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# Regional Implications of Qasem Soleimani's Killing

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## • Key Points:

- In early January, Iranian military general Qasem Soleimani was assassinated by an American drone strike in Iraq. The killing of Soleimani has brought the relations between Iran and the United States to the lowest ebb in decades
- Iran's overt employment of its ballistic missiles against the United States demonstrates Iran's intent to use its conventional weapons as a strategic and political tool against its adversaries in the region.
- Trump's unilateral withdrawal from Iran nuclear deal brought the footprints of eroding hegemony of America from the Middle East. Assassination of Qasem Soleimani accelerated this in many ways.
- It is pragmatic for Pakistan to remain neutral in the current standoff between the United States and Iran. However, Islamabad should actively engage with regional and extra-regional countries to ease up the situation in the already chaotic Middle East region.

## Introduction

In early January, the Iranian military general Qasem Soleimani was assassinated by an American drone strike in Iraq. The killing of Soleimani has brought the relations between Iran and the United States to the lowest ebb in decades.

Responding to the assassination, Iran launched more than a dozen rockets at Iraqi military bases housing American troops. The situation has de-escalated but the tense situation has put regional security in jeopardy. Under this background, this perspective paper attempts to answer the following questions:



Figure 1 - How United States Killed Qasem Soleimani  
(Source: IANS Graphics)

The authors are part of the research team at the Centre for Strategic and Contemporary Research.

- What is the significance of Iranian missile attacks on American troops?
- What will be the negative spillover of Iranian missile attack on American hegemony and dominance?
- What will be the future of Indo-Iran relations?
- What is the way forward for Pakistan?



Figure 2 – Who is Qasem Soleimani?  
(Source: Anadolu Agency)

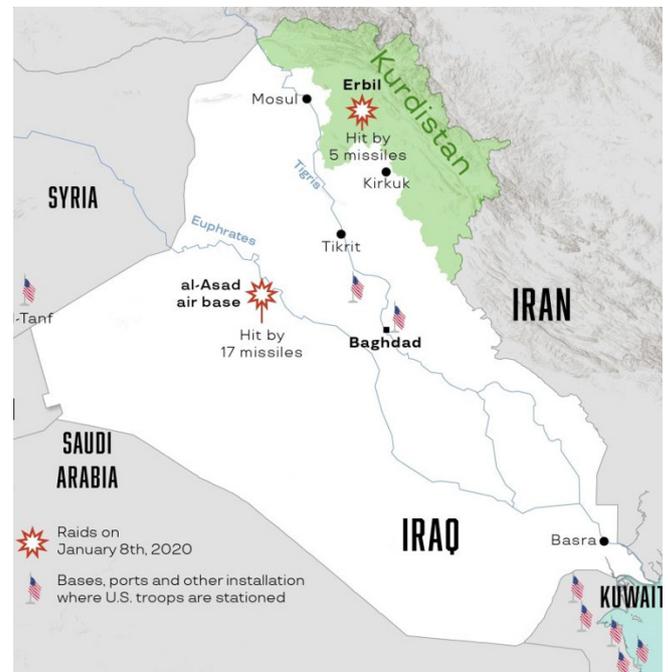


Figure 3 - Iran's raid on the US bases in Iraq  
(Source: Inside Over)

## Significance of Iranian Missile Attacks

Retaliating to the assassination of Soleimani, Iran chose a limited and proportionate response - attacking two strategically significant Iraqi bases, which housed American troops.<sup>1</sup> The operation was conducted on January 8, 2020 using Fateh-110 Short-Range Ballistic Missiles and Qiam-1 Long-Range Ballistic Missiles.<sup>2</sup> The missiles were launched to strike the Ayn al-Asad air base in Iraq's Al-Anbar province and Erbil base in northern Iraq.<sup>3</sup>

The precision of the attacks has been contested so far. Experts like Vipin Narang and Jeffrey Lewis suggest that Iranian missiles possessed high-precision striking capabilities and wreaked much damage on the targeted

facilities.<sup>4,5</sup> On the contrary, conforming to the United States Department of Defence, Michael Elleman, Director of Non-Proliferation and Nuclear Policy at the International Institute for Strategic Studies has suggested that the attacks were fraught with huge circular error probable.<sup>6</sup>

