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Israel-Iran Hostilities: The Fallout for Lebanon's Political Dynamics

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Abstract

The Israel-Iran rivalry, intensely rooted in ideological and strategic hostilities, has been increased by the introduction of disruptive technologies such as artificial intelligence, drones and cyber warfare. This study investigates the implications of this rivalry on Lebanon, which serves as a proxy battlefield for both nations. By employing Realist theory, the paper studies the power dynamics between Israel and Iran, concentrating on their strategic tactics to achieve regional supremacy and dominance. Israel's focus on technological preemption, demonstrated by the Iron Dome and advanced cyber abilities, differs from Iran's asymmetric strategies, entailing proxy alliances and the deployment of drone technologies. The study underlines Lebanon's fragile sovereignty, worsened by Hezbollah's militarization and external involvements, which weaken political stability and excavate sectarian divisions. The analysis also emphasizes the humanitarian and socio-political adverse impacts of technological militarization on Lebanon's civilian population. Data for this research has been gathered mainly from secondary sources such as academic articles, historical records and policy reports, providing an in-depth knowledge of the interplay between regional disputes and disruptive technologies.

Introduction

The Middle East is an area deeply swayed by historical grievances, ideological divides and competing geopolitical desires. One of the most noteworthy rivalries in this context is the lasting hostility between Israel and Iran, which has grown into a complex conflict obsessed by technology and proxy warfare (Tanvir & Abbas, 2024). This contention, rooted in ideological, religious and strategic factors, has been exaggerated by the rise of disruptive technologies that have changed traditional methods of diplomacy and warfare. Technologies such as innovative drones, cyber warfare, artificial intelligence (AI) and precision-guided weaponries have restyled the security landscape, creating new liabilities and opportunities for all parties involved (Barel, 2021). At the focus of this conflict is Lebanon, a nation

stressed with political instability and economic delicacy, yet critically located as a battleground for this high-tech arms race (Mahmoudian, 2024). This paper examines how the hostilities between Israel and Iran affect Lebanon's political dynamics, with specific attention to the role of disruptive technologies in determining these interactions.

Israel's foreign policy toward Iran is formulated on the principle of preemption, with a robust emphasis on technological superiority as a curb and a way to thwart asymmetric threats (Zimmt, 2024). A crucial aspect of this strategy is the incorporation of disruptive technologies across various domains. One of Israel's most outstanding technological achievements is the Iron Dome missile defense system, which employs AI-driven algorithms and progressive radar systems to divert short-range projectiles with near-perfect correctness. Since its utilization, the Iron Dome has sheltered Israeli civilians from thousands of rocket attacks, mostly launched by Iranian-backed groups such as Hamas and Hezbollah (Byman, Jones, & Palmer, 2024). In addition to defensive systems, Israel has exhibited impressive offensive aptitudes in the cyber domain. The Stuxnet cyberattacks, a joint operation between Israel and the United States that targeted Iran's Natanz nuclear facility, characterized a significant milestone in the use of cyber warfare for strategic tenacities (Horschig, 2024). By inactivating centrifuges critical to Iran's nuclear program, Israel not only hindered Iran's nuclear goals but also proved its ability to conduct covert, high-impact operations without resorting to conventional military engagement. Israel's reserves in autonomous systems and precision-guided munitions additionally highlight its promise to uphold a technological edge (Davenport, 2024). These advancements allow Israel to accomplish targeted strikes with trifling collateral damage, as perceived in its operations against Iranian military belongings in Syria and Hezbollah's infrastructure in Lebanon. By leveraging these technologies, Israel intends to compensate for the asymmetric threat imposed by Iran and its proxies while strengthening its position as a technological leader in the region (Polak, Weiss, & Levy-Tzedek, 2024).

