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## Iran and the Action of Agents of the Security Environment of West Asia

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### Abstract

Southwest Asia has played a central role in the geopolitics of the global system since the Cold War years. All characteristics of a geopolitical region can be observed in Southwest Asia. In this geographical area, signs of challenge, crisis, conflict, and competition for power expansion among regional actors and significant powers are expanding. The security environment of Southwest Asia is linked with many indicators of "geopolitics of crisis" and "geopolitics of chaos." Given these conditions, as well as the political and social challenges and the geopolitical conflicts and security concerns in the region, the actions of actors—especially the emergence of centrifugal actors in Southwest Asia—will also change. Accordingly, it is predictable that the states of Southwest Asia can achieve their goals under conditions of stability and security. As a result, the national goals and interests of the Islamic Republic of Iran can also be better secured under such conditions. In other words, the agent's actions in this region influence the security environment of this area. The aim of this study is to explain the actions of the agents and examine the impact of their actions on the processes of the security environment. The study's findings show that one of Iran's security priorities in Southwest Asia is to prevent the increase of influence by regional and extra-regional powers in this area and reduce it. In this regard, Iran seeks to tie its interests to the region by creating economic and cultural relations that ensure mutual and multilateral benefits through appropriate and reasonable security policy.

**Keywords:** Agent-Structure, Security Environment, Iran, West Asia

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## Introduction

In the years following the Cold War, the stage was set for the emergence of identity crises in the Balkans, the Middle East, Central Asia, and the Caucasus. Many of the historical conflicts between rival groups were revived in the absence of structured regional and international power. Rival groups generally attempted to reproduce their historical objectives based on hatred, revenge, and perceived legitimacy. The first phase of identity competition took shape in the Balkans. This process then spread to Central Asia and the Caucasus. Accordingly, regional crises in the years following the Cold War have taken on a normative nature. Ethnic, religious, identity, linguistic, and social minority groups can be considered the primary agents of regional crises, which, in turn, create social crises. In such circumstances, not only do regional actors play a role in security, but significant powers, due to their structural position in international politics, are also perceived as influential forces in initiating, continuing, and resolving conflicts. In other words, external and regional agents enter the crisis area. To put it differently, social crises are generally influenced by the forces and processes of international actors. For example, the Arab Spring in Middle Eastern countries demonstrated that international actors strive to create conditions for controlling and managing the crisis whenever political change occurs. The democratic political developments in Middle Eastern countries in 2011 emerged in various geographical areas because controlling the political expectations of citizens was challenging. If the revolution and political developments in the region's

countries faced a reaction from military groups, the spread of conflict would have been inevitable.

Problems arising from regional crises and identity conflicts often lead to the intervention of neighboring states. In many cases, such interventions aim to halt the spread of the crisis. In some instances, political and security crises have led to widespread migrations, which in turn make possible a new form of political instability and social insecurity in the surrounding environment. Parallel to all the aforementioned social processes, the intervention of major powers is regarded as another inevitable consequence of the crisis in the regional environment.

Therefore, agents in a regional crisis environment consist of internal and transregional agents. The present study attempts to examine the role of agents in the Middle East's security environment and explain the best approach Iran can take to confront these agents' actions.

## 1. Historical Evolution of Conflicts and Geopolitical Competitions in Southwest Asia

The control and management of regional crises are part of the mechanisms of national security studies in the 1990s. This process gradually expanded in the Arab Middle East and Southwest Asia. Suppose we assess the intensity of the crisis in Middle Eastern countries. In that case, political transformations in Syria, Libya, and Yemen have led to more political and security violence than in other countries. This trend can be considered one of the factors

that make it possible for a crisis to develop in other geographical areas (Dokmejian, 1998, p. 192). Accordingly, most international wars for the United States will mean considering the implications of such a conflict concerning protecting its vital interests, ensuring the security of its allies, enabling political changes, and preventing uncontrollable events.

It should be explained that in foreign policy and the process of escalation or management of regional crises, emphasis on elements such as democracy, human rights, and humanitarian actions is a function of rival actors' interests and strategic security in global politics. Regional actors also explain the process of crisis expansion in their neighboring environments based on social factors linked to security necessities. In some cases, social groups and strategic agents in the U.S. criticize the excessive intervention of U.S. security and strategic forces in various geographical areas. In the early post-Cold War years, Barry Buzan emphasized the role of ethnic and identity frameworks in conflicts. He interpreted the concept of a security dilemma based on identity competition (Anderson, 2017, p. 134).