The attacks led to infrastructural damages. Human casualties, however, remain debatable. Following the strikes, General Amir Ali Hajizadeh, the head of Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps' (IRGC) Aerospace Force stated that the attacks did not aim at inflicting any human casualties.<sup>7</sup> However, officials in Tehran also announced that the strikes had resulted into the killing of scores of American troops, which were consequently transferred to Jordan and Israel on nine sorties of C-130 flights for medical aid. On the contrary, the United States Department of Defence announced zero human casualties stating that Iran, seeking to avoid American aggression, deliberately orchestrated the attacks in a way that could evade human casualties.<sup>8,9</sup> Later, Pentagon

<sup>1</sup> Erin Cunningham, Adam Taylor, Michael Brice-Saddler, "More than a dozen missiles hit two bases in Iraq, Pentagon says," *The Washington Post*, January 8, 2020, [https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle\\_east/iran-live-updates/2020/01/07/896c70a2-30d5-11ea-9313-6c8a89b1b9fb\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle_east/iran-live-updates/2020/01/07/896c70a2-30d5-11ea-9313-6c8a89b1b9fb_story.html).

<sup>2</sup> Harry Lye "What missiles did Iran use to attack US bases?" *Army Technology* January 8, 2020. <https://www.army-technology.com/features/what-missiles-did-iran-use-to-attack-us-bases>.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Vipin Narang, Twitter post, January 2020, 11: 51 a.m., <https://twitter.com/NarangVipin/status/1215164268779208704>.

<sup>5</sup> Jeffrey Lewis, Twitter post, January 2020, 1:37 a.m., <https://twitter.com/ArmsControlWonk/status/1215009628842385409>.

<sup>6</sup> Michael Elleman, Twitter post, January 2020, 2: 44 a.m., <https://twitter.com/EllemanIISS/status/1215026615429816320>.

<sup>7</sup> "Top Iranian General: The strikes on US bases were just start of big operation," *The Times of Israel*, last modified January 10, 2020, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/top-iranian-general-strikes-on-us-bases-were-just-the-start-of-big-operation/>.

<sup>8</sup> Qassim Abdul Zahra and Ali Abdul Hassan, "American Troops were informed of Incoming Iran Strike: Military Officials," *Time*, last modified January 13, 2020, <https://time.com/5764023/american-troops-informed-iran-attack/>

<sup>9</sup> Jake Tapper, Twitter post, January 2020, 6:02 p.m., <https://twitter.com/jaketapper/status/1214895207021502464>.

revealed that 11 American soldiers were injured in the Iranian attacks.<sup>10</sup>



Figure 4 – Satellite Imagery of impact of Iranian missile attacks on Ain Al Assad Airbase (Source: MIIS)

Iranian response to the American attack has several contours attached to it. Missile programmes have been attributed as an integral part in Iran’s conventional war-fighting capability. Iran possesses the largest number of ballistic missiles with mobile launchers in the region, rendering it capable of conducting conventional attacks.<sup>11</sup> Iran’s robust missile technology is already viewed as a source of threat to regional and global security by the United States and its allies in the region.<sup>12</sup> A precise and proportionate counter-attack demonstrates Iran’s strategic shift from proxy military engagements to direct confrontation.<sup>13</sup> Further, Iran’s direct confrontation against the United States apparently indicates a strengthening Iran and decreasing might of the US in the region.

In strategic terms, Iranian strikes augmented Iran’s conventional capability and credibility. In political terms, the attacks were counted on as the country’s national

<sup>10</sup> Jake Tapper, Ryan Browne and Barbara Starr, “US troops were injured in Iran missile attack despite Pentagon initially saying there were no casualties,” *CNN*, last modified January 17, 2020, <https://edition.cnn.com/2020/01/16/politics/service-members-injured-iran-strike/index.html>.

