



# Following Israeli attacks, Iran and other Gulf states could prevent endless war through regional non-proliferation cooperation

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On 13 June 2025, Israel launched military strikes against Iran with the stated goal of destroying its nuclear programme. While the war is still unfolding with more Israeli strikes followed by Iranian counter-strikes, the risk of further escalation is high, with potentially devastating consequences across the region and beyond.

Apart from reflecting its long-term aspiration to kinetically strike Iran's nuclear facilities, Israel's actions were facilitated by the permissive US policy towards the country under President Donald J. Trump—who himself threatened to bomb Iran if it did not agree to a new nuclear deal.<sup>1</sup> While Israel is unlikely to reach its stated aims even if the USA becomes directly involved in the war, it may nevertheless hope that the war will serve its less clearly articulated goal of weakening Iran or even bringing about regime change.

The Gulf Arab states—which have been mending relations with Iran in recent years and which could suffer considerable collateral damage in the war—have strongly condemned the Israeli attack. In the months preceding the attack, they stated that they would not allow their territory to be used as a launching pad for strikes against Iran—a position that may be tested if the USA, which maintains military bases in these countries, enters the war. The Gulf Arab states also supported the Iranian-US nuclear negotiations that started in April, and they were later drawn into the diplomatic process directly through a proposal whereby Iran and other regional states would collaborate on the production of fuel for civilian nuclear power plants.

While war seems to have ended Iranian-US nuclear diplomacy, this paper argues that Iran and other Gulf states should re-explore possibilities for regional nuclear cooperation once the immediate hostilities subside. Cooperation based on mutual transparency and restraint could help prevent the kind of open-ended war that experts have long warned would follow a strike on Iran's nuclear facilities. It could also offer a modest but meaningful diplomatic step toward rebalancing a deeply asymmetrical regional order long shaped by efforts to preserve Israel's nuclear monopoly. As demonstrated by the current war on Iran and

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<sup>1</sup> White House, President Donald J. Trump restores maximum pressure on Iran, 4 February 2025 <<https://www.whitehouse.gov/fact-sheets/2025/02/fact-sheet-president-donald-j-trump-restores-maximum-pressure-on-iran/>>; Chiacu, Doina and Ljunggren, David, 'Trump threatens bombing if Iran does not make nuclear deal', Reuters, 30 March 2025 <<https://www.reuters.com/world/trump-says-there-will-be-bombing-if-iran-does-not-make-nuclear-deal-2025-03-30/>>.



earlier episodes of aggressive counterproliferation, the coercive enforcement of this order has in fact itself been a major source of disorder in the Middle East.<sup>2</sup>

## Background to nuclear diplomacy that preceded the war

In the days preceding the Israeli attack, Iranian-US nuclear diplomacy seemed increasingly deadlocked due to disagreements over uranium enrichment. This was by no means a new point of contention but one that has been at the heart of the nuclear crisis with Iran from its inception—and one for which the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Action had offered a seemingly logical compromise solution.

The JCPOA was preceded by over two decades of coercive US diplomacy that initially sought to prevent Iran from developing even a civilian nuclear industry and, since 2003, from enriching uranium.<sup>3</sup> In 2006, the demand for Iran to suspend uranium enrichment activities received international backing through United Nations Security Council resolutions. Together with Iran's insistence on its right to enrich, this left little room for diplomacy.

Instead, the crisis escalated, with Iran stepping up its nuclear activities in response to international sanctions and military threats from Israel and the USA. Iran justified its enrichment programme as a matter of self-sufficiency in producing nuclear fuel, citing past US policies that had restricted the country's access to the international nuclear energy market. At the same time, enrichment supported Iran's strategy of nuclear hedging—that is, maintaining the technical ability to develop nuclear weapons without crossing the threshold of doing so.

A diplomatic off-ramp appeared in 2013, when the US administration of Barack Obama expressed readiness for a compromise whereby Iran would be allowed to carry out limited uranium enrichment under strict international monitoring.<sup>4</sup> This paved the way for the JCPOA, under which Iran agreed to nuclear restraint in exchange for sanctions relief. That Iran agreed and complied with the JCPOA suggested that it viewed nuclear hedging primarily as a bargaining tool in negotiations with the USA. At the same time, the JCPOA addressed the security concerns behind Iran's hedging strategy by taking the military option off the table.