Iran's foreign policy towards Israel is illustrated by a strategy of asymmetry, in which it powers disruptive technologies to compensate for its conventional military drawbacks. One of Iran's most substantial advancements in recent years has been the evolution of drone technology (Mokhtar, 2024). The Shahed-136 drones, for instance, serve as a keystone of Iran's offensive and defensive competencies. These drones often denoted as "loitering munitions," are furnished with advanced guidance systems and can be installed in swarms, overpowering traditional air defense systems. Iran has not only applied these drones to boost its military operations but has also supplied them to associated groups such as Hezbollah and Hamas, thereby encompassing its influence across the region (Kim, Lee, Woo, & Park, 2024). Furthermore, in the realm of cyber warfare, Iran has appeared as a formidable actor. Iranian cyber units have directed attacks on Israeli infrastructure, including power grids, financial institutions and transportation systems, causing in extensive disruption and economic losses. These attacks serve a dual purpose: declining Israel's technological superiority and indicating Iran's capability to get revenge in unconventional ways (Stachoń, 2024). Iran's use of disruptive technologies is also thoroughly interrelated to its ideological narrative. By outlining its technological advancements as a means of confrontation against Israeli aggression, Iran seeks to stimulate domestic support and build up its alliances with proxy groups (Rojo & Skoll, 2024). This strategy not only brooks Iran's regional longings but also excavates its rivalry with Israel in the technological sphere.

Lebanon's geopolitical position and internal dynamics make it a critical as well as a fragile player in the Israel-Iran skirmish (Youvan, 2024). While Lebanon formally claims a stance of neutrality, its sovereignty is significantly diluted by the strong influence of Hezbollah, a powerful Iranian substitution (Daniel, 2023). Hezbollah's assimilation of disruptive technologies into its military abilities has turned Lebanon into a focal point for Israeli countermeasures. For example, Israeli airstrikes pointed at targeting Hezbollah's missile depots and drone amenities within Lebanon are often considered preemptive measures to neutralize possible threats before they happen. The spread of disruptive technologies in Lebanon has had intense political and social implications (Kanaaneh, 2023). Hezbollah's military proficiencies, enhanced by Iranian technology, aggravate divisions within Lebanese society, as rival factions debate the group's role in national security. Moreover, the frequent Israeli airstrikes weaken Lebanon's sovereignty and expose its civilian population to the perils of regional conflicts. The Lebanese government's inability to restrain Hezbollah's activities mirrors the fragility of its political institutions, which are ill-equipped to address the challenges postured by technological militarization. Economically, Lebanon is a proxy battleground. The demolition of infrastructure and the financial costs of upholding security have deepened the country's financial crisis, further weakening its already fragile political structure. In this situation, Lebanon is not simply a passive victim; it is a nation tackling the consequences of a technological arms race that it cannot control (Boyle, 2024).

If the current trajectory of aggression and technological escalation lasts, Lebanon faces an increasingly unwarranted future. The integration of disruptive technologies into the Israel-Iran clash has momentous implications for Lebanon's political stability, social structure and economic viability. Cyberattacks targeting critical infrastructure like as power grids and banking systems, could immobilize Lebanon's economy, worsening public discontent and corroding trust in government institutions (Sobelman, 2025). The regularization of drone warfare and precision-guided strikes risks creating a cycle of violence that unreasonably affects Lebanon. Civilian casualties, displacement and the destruction of infrastructure pay to a humanitarian crisis that deteriorates the country's existing challenges. Also, Lebanon's role as a battleground for proxy conflicts sets a hazardous precedent for other regional quarrels, where technologically driven proxy warfare may develop the norm rather than the exemption. On the international stage, Lebanon's situation culminates in the vital need for global frameworks to normalize the use of disruptive technologies in conflict. Without such regulations, the unrestricted proliferation of these technologies could destabilize not only Lebanon but also the bigger Middle East, promoting an environment of continuous instability (Abou-Khalil, Khalifé, & Aoun, 2024).