<sup>11</sup> Laurence Norman, Iran’s arsenal includes hundreds of short-range and Medium-range Ballistic Missiles, *The Wall Street Journal*, last modified January 7, 2020, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/irans-arsenal-includes-hundreds-of-short-and-medium-range-ballistic-missiles-11578452239>

<sup>12</sup> Missile Defence Advocacy Alliance, “Iran,” <https://missiledefenseadvocacy.org/missile-threat-and-proliferation/todays-missile-threat/iran/>.

<sup>13</sup> Sune Engel Rasmussen, “Iran and U.S. Shift to Open Confrontation in Iraq,” *The Wall Street Journal*, last modified January 2, 2020, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/iran-and-u-s-shift-to-open-confrontation-in-iraq-11577991681>.

prestige factor. Further, arguably the attacks were tacitly designed to symbolically display Iran’s conventional might and demonstrate its relative strength in the region. If so, the political objectives of the strikes have been quite achieved. Also, the attacks did not invite a further escalatory response from the United States as was desired by Iran.

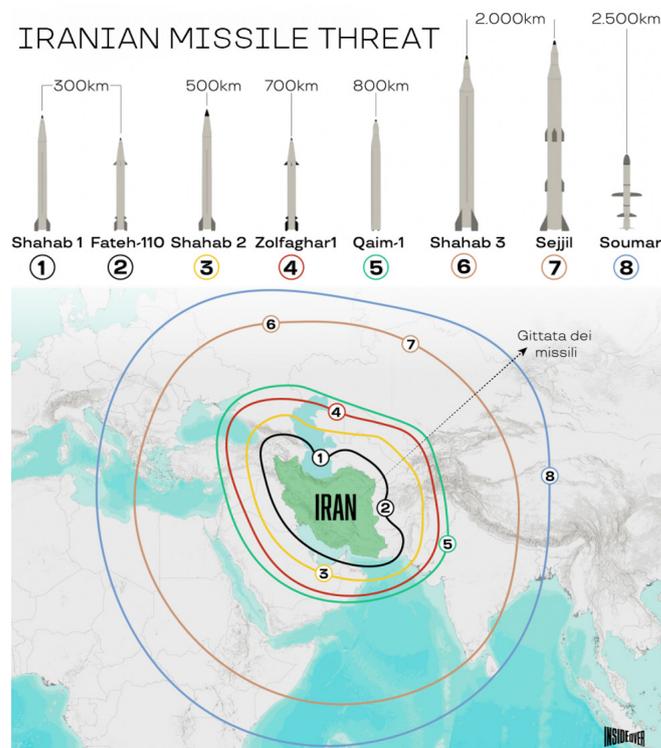


Figure 5 – Types of Iranian missiles (Source: Inside Over)

The precision of Iran’s ballistic missiles is subject to debate currently. However, the weapons might be highly precise in case American troops have escaped any casualties as this was the stated objective of the IRGC forces. Iran’s overt employment of its ballistic missiles against the United States demonstrates Iran’s intent to use its conventional weapons as a strategic and political tool against its adversaries in the region.

## Iranian Challenge to American Hegemony

By assassinating Qasem Soleimani, the United States once again has acted upon the traditional fault-lines of its hegemony in the chaotic Middle East.<sup>14</sup> The designed action remained counterproductive even before the eyes of American public. Trump’s rhymes and reasons backfired with unintended and unimagined speed and scale on the global political landscape. In Washington’s traditional parlance, projected lingo of rogue, renegade, axis of evil, outlaw, and terror state are reiterated as

<sup>14</sup> Badi Badiozamani, *Iran and America: Rekindling a Love Lost* (New York: East-West Understanding, 2005): 5-7.

have been since the WW-II but proved schizophrenic.<sup>15</sup> That is to say, oftentimes American policy makers took aforesaid constructs self-delusional in a way where patient of schizophrenia remains schizophrenic. Conversely, Iran's reaction of unleashing missiles that targeted Ayn al-Asad base in Baghdad proved to be the most critical threat to American hegemony.<sup>16</sup>

