



Does Iran's Strike on Its Gulf Neighbors Reflect a Strategic Miscalculation?

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Political experts and analysts from Gulf and Arab nations argue that Iran's retaliatory strikes of ballistic missiles and drones against U.S. military installations and American economic interests in Gulf states, constitute a miscalculation strategy. The deliberate targeting of civilian infrastructure, including airports, commercial ports, oil depots, and water facilities throughout the Gulf states exacerbate regional conflict deepness geopolitical hostility between Iran and Gulf state.

The retaliatory missile strikes follow the air strike of US-Israel against Iran, which resulted in the killing Iran supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and high-rank officials. The persistent large-scale military offensives cause the humanitarian consequences and widespread destruction of critical civilian infrastructure, not only within Iran but also across Middle east region. The conflict intensifies global energy shock and profound economic disruption in world. The US-Israel offensive, which launched on 28 Feb 2026, inflicted the heavy leadership losses on Iran, including the assassination of supreme leader of Iran, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, and other senior officials, including minister of defense and secretary of national security council, Dr. Ali Larijani. These aggressive military actions represent a serious violation of international law and Iranian territorial integrity.

Arab experts' position based on four arguments. First Iranian's actions may precipitate the emergence of a new war frontline in the region; Second, this intensifies Arab prejudice towards Iran; thirdly, it heightens Iranian isolation within the region; and fourth, it weakens Oman and Qatar's roles as mediators among the US, Israel on one side and Iran and other side.

The academic concept of strategic miscalculation is crucial for comprehending this dynamic. Political scientists, particularly Professor John Messimer, explain it as "state leaders making decisions based on miscalculations and underestimating the capabilities of adversaries or other countries, potentially resulting in unplanned escalation and catastrophe". However, Strategic miscalculation occur when policymakers attempt to deter another nation; if deterrence failed, the conflict escalates due to incorrect estimations of the rival's intentions and alliances.

In this instance, Iran retaliates not only against US-Israel military stations but also escalates the war regionally by hitting US military bases in Bahrain, Jordan, Qatar, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Oman. Iran argues its right to self-defense under Article 51 of the United Nations Charter to strike locations from which enemies launch attacks.

Based on realist theoretical perspective, Iran's reaction to joint US-Israel military attack aggression can be interpreted as to defend its territorial integrity and state survival. The attacks have targeted Iran's leaders, military officials, military installations, and civilian infrastructure, including oil plants, buildings, schools, and hospitals, resulted in the killing 3636 people, including, 254 children in Iran.

Iran perceives Gulf states as relatively weak unlikely to engage new frontline battle against it. Iran alleges that US military bases in Gulf countries serve as launch points for attacks using stealth airplanes such as the F-35 and B-2 stealth bombers. It views missile defense systems in the region as essential barriers that impede Iranian ballistic missiles from reaching Israel. Moreover, Iran interprets the behavior of few Gulf states as strategic "buck-passing", encouraging the military action against Iran with the objective of regime change for the Islamic Revolutionary government while evading involvement directly.

The US. has deployed missile defense systems, including Patriot and THAAD, throughout the Middle East to intercept Iranian missiles targeting Israel. Nevertheless, Iranian missiles obliterated the missile defense system in the region. Which allows its missiles to reach Israel and inflict heavy losses.

The Zionist leader Benjamin Netanyahu desires to establish a Greater Israel, achieve regional hegemony, and ultimately turn Iran into a failed state. His actions will aggravate the volatile security situation. It exacerbates sectarian polarization between Shia and Sunni Muslims. He believes the escalation of conflict in the region as a pragmatic strategy for personal survival. He employs external conflict to reinforce domestic authority and entrench his control. The ongoing hostilities orchestrated by Israel in coordination with the United States perpetuate the

interventionist approach. This dynamic intensifies the proxy conflict, undermines regional order, and weakens state cohesion in a region. It also reinforces the longstanding perception of Israel and the USA as imperialist actors in this region.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu poses a threat to regional and global stability. Israel's military airstrike against seven Arab states, including Palestine, Yemen, Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, and Qatar, reflects Israel as an expansionist, aggressive and rogue state. The Zionist prime minister is responsible for the killing of 80,000 of Palestinian people, mostly women and children. He utterly obliterated the city of Gaza, including mosques, schools, hospitals, and churches. Moreover, he frankly underlined the necessity to dismantle the Shia axis, which includes Iran, the Houthis in Yemen, and Hezbollah in Lebanon. Consequently, it will obliterate the Sunni coalition comprising Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and Pakistan. Israel's leadership constantly vows to reshape the Middle East and Horn of Africa to align with its interests. Israel engages in bombings and strikes on Iran in collaboration with the USA. These coordinated aggressive airstrikes have targeted Iranian leadership, civilian populations, oil depots, and civilian infrastructure.

The hostility of the US and Israel against Iran, coupled with its retaliatory actions in the Gulf region, precipitates significant economic upheaval and serious energy instability globally. Moreover, the Iranians blocked a crucial maritime route in the Strait of Hormuz, which transports 20% of the world's energy supply. As exerted pressure on the global community to cease hostilities against it. The closure of the strait jeopardizes the global economy and constrains the worldwide energy supply.

The prevailing context underscores that any retaliatory action by Gulf states against Iran's ballistic missiles and drones is likely to escalate the war. And these actions could extend the conflict. And potentially causing the strike on civilian infrastructure, including the oil refinery, desalination plants, airports, and seaports. Consequently, such actions would endanger the civilian security and human survival. The leadership of Gulf states should exert diplomatic pressure on the president of the US. Donald Trump and the Zionist prime minister to cease military escalation against Iran. Furthermore, Israel must halt its blatant aggression on Palestine and Lebanon to avert additional regional escalation.

Iran must refrain from strikes, including targeting civilian infrastructures in the region. Iran's significant mistake regarding its strategy is hitting Qatar and Oman, as such actions jeopardize their intermediary role that is essential for sustaining dialogue and stability in the region. These

nations were advocating against any aggression on Iran. Arab states and Iran have a long-standing historical interaction and shared religious tradition, which geographic proximity underpins. These ties promote tolerance and regional integration through trade and shared interests, avoiding religious politics and Sunni-Shia bloodshed.