The rivalry between Israel and Iran, powered by ideological differences and strategic aims, has been significantly altered by the advent of disruptive technologies. As these two nations utilize advanced and progressive capabilities to proclaim their dominance, Lebanon finds itself caught in the center, fraught with the political, economic and social consequences of this technological arms race. The integration of cyber warfare, drones and artificial intelligence into regional engagements has not only transformed the nature of warfare but also exposed the vulnerabilities of states like Lebanon, which lack the resources and institutional capacity to handle such challenges. To address these issues, a multifaceted approach is necessary. This includes the solidification of Lebanon's political institutions, the promoting of regional dialogue and the development of international norms to control the use of disruptive technologies. Only

through such coordinated struggles can the cycle of escalation be fragmented, paving the way for a more stable and protected Middle East (Hassib & Ayad, 2023).

Research Questions

Q1: How do Israel and Iran's rivalry, intensified by disruptive technologies, affect Lebanon's political stability and sovereignty?

Q2: What are the security impacts of technological militarization, such as drones and cyber warfare, on Lebanon as a proxy battleground?

Theoretical Framework

This theoretical framework employs Realism which is a foundational theory in International Relations (IR) for analyzing the complex dealings between Israel and Iran along with their deep implications for Lebanon's political landscape. By fitting in the insights from various strands of Realism such as Classical, Neorealism, Offensive-Defensive Realism and Neoclassical Realism, the framework offers a nuanced understanding of the strategies, motivations and consequences shaping this trilateral dynamic.

- **Classical Realism: Human Nature and Power Struggles**

  According to Morgenthau, the anarchic international system demands pursuing power for dominance and survival. The Israel-Iran rivalry exemplifies this attitude, where both nations are locked in a tussle for regional hegemony. Israel's technological advancements, together with the Iron Dome and offensive cyber capabilities and Iran's strategic progress of drones and support for proxies like Hezbollah, underline the relentless pursuit of power. Lebanon being a weaker country caught in this power struggle, becomes a proxy battlefield, reflecting the wider Realist view of smaller states as grounds for great-power competition (Morgenthau & Guitton, 1955).

  Kenneth Waltz Neorealism underscores the systemic structure of international politics, where the nonexistence of a central authority forces states to prioritize self-help strategies. The security dilemma - where actions by one state to improve security unintentionally threaten others - is patent in the Israel-Iran dynamic. The preemptive assaults of Israel on Hezbollah's missile depots in Lebanon and its cyber operations against Iranian nuclear abilities are defensive actions that seemed aggressive by Iran. This triggers Iran's asymmetric answer, such as preparing proxies with disruptive technologies. The result is an ever-increasing technological arms race, with the sovereignty of Lebanon being eroded as it becomes the theater for these security tensions (Randle, 1980).

- **Offensive Realism: Power Maximization and Hegemonic Aspirations**
  John Mearsheimer's Offensive Realism suggests that states are just like power maximizers in an anarchic world, where only dominance guarantees survival. Israel's offensive cyber strategies and technological investments line up with Mearsheimer's view of states looking for regional

hegemony. Iran's backing for Hezbollah and its improvements in drone and missile technology can likewise be understood as efforts to counterbalance Israeli dominance and confront its regional superiority. Lebanon, with its internal divisions and weak state apparatus, is disproportionately adversely impacted, as the pursuit of domination by these two regional powers weakens its stability and intensifies domestic tensions (Lieber, 2002).

- **Defensive Realism: Balancing Security and Overreach**

  Kenneth Waltz and Stephen Walt Defensive Realism emphasizes those strategies that balance power without aggravating countermeasures that lead to countless insecurity. Israel's focus on technological defense systems like the Iron Dome demonstrates a defensive strategy meant for deterrence. However, Iran's asymmetric policies - pertinently its provision of drones and missiles to Hezbollah - reflect the Realist concept that weaker states or actors assume unconventional methods to balance against stronger opponents. The back-and-forth of these strategies fuels the militarization of Lebanon, eroding its sovereignty and excavating political fragmentation (Siverson, 1988).