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2 See Albalawi, Almuntaser, 'From Asymmetry to Autonomy: Rethinking Arms Control in the Middle East', PRISME Initiative, 2025, <<https://prismeinitiative.org/blog/asymmetry-autonomy-rethinking-arms-control-middle-east-almuntaser-albalawi/>> and Elbahtimy, Hassan, 'Whose Nuclear Disorder? The Middle East in Global Nuclear Politics', PRISME Initiative, 2025, <<https://prismeinitiative.org/blog/middle-east-global-nuclear-politics-hassan-elbahtimy/>>. Both papers were presented at the Sustaining Alternative Links beyond Arms and the Military (SALAM) workshop on nuclear politics in and with the MENA region for which this paper was prepared.

3 Erästö, Tytti, 'Learning from the past in the Iran nuclear dispute', Middle East Research and Information Project (MERIP), 16 April 2014 <<https://merip.org/2014/04/learning-from-the-past-in-the-iranian-nuclear-dispute/>>.

4 Parsi, Trita. *Losing an enemy: Obama, Iran and the triumph of diplomacy*, 2017, pp. 192-196.



Despite the past failure of coercive diplomacy, President Trump ended implementation of US commitments under the JCPOA in 2018 and adopted a policy of ‘maximum pressure’ towards Iran.<sup>5</sup> His goal was to coerce Iran into accepting a new deal—one that, among other things, would end all uranium enrichment in the country.<sup>6</sup> In practice, this merely reignited the nuclear crisis, with Iran responding to pressure and provocations by stepping up its nuclear activities—including enrichment of uranium to the 60 percent level in 2021.<sup>7</sup> Unfulfilled promises of sanctions relief under the JCPOA also contributed to the election of a more hardline Iranian president, as well as closer military cooperation between Iran and Russia. These developments, combined with inertia of the US administration under Joe Biden in restarting nuclear negotiations with Iran, complicated efforts to revive the JCPOA between 2021 and 2024.

## Recent efforts at nuclear diplomacy

While the current Trump administration continued its coercive approach towards Iran, it also made efforts to engage Iran diplomatically, with bilateral negotiations starting in April 2025.<sup>8</sup> Complicating these efforts, however, were mixed signals from the USA on whether it still sought a policy of zero uranium enrichment in Iran.

The general US goal of denying Iran a nuclear weapon, announced by the White House in February, seemed vague enough to allow flexibility on this issue—thus arguably enabling the bilateral talks.<sup>9</sup> The remark made on 14 April by the main US negotiator, Steve Witkoff, that Iran could continue enrichment to the 3,67 percent level (as allowed under the JCPOA), also suggested that US policy goals had changed.<sup>10</sup> However, he later asserted that no enrichment in Iran should be permitted.<sup>11</sup> President Trump’s subsequent comments also pointed to inflexibility on the issue.<sup>12</sup>

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5 White House, Office of the Spokesperson, Maximum pressure campaign on the regime of Iran, Factsheet, 4 April 2019 <<https://2017-2021.state.gov/maximum-pressure-campaign-on-the-regime-in-iran/>>.

6 US Department of State, After the deal: A new Iran strategy, 21 May 2018. <<https://2017-2021.state.gov/after-the-deal-a-new-iran-strategy-3/>>.

7 BBC, ‘Iran to enrich uranium to 60% after ‘wicked’ nuclear site attack,’ 14 Apr. 2021 <<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-56743560>> ; Kelley, Robert E., ‘Why is Iran producing 60 per cent-enriched uranium?’, SIPRI Commentary, 29 April 2021 <<https://www.sipri.org/commentary/essay/2021/why-iran-producing-60-cent-enriched-uranium>>

8 Wintour, Patrick, ‘Iran and US agree to continue nuclear talks after first indirect round’, The Guardian, 12 April 2025 <<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/apr/12/iran-foreign-minister-oman-us-nuclear-programme-talks>>.

9 White House, Maximum pressure campaign on the regime of Iran.

10 Davenport, Kelsey, ‘Creating the conditions for a nuclear deal with Iran,’ Just Security, 1 May 2025. <<https://www.justsecurity.org/110379/creating-conditions-nuclear-deal-iran/>>.

11 Sanger, David E., ‘Trump Envoy Says Iran Must Give Up Nuclear Enrichment Capability,’ The New York Times, 18 May 2025 <<https://www.nytimes.com/2025/05/18/us/politics/trump-witkoff-iran-nuclear.html>>.

12 Sanger, David E., ‘Iran rejects plan to stop it from enriching uranium, Trump says,’ The New York Times, 9 June 2025 <<https://www.nytimes.com/2025/06/09/us/politics/iran-nuclear-trump-proposal-uranium.html>>.