Suppose we examine the political developments in Turkey in June 2013 and the political crisis in Egypt in June-July 2013. In that case, we cannot ignore the role of the regional public sphere in shaping escalating political demands in the region. Such an approach means that political crises are directly related to the trends of civil wars in neighboring countries. So far, the intensity of the civil war in Yemen has been the most severe. Syria has also witnessed signs of chaos and the destruction of its social history in the course of the civil war (Barzegar, 2014, p. 92).

In all the mentioned processes, we observe the Middle East's expansion and escalation of identity crises. Crisis developments that have tragically and dangerously reflected themselves in the 21st century. The wave of unrest that began in January 2011 in Morocco quickly intensified, as a civil war was neither unfamiliar nor foreign to the Middle East. The historical trends in the geopolitical realm of the Middle East have always reflected signs of conflict and civil war. After the colonial period ended, Algeria, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Oman, Syria, and Yemen all suffered from significant internal revolts and wars, which thousands of surviving witnesses can attest to.

From Barry Buzan's perspective, identity and structural factors have influenced many of the security and strategic conflicts in the Middle East and Southwest Asia following the Cold War. Identity can be seen as the reflection of the latent and suppressed expectations of many social groups in the Middle East and Southwest Asia. Identity competitions rooted in the political and social climate of the 19th century found their reflection in the years following the Cold War. The historical roots of the conflict relate to the period when the Ottoman Empire was in a state of collapse. During this historical period, cultural and social differences were transformed into political and structural conflicts, the effects of which still serve as an influential force for many crises in Southwest Asia today.

Barry Buzan concluded in his studies that a significant portion of the conflicts from the 1990s onwards were influenced by identity and structural factors. In Buzan's analysis, structure and identity cannot be separated when explaining strategic issues. According to

Buzan, identity is considered the driving force of actors' actions, while structure plays the role of balancing these actions (Buzan, 2009, p. 145).

## 2. Behavioral Characteristics of Regional Actors in Southwest Asia

Iran's strategic policymaking in Southwest Asia is linked to Saul Cohen's approach. Cohen sought to explain the trends that reflect the power and security equation in a hazardous and unstructured environment. Cohen's approach is connected to geopolitical and geo-economic formations. For this reason, such an approach has a strategic nature. Any role assumed by actors in the regional environment impacts the behavioral patterns of other countries and influences the behavioral patterns of regional actors and major powers.

Before Saudi Arabia's geopolitical activism as a proxy war actor, Iran's role in the Eastern Mediterranean was limited and defined. When Saudi Arabia and many Western countries used mechanisms related to military action in Syria to overthrow Bashar al-Assad's government, Iran's regional role also changed. In such circumstances, Iran adopted mechanisms of "active engagement." The necessity of active engagement in Iran's strategic policymaking left its mark, and in this process, Iran played a more effective strategic role in the Eastern Mediterranean. The strategy of active engagement in Iran's national security policymaking led to the implementation of a maximum role for the state in regional security.

Iran's regional role in Southwest Asia reflects the reality that any political changes in such areas can affect countries' political stability

and security alliances. In explaining the general characteristics of West Asia, "Saul Cohen" considers it a region that lies in the "western part of the geostrategic instability crescent and the fragile zone of the Middle East. A region more fragmented and unstable than South Asia. The influence of major powers in this region has exacerbated environmental divisions. Its social groups encompass a wide range of Sunni Muslims, Shiites, Christians, Kurds, Druze, and Alawites" (Cohen, 2008, p. 653).

Iran is aware of the fact that regional actors have used security threat mechanisms in the past. In such conditions, any passive pattern could create greater security challenges for Iran's future national security. Controlling disruptive actors in an environment that, according to Saul Cohen, has signs of instability and crisis, requires active engagement. The approach of transnational countries and major powers with a colonial background in the regional environment can be considered among the actors that intensify environmental conflicts (Entessar & Afrasiabi, 2016, p. 115).

Cohen points out that in West Asia, geography and politics have combined to separate the linkage areas of regional actors from each other. In Iraq, some geopolitical necessities led to two regional wars in 1980 and 1990—one between Iraq and Iran and the other between Iraq and Kuwait. The economies of these areas have generally been based on the oil sectors of Kuwait, southern Iraq, and southwestern Iran. The continuation of such crises creates conditions where countries need to utilize an influential role and constructive engagement in security crises.