- **Neoclassical Realism: Domestic Factors and Leadership Decisions**

  Gideon Rose and William Wohlforth's Neoclassical Realism attempts to bridge systemic pressures and domestic-level variables, stressing the role of leadership, political institutions and insights. Lebanon's internal divisions, intensified by Hezbollah's association with Iranian interests, exemplify the domestic impact of external hostilities. Hezbollah's technological militarization not only draws Israeli retaliation but also deteriorates Lebanon's state apparatus, underlining how domestic vulnerabilities interconnect with systemic pressures. Israel and Iran's leadership decisions, intended by domestic political imperatives and historical narratives, additionally increased the conflict, with Lebanon's internal stability becoming security damage (Rose, 1998).

- **Balance of Threat: Perceived Intentions and Strategic Calculations**

  Key Proponent: Stephen Walt, while the balance of power advocates for aggregate capabilities, Walt's Balance of Threat theory considers seeming intentions and proximity as critical elements of state behavior. Israel notices Hezbollah's Iranian-supplied technology as an existential threat, encouraging preemptive actions. Iran, in turn, views Israeli technological supremacy as a direct challenge, intensifying its efforts to boost proxies in Lebanon. Lebanon's fragile sovereignty is trapped in this perception-driven spiral, as external threats aggravate internal divisions (Walt, 1985).

- **Policy Implications and Normative Considerations**

  Realism highlights the need for state resilience to alleviate the effects of external pressures. Improving Lebanon's political institutions and mitigating Hezbollah's technological militarization are serious steps to reclaim sovereignty. The Realist viewpoint highlights the destabilizing potential of unchecked technological advancements. International norms governing cyber operations, drone warfare and AI in conflict must be formulated to prevent intensification. While Realism highlights power dynamics, the framework acknowledges the need for dialogue to address shared security alarms. Confidence-building actions between Israel and Iran, eased by third-party mediators, could reduce Lebanon's vulnerability as a proxy battlefield (Fjäder, 2014).

So, Realism offers a robust framework to analyze the Israel-Iran hostilities and their impact on Lebanon. By incorporating Classical, Neorealist, Offensive-Defensive and Neoclassical perspectives, this framework captures the interplay between systemic pressures, domestic vulnerabilities and state behavior. The technological dimension of this rivalry strengthens its consequences, with Lebanon bearing the brunt of regional power tussles. Addressing these challenges necessitates strengthening state institutions, regulating disruptive technologies and promoting dialogue to navigate the complexities of modern international relations.

Discussion Model

1) **Power Dynamics between Israel and Iran**
   The power dynamics between Israel and Iran are intensely entrenched in realpolitik, where both states engage in strategic tactics to increase their influence and security in the Middle East. Realpolitik, characterized by reasonable and strategic concerns over ideological ones, is evident in the activities of both nations. Israel, for instance, identifies Iran's nuclear goals and support for groups like Hezbollah as nonstop dangers to its security, encouraging it to engage in military and diplomatic struggles to counterbalance Iran's influence. On the contrary, Iran looks at Israel as a regional adversary and pursues to expand its influence through alliances with non-state actors and by boosting its military capabilities. The inherent power-seeking attitudes are being reflected by these states in their military strategies and foreign policies. Israel's focus on sustaining a qualitative military edge and establishing alliances with other regional powers highlights its commitment to realpolitik. Iran, on the other hand, attained a strategy of asymmetric warfare and proxy alliances, leveraging groups like Hezbollah to spread its reach and minimize Israeli influence (Zrůst, 2019).

2) **Lebanon as a proxy state**
   Lebanon is a critical arena for great power competition, especially between Iran and Israel. The country's intricate political landscape and strategic position make it a focal point for regional power struggles. Iran's backing for Hezbollah, a powerful political and military force in Lebanon, represents its strategy of using Lebanon as a proxy to impose influence and encounter Israeli interests. This dynamic is a definitive example of the balance of power theory, where regional powers are involved in indirect hostilities through non-state actors to elude direct conflict. Such an involvement of external powers in Lebanon's political structure further shows its role as a proxy state. The European Union, for example, steers its policies in Lebanon by balancing the normative and realist approaches, eliciting broader geopolitical tensions in the region. This dual approach underlines the Lebanon's importance as a battleground for conflicting interests, where both regional and international actors compete for influence (Ruffa, 2011).