This ambivalence reflected the Trump administration's self-inflicted difficulty in accepting a compromise solution—one that would inevitably resemble the JCPOA. Renegotiating such a compromise would only underscore the absurdity of leaving the agreement in 2018. In an effort to make the new deal look different, the USA reportedly proposed a three-year suspension of enrichment by Iran, followed by the resumption of limited enrichment activities.<sup>13</sup> Iran's experience in 2004 with a similar temporary suspension—which led to European demands for further extensions—partly explains why this proposal was rejected by Iran.

Another potential compromise that was considered during the talks was the establishment of a nuclear consortium, under which the production of nuclear fuel would become a joint effort between Iran and other regional states, including Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE).<sup>14</sup> Some of these states suggested they were open to the idea, prompting discussions about the possibility of establishing a joint enrichment facility on an island in the Gulf.<sup>15</sup> The main sticking point here seemed to be the location of enrichment facilities: while Iran viewed a consortium as a way to build international confidence in its enrichment activities, the USA saw it as a way to end uranium enrichment on Iranian soil.<sup>16</sup>

Illustrating the increasingly evident diplomatic deadlock in the days preceding the Israeli attack, Iranian officials stated on 9 June that they would not accept the US proposal to relocate enrichment outside Iran as part of the consortium arrangement.<sup>17</sup> This position was likely shaped in part by Iran's earlier, unsuccessful attempt to buy into the EURODIF enrichment company in France.<sup>18</sup> Combined with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) resolution on 12 June that found Iran to be in noncompliance with its nuclear safeguards agreement, these developments were seen by Israel as creating a window for military action.<sup>19</sup>

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13 Wintour, Patrick, 'Iran has "sort of" agreed deal on nuclear programme, says Donald Trump,' The Guardian, 15 May 2025 <<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/may/15/us-has-sort-of-agreed-a-nuclear-deal-with-iran-says-donald-trump>>.

14 Gambrell, Jon, 'Analysis: an outline is emerging of the US offer to Iran in their high-stakes nuclear negotiations,' AP, 3 June 2025 <<https://apnews.com/article/iran-us-nuclear-talks-analysis-israel-mideast-2cbea2d6982bd8806d7e8fa7771afc37>>.

15 Middle East Eye, 'Saudi and Omani officials propose nuclear facilities for Iran on Gulf island: Report,' 3 June 2025 <<https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/saudi-and-omani-officials-propose-nuclear-facilities-iran-gulf-island>>

16 Ibid.

17 Tweet by Iran's Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Araghchi, 4 June 2025 <<https://x.com/araghchi/status/1930219219746009302>>.

18 Fedchenko, V., 'Multilateral control of the nuclear fuel cycle', SIPRI Yearbook 2006: Armaments, Disarmament and International Security (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2006), pp. 692-93. <<https://www.sipri.org/yearbook/2006/13/appendix13C>>

19 IAEA, Board of Governors, NPT Safeguards Agreement with the Islamic Republic of Iran, GOV/2025/38, 12 Jun. 2025 <<https://www.iaea.org/sites/default/files/25/06/gov2025-38.pdf>>



## The risk of an endless war

As experts have warned for years, a war against Iran could have devastating consequences across the Middle East, but it is unlikely to permanently eliminate Iran's nuclear threshold capability, potentially sparking a cycle in which Israel and the USA feel compelled to carry out repeated military strikes in what has been described as a potential 'endless war'.<sup>20</sup>

While this prospect was previously seen as creating a sense of urgency around renewed diplomacy, it now appears to reinforce arguments in favour of Iran crossing the nuclear threshold. As former Iranian foreign minister Kamal Kharrazi suggested already during the lower-level military confrontation between Iran and Israel in May 2024, Iran might need to revise its 'nuclear doctrine' if Israel were to attack its nuclear facilities.<sup>21</sup> Kharrazi was arguably referring to the need to reconsider the fatwa renouncing nuclear weapons as un-Islamic. Paradoxically, instead of preventing Iran from developing nuclear weapons, Israel's aggressive counter-proliferation approach could thus push Iran in precisely that direction.