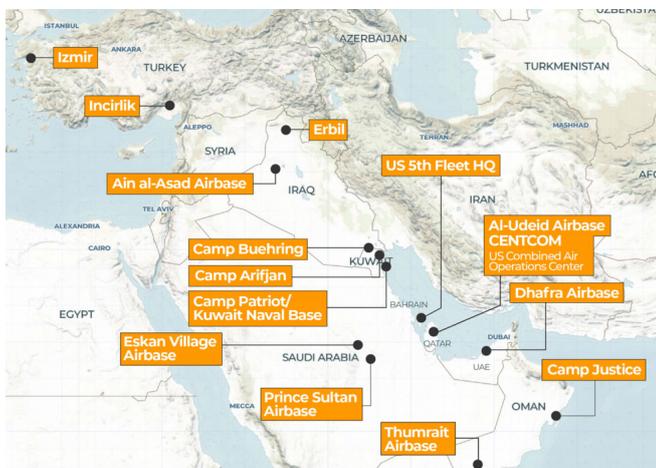


Figure 6 – Major bases used by US forces in the Middle East  
(Source: Al Jazeera)

It is perhaps third time in the history that the American hegemony is challenged with a message having almost global reach. In the strategic context, this kind of achievement has been of critical significance throughout the history of great powers politics. The cases of Cuban Missile Crisis and Vietnam War remind us of the same situation.

During the Cuban Missile Crisis, the escalation between the United States and the Soviet Union, filled with emotive madness of destruction; fortunately diffused, but it successfully delivered the message that the American hegemony can be challenged in its own backyard.<sup>17</sup> It is true that the USSR retreated but at the same time it is also an undeniable fact in great power politics that the American hegemony could be challenged so vividly. Indeed, the Post-Cuban Missile Crises episodes leaned toward the American side because of its effective and incessant propaganda techniques but challenging legacy remained relevant though rarely.

Another striking event that openly challenged the American hegemony was Vietnam War.<sup>18</sup> It would be

<sup>15</sup> Flynt Leverett and Hillary Mann Leverett, "The Year of Iran: Tehran's Challenge to American Hegemony in 2014," *Iran Review*, February 5, 2014, <http://www.iranreview.org/content/Documents/The-Year-of-Iran-Tehran-s-Challenge-to-American-Hegemony-in-2014-2.htm>.

<sup>16</sup> Jonathan Marcus, "Iran's attack: Is there more to come?," *BBC*, last modified January 8, 2020 <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-51034842>.

<sup>17</sup> John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2001)

<sup>18</sup> C George Herring, *America's Longest War: The United States and Vietnam, 1950-1975* (New York: McGraw-Hill Humanities, 2001)

fair to say that perhaps it was the only event in the US hegemonic history that shattered its hegemony into bits and pieces and people like Kissinger had to say: "the Vietnam War required us to emphasise the national interest rather than abstract principles."<sup>19</sup> It is horrifyingly interesting that the United States launched a war, spent billions of dollars, orchestrated immense human bloodshed and put global peace and security in seismic condition without knowing or realising the difference between abstraction and national interests. Rancorously, the confused comedy of the American presidents and officials often stems out at the cost of others' wellbeing. Contextually, Trump's confused comedy that put the global peace and security at stake was also stemmed out of abstraction aimed at conquering peace and stability in the Middle East with the assassination of Qasem Soleimani.

Since the Iranian revolution, the United States has been hardly putting accusations on Iran for strategic reasons and vice versa. It should be remembered that the United States' position rests on four interrelated arguments that Iran supports terrorism, seek weapons of mass destruction, grave violations of human rights and putting hurdles in the way of Middle East peace process.<sup>20</sup> On the contrary, Iran's four accusations against the United States are the opposition of the "Islamic" revolution, supporting Saddam's invasion of Iran in 1980, imposing an unending series of economic sanctions and using proxies against Iran. According to Mearsheimer, the United States cannot disentrail regional powers in any region to go against its interests, and hence, has been playing the role of global policeman.<sup>21</sup> But Mearsheimer's point is not in accordance with Kissinger's allegation of emphasising abstraction instead of national interests. So, it is hard to know what the American foreign policy toward Iran is and what are its goals? Trump kept on alleging Obama for the possibility of initiation of aggression only to show some delusional success stories on foreign policy front to American public for electoral purposes. Even in the wake of the nuclear deal, there has been ambiguity among the topmost United States officials for instance, when President Obama failed in mustering support for military strikes against Bashar al-Assad of Syria, following the alleged use of chemical weapons in 2013.<sup>22</sup> In 2015, the aforesaid situation