3) **Impact of Security Dilemmas on Lebanon's Stability**
   The security dilemma in Lebanon is considerably influenced by Israel's defensive engagements, which exacerbate regional pressures. Neorealism, which focuses on the anarchic nature of international relations and the continuous quest for security, provides a valuable lens to understand these dynamics. Israel's military operations, often vindicated as defensive, are perceived as destructive by Lebanon and other regional actors, leading to an arms race and

amplified militarization. This condition is compounded by Lebanon's internal fragmentation and the existence of non-state actors like Hezbollah, which further thwarts the security landscape (Hazbun, 2016). The 2006 war between Israel and Hezbollah is a key example of how defensive actions can ultimately be reached to broader conflicts, undermining Lebanon and the region (Picard, 2012).

4) **Erosion of Sovereignty**

Lebanon's sovereignty is repeatedly eroded by external coercions, leading to its political fragmentation. The presence of Syrian forces until 2005 and constant Israeli military actions have historically challenged Lebanon's ability to uphold a unified national defense strategy. This has contributed to a bifurcated defense posture, where the state of Lebanese and non-state actors like Hezbollah drive with differing agendas and competencies. The division of Lebanese society, along with the effect of external powers, has led to in a fragmented political landscape where multiple sectarian groups vie for the sake of power, often with external belongings (Fregonese, 2012). Lebanon's geopolitical position marks it as the arena for great power competition, further compromising its sovereignty. The influx of defensive assistance from Western countries, especially in response to the Syrian civil war, proves how Lebanon is trapped in the crosshairs of global strategic interests. This assistance, while meant for bolstering Lebanon's security apparatus, often deficient in cohesive strategy and instead reveals the strategic priorities of donor countries, contributing to a patchwork of security governance that weakens national sovereignty. The hybrid sovereignty model occurring in Lebanon, where state and non-state actors coincide and sometimes collaborate, lead to the complex interplay of local and international forces (Tholens, 2017).

5) **Israeli Technological Superiority and Its Impact on Lebanon**

Israel's offensive strategies, specifically its technological superiority, have meaningfully impacted Lebanon. The Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) have conducted several operations such as the large-scale 2006 war against Hezbollah, tried to neutralize threats and sustain regional dominance. In spite of Israel's innovative military capabilities, including cutting-edge airpower and precision-guided ammunitions, its struggles to completely dismantle Hezbollah have not fully been successful. The ongoing rivalry has caused considerable devastation in Lebanon, with the Lebanese Shiite community being predominantly affected. The constant repeating cycles of violence have not only tense Lebanon's political and social fabric but also challenged the perceived invulnerability of the Israel Defense Forces, instigating the debates about alternative strategies to attain long-term peace and stability in the region. (Falk, 2024).

6) **Iran's Regional Counterbalance and Support for Hezbollah**

Iran has strategically located itself as a counterbalance to Israeli supremacy in the region by backing up Hezbollah. This support is part of Iran's widespread strategy to incorporate Muslim leadership and counteract the impact of Israel and its allies, such as the United States. Hezbollah, backed by Iran, has acquired a military strategy that entails missile warfare to discourage Israeli forces and maintain its position as a prime military power in Lebanon (Samaan, 2017). This backing has allowed Hezbollah to engage in conflicts with Israel, thus serving Iran's interests in keeping up regional hegemony and challenging Israeli policies. Lebanon has become a central arena for great powers rivalry, with Israel and Iran using the state as a field for their strategic interests. Israel's

military activities in Lebanon are part of its intensive strategy to weaken rivals like Hezbollah and Iran. At the same time, Iran uses Hezbollah to encounter Israeli influence and elevate power in the region. This dynamic illuminate Lebanon's role as a critical arena where regional powers employ influence and engage in proxy conflicts, show casting the principles of offensive realism where states seek to enhance their power and security in an anarchic international system (Shamshad & Arshad, 2021).

