

## **The Persistent Conflict between Israel and Iran is Perpetuated by the Involvement of the United States**

Before the 1979 Islamic revolution in Iran, Iran and Israel were allies. However, following the revolution, a regime change occurred in Iran, which adopted an ideology vehemently opposed to Israel, fundamentally altering the relationship between the two countries. In this world view, Israel was seen as a Western colonial outpost, and Zionism was seen as a version of imperialism. At the time, many Arab governments also rejected Israel's right to exist as a Jewish state, and radicals opposed to Egypt's peace treaty with Israel formed a so-called Rejectionist Front. Iran's Islamist ideology perceives Israel as an illegitimate state that has seized Muslim/Arab territories and displaced Palestinians from their homeland. Israel has historically favored maintaining some level of tension between Iran and the Arab states, as it sees potential strategic advantage in leveraging their conflicts against each other.

Israel focused on Iraq's nuclear program, which was discovered in 2002 to be more advanced than Iran had acknowledged to the International Atomic Energy Agency. As the US geared up to attack Iraq in 2003 over what turned out to be bogus claims that Iraq possessed weapons of mass destruction, some Israeli leaders favored a US military attack on Iraq. Israel also engaged in fierce competition with Iran in former Soviet republics, especially Azerbaijan, and forged an alliance with Baku against Tehran. Iran, meanwhile, expanded its influence in areas close to Israel, notably Syria, seizing the opening provided by the 2011 civil war. Iran, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and Israel each harbour ambitions of regional dominance, yet it is improbable that any of them will attain such hegemony.

On December 25, 2023, Israeli air strikes outside the Syrian capital of Damascus reportedly resulted in the death of Sayyed Razi Mousavi, a senior adviser and top commander of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) in Syria, as per Iranian state media. Mousavi played a significant role in coordinating the military alliance between Syria and Iran. As a result, on January 15, 2024, the IRGC launched ballistic missiles at what it claimed was an outpost of Israel's Mossad spy agency in Erbil, in the Kurdish region of northern Iraq. At least eight explosions were heard in Erbil, four people were killed. On April 1, 2024, Israel attacked the Iranian consulate in Damascus. On April 13, 2024, Iran's IRGC seized an Israel-linked ship near the Strait of Hormuz. On the other hand, Iran launched more than 300 drones and missiles against Israel in an attack that Iran dubbed Operation True Promise. This was the

first-ever direct strike on Israel from Iranian soil. Given this context, the tensions between Israel and Iran persist and continue to intensify.

On April 21, 2024, the US House of Representatives passed a \$95 billion legislative package with bipartisan support. This package includes aid for Ukraine, Israel, and the Indo-Pacific region. Despite facing staunch opposition from some Republicans, the bill successfully moved forward after months of delay. Simultaneously, President Biden warned of the US being drawn into war. "Israel is our strongest partner in the Middle East; it's unthinkable that we would stand by if its defences were weakened and Iran was able to carry out the destruction it intended this weekend," he said.

The innocent lives continue to be affected by the ongoing Gaza conflict, which has been fuelled by actions taken by Israel over the past six months. Additionally, the United States' actions are exacerbating tensions between Israel and Iran, potentially leading to further conflict.