<sup>19</sup> Jeremi Sui, "Henry Kissinger and American Foreign Policy," *The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History*, <https://ap.gilderlehrman.org/history-by-era/seventies/essays/henry-kissinger-and-american-foreign-policy>.

<sup>20</sup> Flynt Leverett and Hillary Mann Leverett, "The Year of Iran: Tehran's Challenge to American Hegemony in 2014," *Iran Review*, last modified February 5, 2014.

<sup>21</sup> John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*

<sup>22</sup> Ellen Laipson, "The Absence of a US Policy towards Iran and its Consequences," *Stimson*, last modified May 27, 2014, <https://www.stimson.org/content/absence-us-policy-towards-iran-and-its-consequences>.

compelled the United States officials for the first time since the 1981 Algiers Accords, that ended the embassy hostage crisis, to embrace an agreement with Tehran on nuclear deal between Iran and the P5+1. It should be remembered that both Algiers Accords of 1981 and Iran nuclear deal have concluded largely on Iranian terms.<sup>23</sup> The biggest concern for Iran has been going through hardest economic sanctions and having no arms deals with great powers. This could prove a breakthrough for Iranian economy and defence. In this backdrop, Flynt Leverett and Hillary Mann Leverett suggested: “like 1979, 2014 is likely to be, in unique ways, another year of Iran, when Tehran’s foreign policy strategy will either finally compel Western acceptance of Iran’s sovereign rights, especially to enrich uranium under international safeguards, or fundamentally delegitimise America’s already eroding pretensions to hegemony in the Middle East.”<sup>24</sup>



Figure 7 – Estimated annual funding Iran provides to militant groups it supports (Source: Soufan Center)

Indeed, Trump’s unilateral withdrawal from Iran nuclear deal brought the footprints of eroding hegemony of the US in the Middle East. The assassination of Qasem Soleimani accelerated this in many ways. In essence, Trump already came up with the renewal of the “outlaw states” or renegade states. President Trump increased the quantity and magnitude of Ronald Reagan’s “confederation of outlaw states” (Cuba, Libya, North Korea, Nicaragua, and Iran) with his hubristically delusional revival of the “confederation of outlaw states.”<sup>25</sup> Trump’s version of “outlaw states” is comprised of Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan, Russia, and China and his “outlaw infamy” is looming over Europe and Pakistan. The only difference between Reagan and Trump is marked by the shift from confederation to federation of “outlaw states” but it is evidently proving counterproductive and spreading negative spillover. In this context, the notion of unilateral hegemonic stability is almost over and the

<sup>23</sup> Flynt Leverett and Hillary Mann Leverett, “The Year of Iran: Tehran’s Challenge to American Hegemony in 2014”.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Bernard Weinraub, “President Accuses 5 'Outlaw States' Of World Terror,” *New York Times*, last modified July 9, 1985, <https://www.nytimes.com/1985/07/09/world/president-accuses-5-outlaw-states-of-world-terror.html>.

centre of concentric circle of rising regional hegemony is expanding in the form of Iran, Russia, and China as cores and Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, North Korea, and Pakistan as peripheries. The question, however, is that can Washington disenthrall itself from the events like the assassination of Qasem Soleimani, in order to be safe from unimaginable negative spill over to re-establish its hegemonic status?

