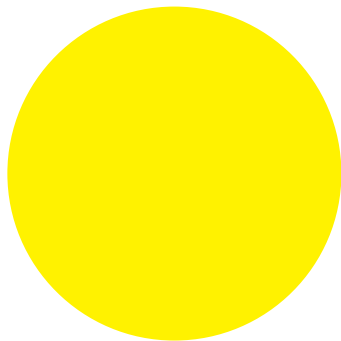


Prominent filmmaker hails Iranian people after 'Bread and Books' wins at Busan

8 >

31st BUSAN International Film Festival 6-15 October 2026



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2 >

Calculus of risk

By Sajad Abedi

Political affairs expert

O P I N I O N
E X C L U S I V E

The current geopolitical landscape of the Middle East, specifically the maritime corridors of the Persian Gulf and the Bab al-Mandab Strait, has evolved into a complex theater of “hybrid deterrence.” The decision by the Trump administration to engage in high-risk military operations in this region—despite the sophisticated military disposition of Iran in the south and the asymmetric capabilities of the Houthis forces in Yemen—is not a product of tactical oversight, but rather a calculated strategic gamble based on three primary pillars: the restoration of “Maximum Pressure,” the disruption of the “Axis of Resistance” maritime synergy, and the necessity of signaling credibility to global allies.

Challenge of ‘southern arc’

To understand the risk, one must first acknowledge the operational reality. Iran has successfully transitioned from a traditional coastal defense to a “distributed maritime strategy.” By utilizing swarms of fast-attack craft, advanced anti-ship cruise missiles (ASCMs), and an integrated network of drones, Iran has created a “no-go zone” that threatens the free flow of oil. Simultaneously, the Houthis in Yemen have transformed the Bab al-Mandab Strait into a strategic chokepoint. Their ability to employ long-range drones and ballistic missiles against commercial and military shipping has effectively extended Iran’s operational reach from the Gulf of Oman to the Red Sea, creating a coordinated “maritime pincer” that challenges U.S. naval hegemony.

Why engage now? Logic of ‘preemptive escalation’

Given these risks, why would Trump opt for a high-stakes intervention? The answer lies in the philosophy of “Peace through Strength.” In the eyes of the Trump administration, the perceived “success” of the Houthi-Iranian axis in disrupting global trade is a symptom of perceived U.S. hesitation.

Page 8 >

Pezeshkian calls for global action on war-related environmental damage

2 >



President Masoud Pezeshkian (Front C) poses for a family photo with world leaders at the 17th Summit of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity in Yerevan, Armenia, on October 16, 2026.
president.ir



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3 >



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6 >

