



IPS INSIGHTS

Perspectives On the Issues Shaping Policy

War on the Western Front

Brig (r) Said Nazir, Senior Associate IPS



In recent months, as Iran was engulfed in the clouds of internal mayhem, followed by overt or covert external subversion towards the regime change, the storm of war overtook the events, scuttling its indirect nuclear talks with the US. Resultantly, Iran is facing a dilemma to fight a short and intense war or widen the scope and extend the duration of hostilities. Since US and Israel were aiming for a short intensity onslaught with crippling effects on Iran's nuclear facilities and missile cum drones offensive capabilities, Iran opted for the regional war zone for a long-drawn war of attrition. As the war strategies are always fraught with miscalculations, blunders and uncertain outcomes, therefore the events may not unfold as per the Iranian playbook.

The drones and missiles attacks of Iran on the Gulf States have provided the US and Israel with the opportunity to apply the strategy of deceit, deception by taking advantage from

the fog of war. This is obvious, as Israeli attacks on GCC's oil facilities, civilian infrastructures, civil aviation and important buildings are being synchronized with the Iranian missiles trajectory from their bases in the Gulf states to paste it on Iran.¹ Similarly, the Gulf States are in double jeopardy, as they are caught between a double fire from Iran and US/Israel amid a compromised air defence system operated and controlled by US.

By widening the scope of war, Iran has practically diluted its consolidated punch against Israel and pushed the Gulf States towards Israel/US, thereby losing sympathy, solidarity and diplomatic leverage in the Arab Peninsula. If the Gulf States retaliate to the Iranian strikes, then Iran could

¹"Qatar, Saudi Arabia arrest Israeli intel spies 'planning bombings': American journalist," March 3, 2026, AA, <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2595628/qatar-saudi-arabia-arrest-israeli-intel-spies-planning-bombings-american-journalist>

face multiple threats, giving a potential benefit to Israel. Likewise, the stretching regional war is putting strains on Iran's logistical stamina besides the rising attrition rate of its long range drones and missiles. The Iranian navy and its coastline infrastructure and petrochemical industry are more vulnerable than the US bases or naval armada. Similarly, in the region, the Iranian supply chain and air/sea routes are closed, and any replenishment of vital equipment from China, Russia and elsewhere is almost choked. The immediate challenge for Iran, therefore is to survive rather than standing tall on the battlefield.

On the contrary the US and Israel's war goals are too ambitious in nature and against the grain of the ground. It appears that the hawks in the Trumps war cabinet paid more heed to the wishes and wills of Trump and Netanyahu than the strategic directions of war. The US would have gained more on the negotiating table than on the battlefield, as the nuclear deal was almost done, Iran's proxies were battered and bruised, and the sanctions had started to agitate at internal front. For the US, a missile regime could have been imposed through UN resolution with a softening touch on economic sanctions.

However, war is the game of blunders and the one who commits more blunders is the ultimate looser. US has lost the credibility of its security

umbrella in the Middle East, and Israel has stripped off America from its cloaks of super power and relegated it from the position of "America first" to prioritize Israel's ascendancy in the region.

Interestingly, China and Russia are watching the dismantling of the world order from a distance and waiting for the challenges to transform into opportunities. The asserting tools of both the powers are probably kept in reserve to be used at the right time; otherwise, their displayed behavior at the world stage during volatile environments is dwarfing their stature.

In all these developments, Pakistan is in the diplomatic crossfire and walking on a tight rope. Its apparently balancing act requires extra agility and ability under the given circumstances. Islamabad should understand that a battered Iran with the current dispensation is less challenging than a politically collapsed one. Extension and outreach of Israel influence up to Balochistan, Sestan, and Chabahar, in the context of string of nexus between Modi's Akhand Bharat and Netanyahu's Greater Israel will pose serious security threats to Pakistan. With the drifting of UAE and Afghanistan towards India, Israel's geo-strategic trapping is an additional baggage to be taken cognizance of. Therefore, all is not well, but the hope is not that ill.