## Future of Indo-Iran Relations

India-Iran relations have remained in a swing over the course of their bilateral relations. During the Cold War, both were on the opposite sides of the equation. India, despite being the member of non-aligned movement was in a strategic partnership with the then Soviet Union. Conversely, the erstwhile regime of Iran was in strategic cooperation with the United States till 1979. The 1979 revolution in Iran changed the geopolitics of Middle East in general and Iran in particular. Since 1979, and post-Cold War environment, the bilateral relations between India and Iran have always been outplayed by the United States. India is Iran’s biggest importer of oil. Earlier, Iran used to arrange for 10 per cent of India’s oil needs. On the other hand, the sanctions imposed by the United States on Iran have rendered India to side with the former. This also becomes logical and evident from the fact that India has expressed strong opposition to the Iranian ambitions of acquiring nuclear weapons. However, it has sustained its desire to continue with the business engagements with Iran. The Chabahar port is an example of cooperation in recent times. The Iran-Iraq War of 1980s was another factor where India and Iran were on the diverging trajectories.

The Middle East as a region is already subject to proxy wars of Iran and Saudi Arabia. In addition to that, the United States’ foreign policy toward the region vis-à-vis Iran is always being contested. The United States singles out itself from The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, also known as Iran nuclear deal. Moreover, the situation has further compounded with the death of Soleimani. Trump was very vocal against the nuclear deal of Iran even before coming into office. He apparently wants to divert the attention from impeachment process against him. Moreover, it has been compounded by an accidental shooting down of a passenger plane killing many Canadians flying over Iranian airspace. There is an element in the United States which will always dictate the bilateral relations between India and Iran. It is evident since the United States has time and again given waiver to India as far as 123 Agreement (2005 India-United States civil nuclear agreement) is concerned. From the perspective of India, its foreign policy, while engaging Iran, is two-pronged. One factor is Pakistan

that comes under the framework of Mandala concept and other is the concept of “extended neighbourhood.”

The Mandala theory states: “Your neighbour is your natural enemy and the neighbour’s neighbour is your friend.” The Mandala word itself originates from Sanskrit and it means circles. The Mandala concept is one in which there are circles of friends and foes with the central point being the King and his state.

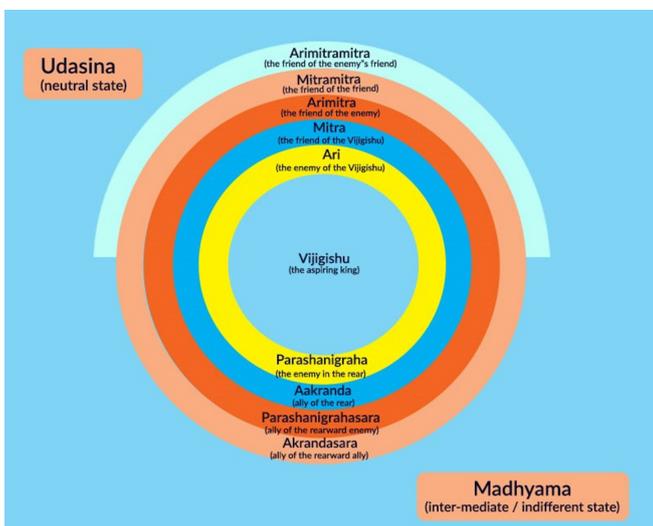


Figure 8 – Kautilya’s Mandala theory  
(Source: The True Picture)

By applying the Mandala theory of foreign policy of India, it is based on the geographical assumption that the immediate neighbour state (Pakistan) is most likely to be an enemy (real or potential) and a state next to the immediate neighbour (Iran) is likely to be a friend. Therefore, the said concept is implemented by Indian foreign policy which also to an extent correlates with its vision of extended neighbourhood. However, one must be cognizant of the fact that Iran and Pakistan are not rivals to each other as in the case of India and Pakistan. Still, the tilt of Pakistan toward Saudi Arabia speaks volumes about the void with Iran that has been captured by India in addition to its geographical placement as a neighbour of Pakistan. Under the Mandala concept, India is trying to increase its cooperation with every state which borders Pakistan. Afghanistan is also another case in point.

