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# **Iran - Israel Conflict: A New Stage Emerges**



## **Introduction**

Israel, a conflict rooted in deep-seated political, religious, and territorial disputes. In recent years, this rivalry has intensified, marked notably by Iran's expanding military footprint in Syria. According to Israeli intelligence, Iran now operates thirteen bases in Syria manned by five divisions of the Islamic

Additionally, it has established a brand-new proxy unit known as the Al-Hussein Division to specifically operate in Syria.

## **The Major Long-Term Impact of Strikes on the Nature of the Iran-Israel Rivalry**

The direct confrontations between Iran and Israel in April 2024 mark a significant departure from the longstanding pattern of proxy warfare that has characterized their rivalry. For the first time, the two nations have engaged each other openly, signaling a pivotal shift in the nature of their conflict. This

dynamics of the Iran-Israel rivalry, to understand they might redefine future interactions between Iran and Israel and forecast the potential ramifications for the broader Middle East.

### *1. Redefinition of Engagement Rules*

The longstanding unofficial rule that prevented direct territorial assaults between Iran and Israel has been decisively violated. This significant escalation sets a new precedent, potentially leading to more open and direct confrontations. This shift not only increases the risk of a broader regional conflict but





#### *Scenario 4: Iran's Military Buildup in Response to Vulnerabilities*

actions. This significant military buildup pressures Israel to increase its preemptive and retaliatory

#### *Scenario 5: Proxy Engagement to Pressure the US and Israel*

To manage the conflict dynamics and pressure the United States to remain neutral, Iran might

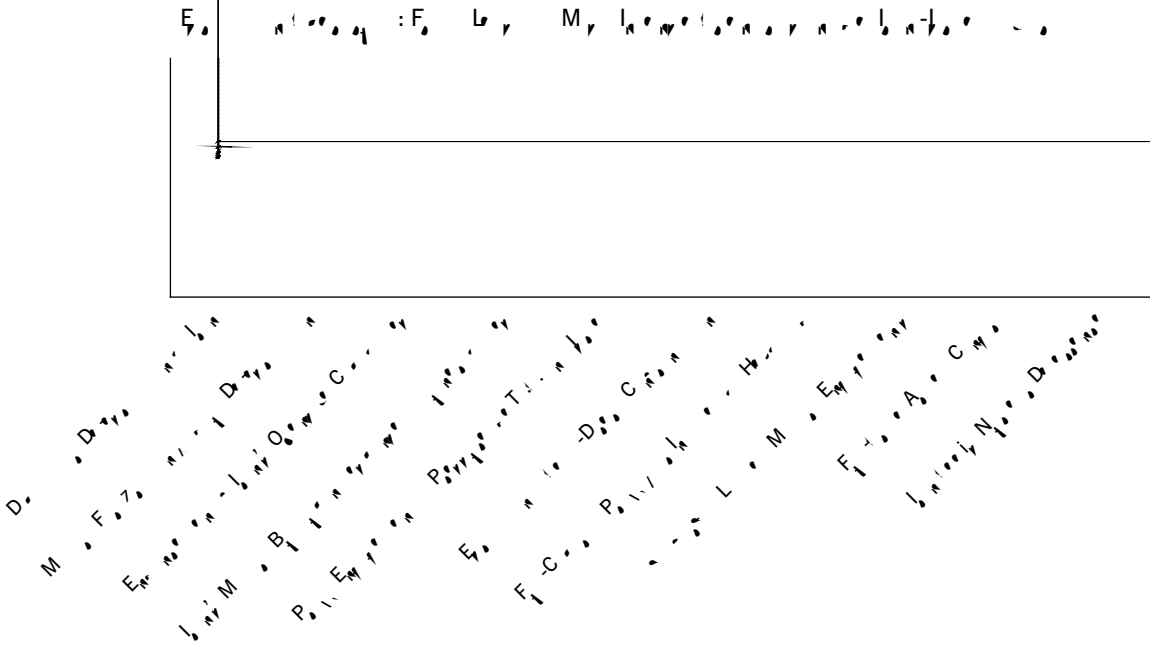
seeking a full-scale war, this strategy could lead to significant casualties and strategic setbacks, as exemplified by the attacks on US military bases in Jordan. This approach is designed to complicate any direct response by the US and Israel, making it harder for them to justify a full-scale retaliation without entering a broader conflict. It also serves as a means for Iran to assert its influence indirectly

#### *Scenario 6: Escalation to Semi-Direct Confrontation*

As military buildups continue and proxy activities intensify, the situation may evolve into a “semi-







**Combinations and Hybrids**

involve combinations of different scenarios. The dynamic and fluid nature of geopolitical conflicts means that elements from multiple scenarios could manifest simultaneously or sequentially, influencing the trajectory of into a full-scale armed conflict (Scenario 9) under certain triggers, such as a misjudgment or an unexpectedly reflecting a hybrid of strategic decisions and reactions from both sides. It is also possible that Iran would

the conflict potentially moving from one scenario to another as new information becomes available and as the for understanding potential developments, the actual unfolding of events will likely be more fluid, requiring continuous reassessment of the situation and flexible policy responses.

**Implications for the United States**

Historically, events such as the 9/11 attacks, the rise of ISIS in 2013, and the recent activities of ISIS-K have underscored how instability in the Middle East can have direct and far-reaching impacts on international stability.<sup>9</sup> specific implications of recent developments for the U.S. in the Iran-Israel rivalry, especially considering the

## **Implications**

*1. Increased Risk for U.S. Troops in Iraq and Syria*

highlight a volatile situation that could inadvertently draw the United States into conflict. The persistent sources of tension, including territorial disputes and proxy conflicts, maintain a high risk of future confrontations that to restore stability. This deepening commitment to regional security significantly increases the likelihood of

### *5. Nuclear/WMD Proliferation*

nuclear non-proliferation. The statement by Saudi Crown Prince Mohammad Bin Salman, indicating that Saudi

### **Takeaways from the Recent Exchange of Strikes**

The recent exchange of strikes between Iran and Israel has not only marked a new phase in their long-standing

### 3- Vulnerabilities in Iran's Air Defense

IDF success in hitting a military airfield in middle of Iran's territory have exposed significant vulnerabilities

### 4- Effectiveness of U.S. Regional Defense Initiatives

The effectiveness of U.S.-led efforts to bolster the aerial defense capabilities of regional partners has been

Despite the U.S. and its allies' success in neutralizing a significant number of Iranian projectiles, some argue that in the event of a full-scale war between Iran and Israel, there would be no guarantee that Israel and its

number of missile launchers, in the low hundreds. This means that Iran cannot launch its entire long-range arsenal simultaneously. After the first wave of attacks, the launchers would need to be reloaded, a process that expose them to Israel and its allies but also requires time, allowing Israel and its allies a sufficient window to

### **Navigating the Future: Policy Directions for U.S. Involvement in the Middle East**

In light of the recent developments in the Iran-Israel rivalry and the broader Middle Eastern geopolitical landscape, it is imperative for the United States to reassess and refine its strategic approach. This section





