

America and Iran: Redrawing the Balance of Power

(Translated)

Al-Rayah Newspaper - Issue 602 - 03/06/2026

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News is circulating these days about the imminent announcement of a final and decisive agreement between America and Iran, suggesting that the scales will tip in favor of the diplomatic track, over the military one — that is, in favor of de-escalation rather than escalation. In parallel with all the diplomatic efforts exerted by both sides to reach this agreement, and coinciding with the naval blockade imposed on Iran, America is renewing its strikes on southern Iran, particularly Bandar Abbas, Larak Island, and the area surrounding the Strait of Hormuz. These strikes targeted military vessels, missile platforms, and air defense systems.

At moments like these, international politics is not measured by the number of military statements or the speed of diplomatic pronouncements, but instead by the depth of the cracks revealed by successive events beneath the surface of the international order. What is happening around the Strait of Hormuz today is no longer merely tension between Washington and Tehran; it is, in fact, a direct test of the limits of U.S. power at a time when the world no longer accepts a single dominant hegemon.

For days on end, the language of negotiation has become intertwined with the language of the fire of war. Delegations sit in Pakistani and Qatari mediation rooms, while in the background, the sounds of strikes and counter-strikes are heard in a highly sensitive geopolitical theater, preceded by AI-generated images on social media posted by Trump on his account depicting American strikes on Iranian ships. This is not a mere coincidence. It is a new pattern: war under the guise of diplomacy, and diplomacy under the shadow of conflict.

What this complex equation reveals is that America no longer acts as a power capable of imposing stability from a position of absolute superiority. Instead, it acts as a power that simultaneously manages and contains escalation, according to the logic of “peace through strength.” It practices deterrence, but it lacks the luxury of a swift decisive victory that characterized its previous decades. In contrast, Iran operates within a calculated space of gradual attrition, benefiting from sensitive geography and global energy corridors that make any limited clash capable of transforming into a widespread international crisis.

The most dangerous aspect of the situation is not the escalation itself, but its simultaneous occurrence with the continuation of negotiation channels. This parallel reflects a profound shift in the structure of the international order: peace and war are no longer two separate parallel lines, but rather two overlapping layers existing simultaneously. In this gray area, the major power loses its ability to impose the “final decision” and becomes a player in a game of perpetual crisis management, a game in which even its appeals to China to win have proven ineffective.

Economically, the cost of military engagement is no longer limited or localized. Any disruption in the Strait of Hormuz immediately impacts global energy markets, threatens supply chains, and puts the global economy at risk and in a state of constant anxious uncertainty. This interconnectedness does not grant America additional power. Instead, it constrains its actions. Every military move is calculated not only based on superiority, but also on the potential global repercussions that could extend beyond the theater of operations itself.

On the other hand, the Lebanese front occupies a highly sensitive position in any negotiations between the United States and Iran, not as a separate domestic issue, but as a central node in the broader network of regional influence. In the strategic calculations of both sides, Lebanon transcends its narrow geographical boundaries to become a direct testing ground for the balance of power in the Middle East.

From Iran’s perspective, Lebanon constitutes an extension of its regional influence and one of its most important tools through its support of Hezbollah, granting it the ability to influence the regional balance of deterrence and create strategic depth beyond its borders. Conversely, the US views this influence as part of a broader order that threatens the stability of its allies in the region, foremost among them the Jewish entity and the Gulf States, which are ready to join the

normalization process. Containing or diminishing this influence is therefore an objective within its broader security vision, especially after the failure to close the arc of Hezbollah, end its military influence, and disarm it.

In this sense, Lebanon is not treated as a standalone issue, but rather as a “testing ground for influence” between two opposing regional projects. This explains why its name could appear in any broader negotiation process between Washington and Tehran, even if it is not explicitly or definitively included in any potential agreement. It also explains why the Jewish entity was given the green light to continue its aggression in Lebanon, in the hope that the negotiations would be affected by the expected ground developments.

Strategically, America now faces a classic dilemma for a major power in transition: expanding commitments versus limited decisive action. It is required to protect its partners, deter its adversaries, ensure market stability, and prevent a slide into all-out war—all simultaneously. Before and after all that, it must protect a nascent Jewish entity whose very existence is threatened. This kind of multiplicity of objectives creates something akin to strategic strain, where every calculated move becomes risk management, rather than the creation of decisive outcomes.

Conversely, this does not imply the rise of an alternative power capable of completely filling the void within the capitalist order, including China. Instead, it points to the gradual disintegration of the unipolar world order in the current international order. We are witnessing a world where power centers are dispersed, crises intersect, and alliances become so intertwined that any absolute hegemony is more of an exception, than the rule.

Therefore, what is happening can be understood not as a sign of immediate collapse, but as a slow deflating of what might be called the bubble of unconditional American supremacy. This bubble hasn't burst, but it's gradually losing pressure under the weight of realities: endless wars, persistent adversaries, volatile markets, and allies reassessing their stances with every crisis. These factors combined suggest that the greatest achievement America can hope to attain in its negotiations with Iran is an agreement that could collapse at any moment, especially given the complexities of the nuclear issue.

In short, the world is not heading toward a power vacuum. Instead, the world is heading toward a redistribution of power. However, the era of believing in the existence of a single power capable of regulating the entire planet's rhythm is drawing to a close. In this transformation, empires are not necessarily defeated in a single battle, but instead gradually erode as each battle becomes less decisive than the last. In this context, arrogance is the most accelerating factor in this erosion.

Yet, the decline of Western hegemony does not signify the end of history, but instead the beginning of a larger question: What vision possesses the capacity to rescue a world exhausted by hegemony, conflict, and consumerism? At the heart of this strategic civilizational vacuum, Islam emerges as a civilizational project with a different conception of humanity, power, justice, and international relations.

In an era where Western certainty is eroding under the weight of wars, crises, and domestic contradictions, talk of Islam's return to the center of historical and geographical action is not merely nostalgia, but a possibility imposed by the transformations of the world itself. From within the growing Islamic awareness of the Ummah, this horizon is linked to the glad tidings of the Messenger of Allah (saw) of the return of the Khilafah Rashidah (Rightly Guided Caliphate) on the Method of the Prophethood, with what this means in terms of restoring the meaning of justice and the unity of the Ummah. All this is in the face of a world that has lost its moral and spiritual balance, whose intellectual and civilizational foundations have cracked, and whose confidence in its political and economic institutions has eroded. Thus, the real question today is not: Who rules the world? Instead, it is: Which civilizational project has the ability to save it?