However, the security benefits of acquiring nuclear weapons should not be taken for granted. Given Israel's risk-seeking behaviour and the fact that deterrence only works against rational actors, it is unclear whether Israel would in fact be deterred by an Iranian nuclear deterrent. Indeed, Israel's own nuclear arsenal has not succeeded in deterring rocket, missile and drone attacks against the country. A nuclear capability could even constrain Iran's options in responding to further aggression, as its conventional missile strikes could be misperceived as nuclear, raising the risk of inadvertent nuclear escalation. Reminiscent of the South Korean-US alliance against North Korea, Israel and the USA might ultimately pursue an even more dangerous pre-emptive strategy aimed at eliminating Iran's nuclear weapons, risking a nuclear war in the Middle East.

## The price of war for Gulf Arab states

The Gulf Arab states are particularly vulnerable to the regional consequences of Iran-Israel war. These countries host US military bases, which would likely be targeted by Iranian counterattacks if the USA joins the war, and they export oil and gas through the Strait of Hormuz—which Iran has threatened to close in response to being attacked.<sup>22</sup> In addition to the risk of radiological contamination caused by strikes on nuclear facilities, this war could—much like previous Gulf conflicts—also cause significant environmental damage through oil leaks spreading across the Gulf.

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20 Toossi, Sina, 'The war over war with Iran has just begun,' Responsible Statecraft, 28 March 2025 <<https://responsiblestatecraft.org/trump-iran-2671616967/>>.

21 Villar, Xavier, 'The evolving debate: Iran's nuclear policy and regional security concerns,' Tehran Times, 12 Oct. 2024 <<https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/504902/The-evolving-debate-Iran-s-nuclear-policy-and-regional-security>>.

22 Shafaq News, 'Iranian commander threatens to close Strait of Hormuz if US attacks,' 29 March 2025 <<https://shafaq.com/en/World/Iranian-commander-threatens-to-close-Strait-of-Hormuz-if-US-attacks>>.



Reflecting their improved relations with Iran and concerns about the war that they still hoped to avert in the spring of this year, Gulf Arab states voiced their opposition to military strikes against Iran. For example, in January, Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud expressed support for continued Iranian-US engagement and stated that ‘a war between Iran and Israel ... is something we should try to avoid as much as possible.’<sup>23</sup> Saudi Arabia—like Kuwait, Qatar and the UAE—also refused to allow its territory to be used to launch attacks against Iran.<sup>24</sup>

These countries could also be drawn into a nuclear arms race, should Iran decide to develop nuclear weapons. Saudi Arabia has previously stated that it would follow suit if Iran acquired such capabilities, and Egypt and Türkiye are also frequently mentioned in connection with the so-called ‘nuclear domino’ theory.<sup>25</sup> However, the spread of nuclear weapons would hardly make the region any safer, not least because of the likelihood of Israeli preventive strikes against any new proliferators.

## Pursuing regional stability through Gulf non-proliferation cooperation

As argued above, while Israel’s attack and the prospect of open-ended aggression may strengthen the case for Iran to develop nuclear weapons, these might ultimately not provide the desired security. If Iran too reaches this conclusion, it —along with other Gulf states— could still seek to prevent an endless war and regional arms race through diplomatic means. Although their options for de-escalating the current conflict are limited, these states could influence its aftermath through regional nuclear cooperation—which could take on simpler forms than the joint operation of a nuclear fuel cycle discussed in the context of the Iranian-US talks.<sup>26</sup> Notably, if such cooperation would be based on mutual nuclear transparency and restraint, it could provide a compelling way to counter the gruesome counterproliferation logic calling for repeated military action against Iran.

## Enhanced nuclear transparency

In principle, the simplest form of nuclear restraint for the Gulf countries would be to enhance transparency within the existing verification framework provided by the IAEA. As parties to the 1968 Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), all states in the Gulf region have

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23 Nakhoul, Samia and Rashad, Marwa, ‘Saudi foreign minister says Trump does not raise risk of Iran-Israel war,’ Reuters, 21 January 2025 <<https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/saudi-foreign-minister-tells-davos-meeting-iran-israel-war-should-be-avoided-2025-01-21/>>.

24 Mathews, Sean, ‘Gulf states refuse to be launching pad for any US attacks against Iran,’ Middle East Eye, 1 April 2025 <<https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/gulf-states-refuse-launching-pad-for-us-attacks-iran>>.

25 Serwer, Daniel, ‘A nuclear Middle East is not a secure Middle East,’ Middle East Institute, 25 March 2025 <<https://www.mei.edu/blog/nuclear-middle-east-not-secure-middle-east>>.