The future of Indo-Iran relations will continue to flourish depending upon the United States disposition toward the region. The extended neighbourhood, being a part of India’s foreign policy, entails that “India should break out of the claustrophobic confines of South Asia.” Such designs are independent of the regime type in India. All India Congress and Bharatiya Janata Party have unequivocally pursued the said foreign policy where any region beyond South Asia comes

under the umbrella of extended neighbourhood. This umbrella spreads eastward, southward, northward, and westward. Some analysts argue it to be “360 degree vision.” Recent cooperation between India and Iran includes Chabahar port that will serve as an entry point for India’s outreach toward Central Asia as well as Afghanistan, while bypassing Pakistan. Again, this extension of India toward its neighbourhood manifests the Mandala theory as well. For the said purpose, India has financially supported construction Route 606 also known as Zaranj-Delaram Highway. The aim here is directed against Chinese development of Gwadar port. The North-South Transport Corridor between India and Iran and other regional powers is also a point of bilateral convergence.

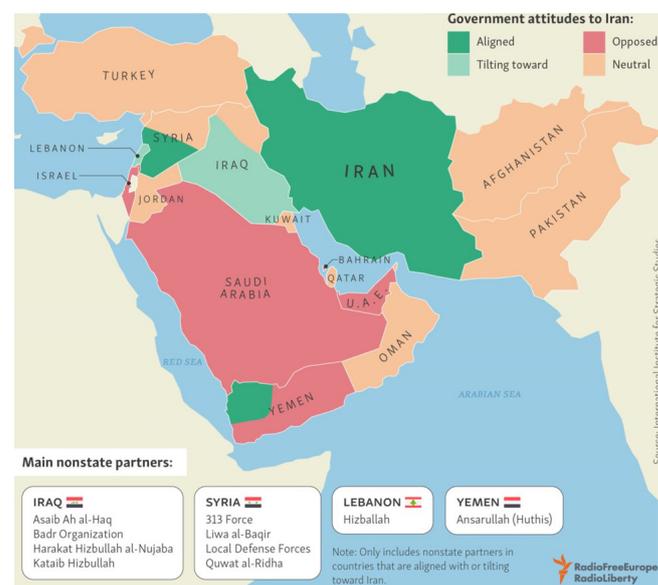


Figure 9 – Iran’s allies and foes in the Middle East  
(Source: Radio Free Europe / Radio Liberty)

The future scenarios in South Asia and Middle East are dubbed with instability and chaos. However, the element of geo-economics would lead the geopolitics in the case of India and Iran. Still the politics of cooperation can be ruptured as per the manoeuvring of the United States’ actions and decisions on the foreign policy toward the Middle East. One can argue that, India would still oppose Iran going nuclear but at the same time vouch for further cooperation. How would Iran respond to this dual policy of India since the nuclear deal has been scrapped, is yet to be seen.

## Way Forward for Pakistan

In recent times, Pakistan has largely remained aloof in any regional or extra-regional conflict. During the Second Gulf War in 2003, the then Pakistan President General Pervez Musharraf demanded United Nations’ (UN) support for multinational force in Iraq to convince

the domestic audience on sending Pakistan's troops to Iraq.<sup>26</sup> This was in line with Pakistan's stated approach of sending troops overseas either for UN peacekeeping operations or any military intervention authorised by the UN Security Council like during the first Gulf War in 1991. Similarly, Pakistan's Parliament unanimously decided to stay neutral during Yemen conflict in 2015.<sup>27</sup> Pakistan also refused to send troops to Middle East to become part of the United States-led global alliance against Islamic State.<sup>28</sup>

Following Soleimani's assassination, Pakistan's political and military leadership has called for de-escalation and maximum restraint and have been very vocal about staying neutral.<sup>29</sup> On Prime Minister's direction, the Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi visited Saudi Arabia, Iran, and the United States and urged for restraint.<sup>30</sup>

Any conflict in the region will be catastrophic for Pakistan and the country will have to suffer from spillover. Pakistan can face spillover in the form of certain extremist elements exploiting the situation for sectarian violence.<sup>31</sup> Meanwhile, a conflict can also trigger massive influx of refugees from Iran to Pakistan's Balochistan province, which will exacerbate security problems for Pakistan.<sup>32</sup>

On the other hand, an increase in global oil prices will prove fatal for Pakistan's economy, which is already under stress. Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries – Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Oman, Qatar, and United Arab Emirates - are home to millions of Pakistani expatriates. Last year alone, 95 per cent of about 563,000 people, who relocated abroad, went to GCC countries

for employment.<sup>33</sup> In case of any conflict, Pakistan will be forced to relocate these people. Consequently, the national exchequer will be deprived of about \$12 billion, which it currently receives in the form of foreign remittances.<sup>34</sup> Moreover, Pakistan heavily relies on Gulf countries for its energy requirements.