A similar perception exists in the security behavior patterns of countries like the United

States. Some theorists at the Brookings Institution, such as "Derek Chollet," "Eric Edelman," "Martin Indyk," "Robert Kagan," and "Thomas Wright," point out that the most pressing problem facing the U.S. President regarding the future regional security of West Asia pertains to the future security of Syria and Iraq. In the view of these theorists, the suppression of ISIS in Syria and Iraq will increase Iran's influence in the regional environment (Chollet et al., 2017, p. 123).

### 3. The Role of Periphery Actors in Southwest Asia

West Asia is considered a crisis-prone region geopolitically and strategically. The increase in policy studies in the field of strategic issues related to West Asia is not only linked to Iran's national security needs but can also be considered part of regional security requirements. Although Iran shares geographical proximity with the Persian Gulf, Central Asia, the Caucasus, and the surrounding areas of the Indian subcontinent, a significant portion of regional security threats facing Iran are related to the geopolitical domain of West Asia. Detailed studies of events and developments in such a region will have a significant impact on the strategic policymaking of Iran and regional countries.

Iran's national security domain is tied to the development of regional countries. Geopolitically, Iran is located in the "peripheral domain of the regional subsystem." Countries in such situations generally face signs of crisis, threats, and security surprises. Expanding security studies and linking them to strategic policymaking can lead to a more accurate understanding of regional security

developments. Under such conditions, Iran will not face security surprises like during the imposed war era. In 1980, Saddam Hussein nullified the Algiers Agreement based on the "Thalweg boundary line" and declared Iraq's sovereignty over both banks of the Arvand River (Cohen, 2008, p. 693).

Whenever regional order is accompanied by signs of a structureless environment, the groundwork for the emergence of new conflicts is created. Southwest Asia can be considered a region where not only peripheral actors but also major powers face security challenges in controlling the region. Peripheral actors have increased after the Cold War. In this context, the role of proxy actors in regional crises can be observed. Each actor tries to define a specific form of the power equation.

The power equation in the Southwest Asia region, especially in Syria and Iraq, has been notably influenced by proxy actors. Iran and Saudi Arabia play a significant role in controlling power politics and the strategic action patterns of countries. Iran needs strategic self-reliance to maintain its position. Strategic self-reliance is a process that starts by changing mental frameworks and leads to the enhancement of structural capabilities. The indicators of strategic self-reliance will be achieved based on interactive action, mobility, confidence, and the reproduction of power resources (Mosala Nejad, 2017, p. 71).

The central axis of Saudi Arabia's ideological and strategic confrontation in the Southwest Asia region is to counter Iran. Therefore, Iran's strategic policymaking must focus on countering such threats in diplomatic, security, and even strategic domains. Utilizing the role of the resistance front as a regional

balancing force is important because it creates the necessary grounds to counter threats at various levels. Saudi Arabia's aggressive actions can be considered one of the issues that impact Iran's strategic policymaking processes.

Strategic policymaking in West Asia is crucial because it is based on signs of the constant change in the behavior of actors and alliances. In conditions based on geopolitical and functional changes of actors, countries like Iran need to use mechanisms that can counter threats. Countering threats is considered an organized action for regional peace-building and security creation. Therefore, threat balancing in Iran's strategic policymaking is carried out based on defensive and security needs. The necessity of Iran's strategic role in Syria and Iraq can have a geopolitical nature because territorial disputes alongside identity differences have taken on a geopolitical nature and are considered part of the reality of the "fragile strip of the region" (Cohen, 2008, p. 691).

#### **4. Competition for Control of Southwest Asia's Economic Resources**

Cohen points out in geopolitical studies of Southwest Asia that economic resources are a factor in regional conflicts and the intervention of major powers in this geographical area. Cohen notes that "the countries of the Persian Gulf and Mesopotamia possess two-thirds of the world's oil reserves and a significant amount of natural gas reserves. Half of this region's natural gas reserves are in Saudi Arabia, with much of the rest in Iraq and Iran. Saudi Arabia not only has the largest onshore oil field in the world but also the largest offshore

oil field. The Burgan oil field in Kuwait ranks second after Ghawar" (Cohen, 2008, p. 675).