26 Cf. Haghirian, Mehran, ‘Nuclear Diplomacy in the Gulf: Exploring Pathways for Regional Nuclear Energy Cooperation between Iran, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE,’ PRISME Initiative, 2025. <<https://prismeinitiative.org/blog/nuclear-diplomacy-gulf-regional-energy-cooperation-iran-saudi-uae-mehran-haghirian/>>



already concluded a Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement (CSA) with the IAEA. However, unlike Bahrain, Iraq, Kuwait and the UAE, neither Iran nor Saudi Arabia has ratified an Additional Protocol to their CSA.<sup>27</sup> The Additional Protocol is a significant tool for increased confidence in NPT states parties' peaceful nuclear intentions as it expands the IAEA's inspection authority beyond declared nuclear facilities.

By jointly implementing or ratifying the Additional Protocol, Iran and Saudi Arabia could therefore increase international confidence in their nuclear intentions, with enhanced IAEA access in Iran undermining any arguments for further military action. Iran already implemented the Additional Protocol from 2016 to 2021 as part of its JCPOA commitments and had agreed to seek parliamentary ratification—although this never occurred, as the USA withdrew from the JCPOA before the deadline for doing so. For Saudi Arabia, adopting an Additional Protocol would be a logical next step following its recent decision to fully implement its CSA.<sup>28</sup>

In practice, however, there will likely be little appetite in Iran for expanding cooperation with the IAEA—whose latest resolution it views as politically motivated.<sup>29</sup> Moreover, on 16 June, the Iranian Parliament started drafting a bill for Iran to withdraw from the NPT in response to the Israeli attack.<sup>30</sup> If the government signs the bill and Iran does leave the NPT, its CSA would no longer apply, possibly ending the IAEA's presence in the country. Even then—and assuming that NPT withdrawal does not necessarily mean a decision to develop nuclear weapons—nuclear verification could still be pursued on a regional basis.

Indeed, as suggested in earlier discussions on establishing a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, a regional verification system could be modelled on the Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials (ABACC).<sup>31</sup> The Gulf states could thus explore the idea of a regional nuclear verification system, which could serve as a valuable confidence-building tool—either complementing IAEA safeguards or compensating for their potential absence in Iran.

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27 The International Atomic Energy Agency, Status list: Conclusion of Additional Protocols, updated 31 December 2024 <<https://www.iaea.org/sites/default/files/20/01/sg-ap-status.pdf>>.

28 The International Atomic Energy Agency, IAEA Director General's Introductory Statement to the Board of Governors, 3 March 2025 <<https://www.iaea.org/newscenter/statements/iaea-director-generals-introductory-statement-to-the-board-of-governors-3-march-2025>>.

29 Aljazeera, 'UN nuclear watchdog board finds Iran not complying with obligations,' 12 Jun. 2025 <<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/6/12/un-nuclear-watchdog-says-iran-non-compliant-of-nuclear-safeguards>>.

30 Reuters, Iran says parliament is preparing bill to leave nuclear non-proliferation treaty, 16 June 2025 <<https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/iran-foreign-ministry-says-parliament-is-preparing-bill-leave-npt-2025-06-16/>>.

31 Carlson, John, 'Nuclear verification in a Middle East WMD Free Zone: Lessons from past verification cases and other precedents,' UNIDIR 2021 <[https://unidir.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Nuclear-Verification-in-a-Middle-East-WMD-Free-Zone-UNIDIR-2021\\_o.pdf](https://unidir.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Nuclear-Verification-in-a-Middle-East-WMD-Free-Zone-UNIDIR-2021_o.pdf)>.



## Region-wide limits to fissile material production

Gulf states could go beyond transparency measures by agreeing on region-wide restrictions on proliferation-sensitive nuclear activities. These could mirror the JCPOA's provisions by capping uranium enrichment levels as well as fissile material stockpiles and banning the reprocessing of spent nuclear fuel. While such restrictions would initially mainly affect Iran's programme—depending on the extent of damage caused by the current war—they would also build confidence over time in Saudi Arabia's nuclear ambitions, which include plans for uranium enrichment.<sup>32</sup>

To be sure, Iran cannot be expected to implement these restrictions without sanctions relief from the USA. It could nevertheless commit to doing so pending such relief, thereby increasing political pressure on the USA to lift sanctions even in the absence of a bilateral nuclear deal.

## Multilateral nuclear fuel cycle

The consortium proposal that was discussed in connection with the Iranian-US talks builds on previous ideas for a multilateral nuclear fuel cycle, the non-proliferation benefits of which stem from the enhanced transparency and trust generated through joint management, oversight and operation of nuclear activities.