7) Israel's Defensive Strategies

Israel's defensive stance has significantly affected Lebanon, mainly through its interactions with Hezbollah. The Israeli strategy, illustrated by a focus on deterrence and precision strikes, targets to maintain a balance of power in the region. This attitude has led to a comparatively quieter Israel-Lebanon border since the Second Lebanon War, as Hezbollah has been deterred from engaging in large-scale conflicts due to the possible damage Israel could impose. The Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) have adapted their military strategies to contain long-range accuracy firepower, which is relatively a response to domestic political pressures to minimalize Israeli losses. This strategic posture not only helps to protect Israeli interests but also effects the internal dynamics of Lebanon by continuing a state of tension that prevents Hezbollah from fully stressing its military capabilities within Lebanon. The deterrence strategy, while operative in reducing direct engagement, leads to a persistent state of militarization in Lebanon, as Hezbollah lasts to prepare for potential future conflicts (Rodman, 2019).

8) Hezbollah's Asymmetric Response

Hezbollah's militarization has intensified Lebanon's internal divisions by putting the country as a field for great power rivalry. The group's military tactics, heavily supported by Iran, include the use of rocket warfare and a deterrence position aimed at maintaining its status as the crucial military power in Lebanon. This militarization has extended sectarian divisions within Lebanon, as various factions line up with either Hezbollah or its opponents, often effected by external powers such as Iran and Saudi Arabia. The existence of Hezbollah as a powerful non-state actor confounds Lebanon's political landscape, making it hard for the central government to proclaim control and maintain national harmony. Furthermore, Lebanon's strategic location and Hezbollah's competencies attract the attention of global powers, resulting in the country into a proxy battleground where regional and international interests hit. This situation not only subverts Lebanon internally but also maintains its role as a focal point in the broader geopolitical struggles of the Middle East (Al-Aloosy, 2020).

9) Internal Political Landscape of Lebanon

Lebanon's political institutions have been pointedly weakened by external conflicts, a condition that can be analyzed through the lens of neoclassical realism. This theoretical framework underscores the interplay between domestic political system and international burdens. Lebanon's geopolitical position in the Middle East deals with various external pressures, which aggravate its internal political fragility. The country's political structure, envisioned by a confessional power-sharing arrangement, is intrinsically vulnerable to external influence. Regional conflicts, including the Syrian civil war, have cascaded into Lebanon, stressing its political institutions and amplifying sectarian divisions. These external engagements often contribute to the influx of refugees, economic instability and increased sectarian tensions, which further

deteriorate Lebanon's governance structures. The existence of foreign powers and their backing for different factions within Lebanon also challenges the sovereignty of its political system, as these factions often highlight external agendas over national interests. This external interference disturbs the balance of power within Lebanon, resulting in political paralysis and a destabilized state apparatus (Dinu, 2022).

10) Hezbollah's Role in Internal Dynamics

Hezbollah's actions have an insightful impact on Lebanon's governance and sovereignty, which can be assumed through the lens of neoclassical realism. As an influential non-state actor, Hezbollah activates both as a political party and a militant group, employing significant control over Lebanon's political landscape. Its military capabilities and regional alliances, specifically with Iran, empower it to act as a state within a state, challenging the ability of the Lebanese government. Hezbollah's contribution to regional conflicts, such as the Syrian civil war, further obscures Lebanon's internal dynamics. By contributing to these conflicts, Hezbollah not only distracts resources away from domestic governance but also exposes Lebanon to retaliatory actions and international sanctions. This dual role of Hezbollah challenges Lebanon's sovereignty, as the government efforts to assume control over its territory and foreign policy. The group's capacity to assemble support and resources self-reliantly of the state weakens the central government's ability to govern effectively. Subsequently, Hezbollah's role contribute to the loss of Lebanon's political institutions, as they intensify sectarian segmentations and deter efforts to build a cohesive national identity (Tari, 2022).