Controlling resources is part of strategic policymaking. Each actor can play a significant role in optimizing the power equation through extensive competition. Expanding power results from controlling a broader range of resources. One of the main indicators of rationality in strategic policymaking can be explained by mechanisms such as "balance of power." Any balance of power requires the utilization of infrastructures that can influence the action pattern of actors in crisis conditions.

Another question is whether the United States should solely support inactive regional organizations that complement the resources of global institutions or, by risking its eager competitors in global institutions, support the strengthening of powerful regional forces for global governance. Since members of regional organizations are unlikely to accept a follower role in global trends, the United States is required to precisely define regional arrangements—arrangements that, compared to risks, offer more benefits for global order (Keller et al., 2018, p. 35).

The role of ISIS emerged in those geographical areas where more economic resources were located. Bernard Lewis points out that during the Cold War, Iraq and Syria adopted and applied the continental European model of totalitarian dictatorship in all aspects. If democratic ideas prevail in these countries, they can inspire other countries. In such a situation, governments in the region will emerge that need peace to gain the loyalty of their citizens (Lewis, 2019, p. 179).

### 5. The Securitization of Actors' Actions in Southwest Asia

Pollack and Byman have explained the developments in the Middle East based on security approaches. The political experience of the Middle East has shown that the fate of authoritarian regimes often leads to chaos and political instability. In many cases, civil wars repeat, creating a cycle of violence that may last for a decade or more. Given such a process, it can be emphasized that the future of the social, political, and security developments of the Arab Spring in the Middle East is dependent on the competition of political groups with rival religious discourses (Byman & Pollack, 2007, p. 94).

This can be attributed to the nature and process of social and security developments in the Middle East. The developments in the Arab Spring region have been transformative and evolving. Various approaches have been proposed regarding the causes of the escalation of political conflicts and the escalation of crises in the Arab Spring countries. Each approach can be considered one of the influential factors in the processes of the Arab Spring and the confrontation of rival discourses in the Middle East. The process that began in Egypt reflected its impact on the confrontation of rival groups in Iraq, Syria, Bahrain, Yemen, and many other regional competitions in the Middle East.

The geopolitical environment of the Arab Spring refers to a geographical area where the identity, political, and security conflicts of actors have expanded after the collapse of the bipolar structure. In such conditions, signs of the use of tools can be observed, which, in the first stage, have an anti-force nature, in the second

stage, are used against limited forces and ultimately lead to the expansion of conflict against broad social forces. Examples of these signs include the use of Sarin chemical weapons on August 23, 2013, during the confrontation between opposition forces and the government.

Social discontent arising from ethnic, cultural, and racial conflicts in the Arab world is numerous. Arab public opinion throughout the region shares similar concerns about corruption, oppressive governments, and weak economic growth. In many countries, such as Iraq and Lebanon, sectarian and ethnic divisions have complicated anti-government policies and beliefs. As the Arab Spring showed, social groups' protests against the political system and authoritarian leaders led to the establishment of the first step of the social revolution. On the other hand, social discontent that led to the displacement of power in one country accelerated the process of rebellion in other countries (Sambanis, 2004, p. 816).

### 6. Geopolitical Movements of Major Powers in Southwest Asia

International actors intervene in societies that lack structural cohesion. The issue of structural cohesion was first introduced by Barry Buzan. He introduced concepts such as "strong state," "powerful state," and "weak state" into the literature of international relations—concepts that are crucial in explaining regional developments and the expansion of conflict from civil war to regional war. A strong state is considered an actor that does not allow foreign interventionist forces to interfere.

However, strengthening U.S. support for global institutions will not be sufficient to prevent strong regional alternatives. When the increase in voting shares is justified by organizational rules, the U.S. must consistently support the increase of these shares and the influence of emerging economies in global institutions. A five-year delay by the U.S. Congress in approving the increase of IMF quotas and governance reforms led emerging economies to lean toward regional alternatives (Keller et al., 2017, p. 35).

Major powers and influential regional actors possess the necessary structural capability to affect regional interaction processes. Given such an approach, whenever internal crises are linked to regional and international political trends, the conditions for a shift in the balance of power and escalation of crises become inevitable. The processes and signs of crisis escalation from civil war to regional war can be analyzed based on the expansion of the crisis and the roles of social, regional, and international actors (Barzegar, 2015, p. 63).