Continued hostility between Iran and the United States will cause Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) issue to be overlooked by the international media. Analysts believe that Modi government will be further involved in strangling Kashmiris if J&K issue is put on the back burner.<sup>35</sup> Concerns have also been raised about the future of Afghan peace talks following the assassination of Soleimani.<sup>36</sup>

Amidst such situation, it is pragmatic for Pakistan to remain neutral in the current standoff between the United States and Iran. However, Islamabad should actively engage with the regional and extra-regional countries to ease up the situation in the already chaotic Middle East region.

<sup>26</sup> Felicity Barringer, "Little Chance of Pakistani Troops in Iraq," *The New York Times*, last modified September 22, 2003, <https://www.nytimes.com/2003/09/22/world/little-chance-of-pakistani-troops-in-iraq.html>.

<sup>27</sup> "Parliament calls for neutrality in Yemen conflict," *Dawn*, last modified April 10, 2015, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1175090>.

<sup>28</sup> Anwar Iqbal, "Troops won't be deployed outside region: ISPR," *Dawn*, last modified November 23, 2015, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1221608>.

<sup>29</sup> Sorvar Alam, "Pakistan: Soleimani killing threatens regional peace," *Anadolu Agency*, last modified January 3, 2020, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/asia-pacific/pakistan-soleimani-killing-threatens-regional-peace/1691468> and Ayaz Gul, "Pakistan Stress Neutrality, Big Rally Protests Killing of Soleimani," *Voice of America*, last modified January 5, 2020, <https://www.voanews.com/middle-east/voa-news-iran/pakistan-stress-neutrality-big-rally-protests-killing-soleimani>.

<sup>30</sup> Kamran Yousaf, "Qureshi relays message of 'restraint' to Tehran and Riyadh," *The Express Tribune*, last modified January 13, 2020, <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2136316/1-fm-qureshi-reaches-riyadh-mission-help-ease-middle-east-tensions/>.

<sup>31</sup> Ashfaq Ahmed, "US-Iran conflict: Pakistan will not be part of any move that disturbs regional peace, says Maj General Ghafoor," *Gulf News*, last modified January 5, 2020, <https://gulfnews.com/world/asia/pakistan/us-iran-conflict-pakistan-will-not-be-part-of-any-move-that-disturbs-regional-peace-says-maj-general-ghafoor-1.68818616>.

<sup>32</sup> Sabena Siddiqui, "Pakistan seeks to mitigate US-Iran tensions," *Al-Monitor*, last modified January 13, 2020, <https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2020/01/pakistan-seek-mitigate-us-iran-aggression.html>.

<sup>33</sup> "GULF TOP DESTINATION FOR PAKISTANI WORKERS IN 2019," *Newsweek Pakistan*, last modified January 2, 2020, <https://www.newsweekpakistan.com/gulf-top-destination-for-pakistani-workers-in-2019/>.

<sup>34</sup> Khurshid Ahmed, "Saudi Arabia, UAE remain top contributors to Pakistan's remittances," *Arab News*, last modified July 11, 2019, <https://www.arabnews.com/node/1524131/pakistan>.

<sup>35</sup> Adil Sultan, "US-Iran Crisis: Is it the Beginning of the End?," *Strategic Foresight on Asia*, last modified January 19, 2020, <https://strafasia.com/us-iran-crisis-is-it-the-beginning-of-the-end/>.

<sup>36</sup> Zaki Khalid, "Strategic Implications Of Qasem Soleimani's Assassination For Pakistan," *Blackbox*, last modified January 8, 2020, <https://blackbox.nervecenter.live/strategic-implications-of-qasem-soleimanis-assassination-for-pakistan/>.