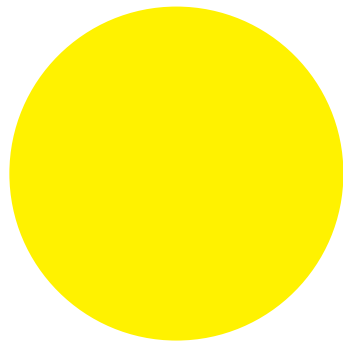


Culture minister hails Beyhaqi as model of truth, integrity



8 >



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2 >

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2 >



President Masoud Pezeshkian addresses a ceremony to begin population census in Tehran, Iran, on October 24, 2026.

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Military superiority without political order

Why lasting security in Persian Gulf requires Iran's participation



By Ali Hassan
Middle East affairs analyst

OPINION EXCLUSIVE

In international politics, there is a fundamental distinction between the ability to defeat a rival on the battlefield and the ability to establish a political order that can endure after the fighting ends. The United States possesses formidable military capabilities, advanced technology, and an extensive network of allies, enabling it to alter the military balance in the Middle East rapidly. Yet the region's historical experience has demonstrated that military superiority does not necessarily translate into the ability to determine political outcomes. This distinction lies at the heart of the US-Iranian relationship: Washington may be capable of inflicting substantial military and economic costs on Iran, but it cannot establish a durable regional security order through military force alone—particularly one that excludes Iran from its formation. From a realist perspective on international relations, power cannot be reduced to the number of fighter jets, aircraft carriers, or missile systems a state possesses. It also depends on a state's capacity to withstand pressure, maintain political cohesion, shape its adversaries' calculations, and prevent its opponents from achieving their strategic objectives. Consequently, even when one power enjoys a decisive technological or military advantage, the ultimate outcome of a conflict does not necessarily correspond to its initial objectives. The experiences of Afghanistan and Iraq, despite their significant differences from the Iranian case, illustrate how operational victories without a legitimate and sustainable political settlement can lead to the erosion of strategic power and credibility. [Page 3 >](#)



Iran, Kyrgyzstan target cooperation in digital technology, creative industries [3 >](#)



Why Iran-US negotiations keep failing

OPINION [4 >](#)



Arzan Fud Underground Complex eyes international recognition [7 >](#)