The U.S. government must adopt standards that preserve the role of global governance institutions while also promoting effective organizations for regional cooperation. However, in practice, U.S. policy towards regional organizations, especially those it is not a member of, has often been inconsistent and uncertain. Although the U.S. has supported European integration, its stance towards other regional arrangements has been much more conditional if not outright opposed. For example, the U.S. response to the launch of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank by China was broadly critical. After lobbying its allies to avoid joining this new organization, the Obama administration faced a swift rush by

European and Asian allies to join the AIIB in early 2015 (Keller et al., 2017, p. 33).

The process of transitioning civil wars into regional wars occurs when signs of a failed state emerge in the regional and international system's structure. The intervention of major powers should be considered among the elements that enable such conditions. In 2011, Syria was among the region's most powerful states. It had extensive military tools and an adequate security structure. However, such a country lacked the necessary mechanisms for social cohesion. This is why it is not considered a vital state. Pollack and Daniel Byman note that post-Cold War conflicts have moved beyond the structural environment of the past and entered a new era of identity-based competition (Byman & Pollack, 2007, p. 123).

If such countries face social crises, the ground is prepared for international actors to play a role in the regional environment. The linkage of sub-national actors with international forces should be considered among the factors that enable crisis escalation. One of the main reasons for the crisis escalation in Syria must be attributed to the interventionism of influential transnational actors. These actors possess the capabilities to transform conflicts into civil wars and regional wars.

Whenever a power vacuum arises, latent political and social forces become more motivated to play a political role. Social forces can pursue their political objectives within the framework of identity-based elements. Identity gradually transforms into a new political force, which, under the influence of structural voids, turns the social environment of the Middle East into a crisis-prone space. The structural power vacuum should be considered

among the forces and factors that have played a significant role in the reproduction of identity-based conflicts in the Middle East.

### **7. The Emergence of Identity Nationalism in Southwest Asia**

Identity nationalism reflects the roots of many political differences and conflicts in the historical and social context. Many of the conflicts in Southwest Asia have historical roots and can be interpreted based on the nationalist action frameworks of the actors. Some studies indicate that only 20% of the world's population lives in homogeneous societies. Such societies can provide the necessary conditions for structural and organizational solidarity.

Signs of identity conflict can be observed in countries that, first, have extensive geography; second, diverse economic resources; and third, a large population. Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey can be considered among such regional actors. Other countries lack social, identity, and cultural cohesion and, therefore, are prone and ready to reproduce identity-based conflicts. Identity-based communities generally possess the tools and capabilities necessary for military engagement. Any cultural conflict can create the necessary infrastructure for military disputes (Welsh, 1993, p. 25).

New social forces have gradually gained the necessary capability to influence international relations. The profound role of these actors makes it essential to pay attention to identity elements and their role in the emergence and spread of international conflicts. Lucas concluded in his studies that social crises can create the necessary conditions for influencing

regional and international conflicts. Alongside the presented approaches, theorists like John Lucas have explained the issue of "incompatible nationalism" and consider it the foundation of regional chaos.

### **8. The Decline of the Strong States in Southwest Asia**

Whenever regional states show signs of power decline, the conditions for the emergence of new political and security conflicts arise. Significant powers are involved in environments and regions with the necessary capability to impact the regional environment. Part of the U.S.'s security and strategic policies in Southwest Asia is deeply intertwined with the power equation and regional crises. U.S. strategy in Southwest Asia is focused on creating identity and peripheral crises (Barzegar, 2018, p. 41).

A foreign policy theory must avoid the concepts of threat and security; these concepts are highly variable and flexible and have been manipulated by statesmen and thinkers in the past. When statesmen extend the country's interests beyond its borders, they often claim that the acceptable and justifiable desire for security is their motivation for such actions rather than admitting to imperialistic or domination-seeking motives. This situation, however, makes it challenging to define concepts and build theory. The difficulty of operationalizing its predictions permanently weakens realism. Almost all past state behavior can be analyzed through realism, just as rational choice theory can explain any actor's choice by providing a post-event, intelligent definition of costs and benefits (Zakaria, 2020, p. 185).

Identity conflicts have created the conditions for the decline of the strong state in Southwest Asia—a strong state forms under conditions of cultural, social, and structural cohesion. The decline of state roles in Southwest Asia is related to the emergence of actors who each present a specific form of security, welfare, and economic identity. In such a process, any conflict identity is considered part of the realities of politics, security, and power.