11) Role of Disruptive Technologies in Conflict

Disruptive technologies, such as drones and cyber warfare, have knowingly transformed the landscape of modern conflict. The use of drones, chiefly, has introduced new dynamics in warfare, permitting for remote operations that lessen human risk while increasing strategic influence. In the perspective of the Ukraine conflict, Iran's provision of 2,000-2,400 drones to Russian forces represents how these equipments can be leveraged to target crucial infrastructure, including electricity grids, thus crippling necessary services and planting chaos. This strategy is not restricted to state actors; non-state actors like Hezbollah have also assumed similar tactics, using drones to counter strategic assets such as the Israeli gas rig Karish (Bouks, 2023). The spread of drone technology underlines a shift towards more asymmetric warfare, where smaller, less conventional forces can wield significant impact over larger, traditional military powers. This shift is eased by the comparatively low cost and high influence of drone operations, which can be installed with precision and stealth, often eluding traditional defense mechanisms. The implications of these technologies are deep, as they democratize military influence, allowing non-state actors to encounter state sovereignty and alter geopolitical balances (Dolatabadi & Kamrava, 2022).

12) Hezbollah's Adoption of Iranian Technology

Hezbollah's military competences have been considerably improved through Iranian support, mostly in the realm of missile and drone technology. Since the early 1990s, Hezbollah has progressed its military strategy to incorporate rocket warfare as a major tactic against Israeli forces, a strategy that has been supported by Iranian technological and logistical backing. This support has empowered Hezbollah to uphold a deterrence position, posturing itself as a formidable military power within Lebanon. The group's aptitude to deploy advanced missile

systems and drones is a direct outcome of Iranian assistance, which offers not only the hardware but also the essential training and operational guidance (Pfeifer, 2021). This relationship demonstrates a broader trend where state actors enable non-state proxies to achieve strategic aims without direct engagement. The implications of this are noteworthy, as it lets groups like Hezbollah to drive within a level of sophistication and capability that would otherwise be unachievable. This dynamic also puts trials for international security, as it confuses traditional state-to-state conflict paradigms and presents new variables into the equation of geopolitical balance. The support from Iran efficiently transforms Hezbollah into a regional power broker, proficient in influencing events far beyond its instant geographical boundaries (Devore & Stähli, 2015).

13) Israeli Preemptive Actions

Responses by Israel's military are significantly influenced by its consideration of threats, especially from Iran. The Israeli defense strategy is profoundly shaped by the possible threat posed by Iran's nuclear goals and its backing for proxy groups like Hezbollah and Hamas. These groups drive in close proximity to Israel, in Lebanon and Gaza, correspondingly and are seen as direct additions of Iranian influence in the region. The insight of an existential hazard from Iran's nuclear program has led Israel to ponder various military options, including preemptive strikes, to nullify this threat (Katz, 2012). The strategic calculations of Israel are also shaped by the demand to maintain a qualitative military edge over its rivals, which contains developing advanced defense systems and conducting intelligence operations to anticipate potential assaults. Israel's strategic calculations include a multifaceted assessment of regional dynamics and the possibilities for escalation. The Israeli military doctrine highlights deterrence and the capability to win decisively in any engagement. This has contributed to a focus on sustaining robust military competence and readiness to act preventatively if needed. The Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) are designed to be involved in both conventional and unconventional warfare, showing the diverse nature of threats, they face, with cyber terrorism and warfare. The current shadow war with Iran, shaped by covert operations and targeted strikes, highlights Israel's proactive tactic to security concerns. This approach is entrenched in the belief that a strong military posture is crucial to deter foes and avert the emergence of new threats (Pathak, 2024).

