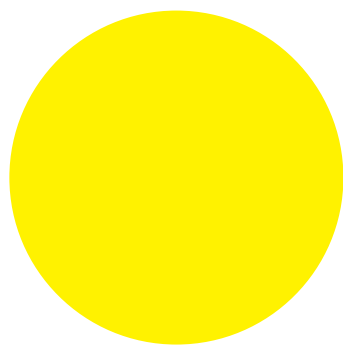


Iran marks national Physician's Day with tributes to Avicenna



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FM downplays Trump economic warfare as 'old US bullying tactic'

Pezeshkian: Iran standing firm despite facing 'full-scale war'



Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian (4th R) and his cabinet members visit the mausoleum of the late founder of the Islamic Republic Imam Khomeini in Tehran on August 23, 2026 on the first day of country's Government Week.



Major gas field holding 7.5 tcf discovered in southern Iran



Veteran pilot talks about fate of three comrades who struck US base

What made Al Udeid one of most intricate aerial missions?



U20 Wrestling World Championships: Reality check as Iran falters in freestyle

US-Iran deadlock

Importance of offensive policy in international system



By Hossein Kazemi
International affairs analyst

OPINION
EXCLUSIVE

The international system is undergoing a transition and the subsystems of this system — namely, regional systems — are also in transition, leading to a redistribution of power among actors. Until this process is fully completed and a definitive balance among the powers is established, stability in regional systems or the subsystems of this regional order should not be expected. At present, neither at the level of the Persian Gulf region, nor in West Asia, nor across the international system as a whole, has the distribution of power and balance taken a form. Therefore, there is effectively no reason to expect the war to stop or the conflict and confrontation among actors in the Persian Gulf region and

around the Strait of Hormuz to come to an end. Stability and consolidation of the Persian Gulf regional order, and movement toward an environment of peace, will come when a balance has been established in the Persian Gulf and the pattern of power distribution among the actors in the region has been consolidated. Current wars are no longer merely military conflicts, but a combination of military, economic, security, political, legal, cyber and cognitive warfare. Therefore, the naval blockade, military attacks and other measures that the US is taking against Iran should not be viewed separately. Together, they form a system of actions and reactions among actors confronting one another. Given that an order has not yet even emerged, let alone become institutionalized, and that the Persian Gulf regional order is genuinely in a state of transition, if

the Islamic Republic of Iran is considered a rational actor, then according to the principles of international relations, its foreign policy should effectively take on an expansionist or offensive character so that it can secure maximum national interests for itself during this transition in the international system. Therefore, Iran's strategy in this hybrid war should combine different approaches, adopting a multifaceted strategy in diplomacy, military affairs and dealing with economic pressure. In practice, Iran is doing exactly that. Its strategy combines pursuing the diplomatic track along with military pressure and economic resistance. This includes setting up alternative channels in response to maximum pressure, seeking to impose maximum counter-pressure, in a positive sense, on the economic costs facing the US and the global economy, while, in a negative sense, seeking to circumvent

sanctions and the economic blockade. At the same time, it is seeking to shift its military doctrine toward an offensive posture, which Iranians describe as defining defense through attack — effectively, defending themselves through offensive action. Iran has therefore learned to combine strategies and tools that, like other actors in the international system, it must use in these hybrid wars, and none of these tools or approaches alone can achieve its objective. As such, the diplomatic track will definitely continue, in the sense that, by consolidating its power, Iran will seek to turn its military and security gains into tangible returns. For this reason, the diplomatic track will continue even in the middle of a war, including if the war escalates.

Iran's shift to defensive posture

What drives Iran from a defensive posture toward an offensive

one, however, is not simply a reaction to an action. Rather, it is the nature of this transition in the international system that is pushing Iran in this direction, as it sees that neither the order nor the balance of power has been consolidated. The US and Israel, because of domestic issues, including elections in Israel and the US midterm elections, need to stabilize their economic situation and establish a degree of stability that will allow them to achieve the victory they are seeking. When a war breaks out, for example, it has a major impact on gasoline prices in the US, pushes up fuel prices and puts reserves at risk. As a result, voters in the US who pay taxes will rethink their support for the governing party. To keep these issues under control until the elections, the US and Israel are unlikely to want a war, unless a major change occurs on the battlefield. Iran, by contrast, knows that if

the governing parties in the two countries get through the elections successfully and return to the international arena with greater strength, the domestic backing they gain after the elections could pave the way for more severe attacks on Iran aimed at establishing a new order in the Persian Gulf and the Middle East. For this reason, Iran, as a rational actor in the international system, is expected to consider a preemptive and offensive move. One possible scenario could be for Iran to influence, at least, the election results and the strength of the governing parties, thereby somewhat reducing the intensity of the war, although it cannot affect the fundamental nature of the war because the conflict is taking place as a result of an upheaval in the balance of power, not because particular individuals are in power in these countries.

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