For this reason, theorists use the mechanisms of social policymaking to manage identity crises. Social policymaking is among the impactful issues in any society's social, economic, political, and psychological fate. Topics such as establishing justice, eliminating poverty and discrimination, and achieving welfare and comfort are among humanity's long-standing aspirations. In such conditions, the issue of social development is considered the strategic focus of many global and regional conflicts (Lewis, 2019, p. 3).

Countries that cannot meet the needs related to public services, housing, environment, health, social security, and welfare generally face numerous challenges to their national security. The exercise of sovereignty by the state occurs when the public needs of social groups are met. The exercise of sovereignty means that the state uses its political tools and power to meet society's social needs.

Countries that cannot meet their societies' identity, social, and economic needs generally face political and strategic challenges. Identity is considered the latent force of society, which can be reproduced in specific historical conditions. The signs of sovereignty can be seen in the comprehensive control of various social divides, the management of highly conflicting

groupings, the reproduction of intra-group solidarities, and the continuation of tribal, ethnic, local, and religious loyalties. Identity is directly related to the subject. Alain Touraine points out that the collapse of social frameworks leads to the victory of subjects who can resist both the forces of death and the social order (Touraine, 2017, p. 163).

## Conclusion

In the years following the Cold War, during a period when the international system was undergoing structural transitions, the primary focus of regional policymaking by countries opposing the Islamic Republic of Iran, particularly the United States and the Zionist regime in Southwest Asia, centered on "constructive destruction" and "regional destabilization." The main characteristics of the strategy of constructive destruction include military intervention, support for opposition groups, and the escalation of crises in the region. Iran's response to this strategy involved utilizing mechanisms that facilitated regional security-building and the formation of solid states. Iran's strategic actions in the regional environment aimed to support strong states and institutionalize the resistance front within the region. Consequently, Iran's strategic policymaking in the crisis-ridden environment of Southwest Asia was based on structural and functional indicators designed to counter the security and strategic policies of the United States, regional conservative countries, and Israel. Each mentioned country attempted to employ signs and symbolic frameworks of imposed strategic policymaking. The export of the revolution to neighboring countries laid the groundwork for the emergence of a new

social force capable of effectively influencing the social environment of regional countries. This shift led to Iran's strategic policy orientation toward the United States' actions and behavioral patterns taking on a deterrent nature. In the U.S. National Security Strategy document, published by Joseph Biden in March 2021, this deterrent capability of Iran is highlighted, noting its role in countering U.S. power tools and regional coalition-building efforts in Southwest Asia.

Given that the structure of regional policymaking in any country, including Iran, is shaped by strategic necessities alongside structural action mechanisms, the Supreme National Security Council plays a central role in setting goals, patterns, and mechanisms for Iran's tactical actions, pursuing a desirable and reasonable regional policy in Southwest Asia. The orientation of Iran's strategic policymaking in Southwest Asia encompasses issues such as friction, balancing, support for allies, curbing centrifugal groups, and resistance to neutralizing the Greater Middle East project and constructive destruction. Each of these patterns requires tools and capabilities supported and provided by strategic institutions tailored to the conditions, capacities, and limitations associated with policy obligations. Therefore, Iran's strategic policymaking in Syria and Iraq has focused on confronting the

pattern of constructive chaos, stabilizing the power structures of regional countries, and protecting official governments. In this process, Iran has sought to utilize the pattern and mechanisms of strong statehood in the regional environment.

Furthermore, the central axis of Iran's strategic policymaking in response to the U.S. regional allies in Southwest Asia has been to counter the "annexation policies" of countries like Saudi Arabia and other Gulf actors. Additionally, the core orientation of Iran's strategic policymaking in confronting Israel's expansionist goals in the region has focused on "holding a referendum in the geographical area of Israel." Iran does not accept Israel's military policies and the outcomes of the wars of 1956, 1967, and 1973. Therefore, Iran considers a referendum the best option for determining the future government's orientation in the regional environment.

Overall, Iran's strategic policymaking structure aims to strengthen national power and optimize the structural security environment in the regional setting, consistent with national power elements. In this context, the dichotomy of diplomatic and field domains is meaningless and can indicate an ambiguous environment in Iran's security structure.

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