As former Egyptian diplomat Mohamed Shaker argued already in 2014, integrating Iran's nuclear programme within plans for an Arab nuclear fuel cycle could offer a 'solution to the Iranian nuclear problem' while avoiding the proliferation risks 'inherent in a scenario of multiple investments in nuclear fuel cycle technologies by individual states'. He also asserted that building on Iran's advanced nuclear programme made more sense than an exclusively Arab effort. Rather than involving all parties in enrichment activities, these activities could be 'black-boxed' and remain the private domain of Iran in order to minimize proliferation risks.<sup>33</sup>

While the idea of a regional fuel cycle seems to have lost its relevance in the short and medium term with the Israeli attack and the resulting damage to Iran's nuclear infrastructure, it remains a viable future model for building confidence in nuclear activities in the Gulf and beyond.

In addition to offering a hedge against coercive counter-proliferation strategies, this and other forms of nuclear cooperation should be accompanied by efforts to strengthen the norm against attacks on nuclear facilities. Despite such attacks already being prohibited under international law, the norm is inconsistently upheld, as evidenced in US support for

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32 Aljazeera, 'Saudi Arabia announces plans to enrich and sell uranium,' 14 January 2025 <<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/1/14/saudi-arabia-announces-plans-to-enrich-and-sell-uranium>>.

33 Shaker, Mohamed Ibrahim, 'Regionalizing nuclear energy in the Middle East: Making progress on the nuclear and WMD-free zone,' *Global Governance*, Vol. 20, No. 4 (2014), pp. 517-528. <<https://brill.com/view/journals/gg/20/4/gg.20.issue-4.xml>>

Israeli strikes and European statements citing Israel's 'right to defend itself' in this context.<sup>34</sup>

## Conclusions

One may ask why Iran—having renounced nuclear weapons under both the NPT and the JCPOA—should take on additional non-proliferation commitments after being attacked by nuclear-armed Israel, which has never even signed the NPT. However, insofar as Iran and other Gulf states agree that nuclear weapons are a liability rather than a solution to their security dilemmas, they would have much to gain from jointly reinforcing this stance through regional cooperation involving voluntary and mutual nuclear restraint. Indeed, this might be their best option for preventing an endless war and arms race in the Middle East, to which the current Israeli war on Iran might ultimately lead. Rather than weakness in the form of unilateral concessions, regional non-proliferation cooperation would demonstrate leadership and strengthen regional diplomacy both as a stabilizing force and as a corrective to the asymmetries of the existing nuclear order and its coercive enforcement in the Middle East.

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34 See e.g. Karl, Jonathan, 'Trump tells ABC Israel strikes on Iran 'excellent' and warns 'more to come,' ABC News, 13 June 2025 <<https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/trump-tells-abc-israel-strikes-iran-excellent-warns/story?id=122807155>>; and Vohra, Anchal, 'Berlin, Paris urge restraint as Israel-Iran crisis escalates,' DW, 14 Jun. 2025 <<https://www.dw.com/en/berlin-paris-urge-restraint-as-israel-iran-crisis-escalates/a-72904227>>.



# PRISME

Pathways to Renewed and Inclusive  
Security in the Middle East



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# PRISME

Pathways to Renewed and Inclusive  
Security in the Middle East

## PRISME Initiative

PRISME aims to redefine the conception of “security” in the Middle East and North Africa, as the starting point for strategic relations between MENA countries and their European and North American partners. It does so in pursuit of effective, collaborative approaches to ensuring a more peaceful and stable future. To this end, PRISME sponsors dialogue and debate between foreign policy professionals across diverse backgrounds and perspectives. These include individuals in governments, thinktanks and academic institutions located in the MENA region, Europe and North America, with a specific focus on engaging young and emerging thinkers and practitioners. Its goal is to re-define security in the Middle East, broadening the definitions of what it looks like, for whom, how it can be achieved, and how outside actors can contribute to it.

## SALAM Project

SALAM (Sustaining Alternative Links beyond Arms and the Military) proposes to rethink the centrality of the arms trade in international relations with and among Middle East & North Africa (MENA) countries.

It fosters and amplifies ideas from a network of scholars and practitioners working in and with the Middle East. Issues they will address include the arms trade’s advertised role in cementing bilateral and multilateral ties between North America, Europe and the MENA region; the opportunity costs of over- or sole reliance on weaponry as security; and alternative modes of engagement that might redefine a shared strategic agenda.