrained: hybrid outsourcing to Europe (which is feeble), or to regional powers such as Turkey, Pakistan, or Egypt (experience demonstrated these add no value), or to Russia and China (China possesses no military disposition, and there exists no precedent for Russo-American security cooperation). Consequently, they have no recourse except to return to reliance upon America and must establish an equilibrium between this reliance and Iran — which has entered a different league entirely.

Relations with Persian Gulf nations following war

I harbor no apprehension whatsoever regarding the restoration of relations with the Persian Gulf nations. These nations possess a good comprehension of the logic of power. We endeavored assiduously, through the language of gentleness and by rendering ourselves equal, to establish a different kind of relationship, but we received no positive response. Now, they have realized that Iran plays in another league, and they shall assuredly strive for a normalization of circumstances. Except for the Emirates, which expelled our ambassador, the remaining nations exhibited limited reactions.

Following this war, which, God willing, shall conclude with honor and triumph, we must resolve our issues with each nation individually. We are now at another level and in another league, and neighboring countries must compete with one another in friendship with Iran, not in hostility.

The full article first appeared in Persian on IRNA.



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A post on X by the US Central Command (@CENTCOM) dated April 6, 2026, shows American servicemen preparing M142 High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems (HIMARS) in a desert area, presumably within the Arabian Peninsula, to fire at Iran.