14) Iranian Strategic Calculations

Iran's strategic calculations are deeply shaped by its technology transfers, pertinently in the realm of nuclear development and missile technology. These transfers are part of Iran's wide-ranging deterrence strategy, aimed at encountering seemed threats from Israel and other regional challengers. By increasing and spreading advanced military technologies, Iran pursues to boost its strategic depth and project supremacy across the Middle East. This has important implications for the regional security landscape, as it modifies the balance of power and intensifies the possibilities for conflict escalation. Iran's maintenance for non-state actors, such as Hezbollah, additionally increases the security risks, as these groups function as proxies in Iran's strategic calculus. The existence of a powerful Iranian-backed militia such as Hezbollah, in Lebanon, assists as a strategic asset for Iran, empowering it to exert impact and encounter Israeli security interests openly. This has put a lot of attentions on Lebanon as a focal point of regional concerns, with both Israel and Iran looking to assert their domination. The strategic position of Lebanon is underlined by its

geographical proximity to Israel and its part as a channel for Iranian influence in the Levant. The continuing conflict in Syria and the larger geopolitical enmities in the region make the situation worse, emerging Lebanon a potential climax for broader regional conflict (Suman, Pandey, Mishra, & Kiran, 2025).

15) Impact on Civilian Life in Lebanon

The social implications of warfare that involve drones and cyberattacks in Lebanon are intense, impacting numerous aspects of civilian life. The use of drones in warfare has initiated a new dimension of fear and insecurity among the Lebanese populace. Drones, frequently used for surveillance and targeted strikes, form a continuous threat of violence from the sky, disturbing daily life and imparting a widespread sense of uncertainty. This technical advancement in warfare has led to psychological strain and shock among civilians, mostly children, who are growing up in a situation where the threat of drone attacks is a part of normal life. The psychological impact is intensified by the economic challenges faced by over half of the population that are living in poverty, as underlined by the constant humanitarian crisis in Lebanon. Cyberattacks further aggravate the societal implications of modern warfare. These attacks can cripple crucial services, such as banking and healthcare, leading to turmoil and further undermining the already fragile social fabric. The disruption of these facilities not only affects the immediate accessibility of resources but also challenges trust in the government and institutions, which are observed as unable to guard the population from such threats. The combination of drone warfare and cyberattacks lead to a climate of terror and distrust, eroding social cohesion and intensifying existing sectarian divisions. This environment is unfavorable to the well-being of civilians, mostly the youth, who are at risk of growing up in a society characterized by instability and conflict (Abouzeid, Halwani, Mokdad, & Habib, 2021).

16) Political Ramifications of Militarization

Technological militarization considerably contributes to Lebanon's political uncertainty, basically through the lens of realism, which highlights the role of power and security in international relations. The beginning of progressive military technologies, such as drones and cyber proficiencies, has shifted the balance of power within the larger region and Lebanon. These technologies are frequently monitored by powerful political factions and foreign actors, which use them to exert impact and carry out their strategic goals. This dynamic aggravates Lebanon's already intricate political landscape, marked by rooted sectarian divisions and a dysfunctional power-sharing structure. The occurrence of technologically advanced military abilities in the hands of non-state actors and foreign proxies weakens the central government's power, leading to a fragmented political environment. This fragmentation is extra fueled by the incapability of the Lebanese state to efficiently manage and control these technologies, leading to a power vacuum that many factions exploit to their advantage. The realist perspective focuses how the pursuit of power and security by these players leads to a constant cycle of conflict and volatility, as each faction pursues to improve its position through technological superiority. Moreover, the reliance on foreign actors for military backing and technology extends Lebanon's dependency on external powers, challenging its sovereignty and political independence. This dependency is a foundation of political tension and uncertainty, as many factions align with contending foreign interests, further dividing the political landscape. The realist theory highlights how the quest for

power and security through technological militarization maintains Lebanon's political instability, as internal and external actors compete for supremacy in a volatile and fragmented environment (Hewlett, 2022).

Conclusion

This analysis has explored the intricate power dynamics between Israel and Iran, with Lebanon as a critical proxy arena, using realism as the guiding framework. Key findings highlight the manifestation of realpolitik in the strategic engagements of both nations. Israel's accent on technological superiority and preemptive measures booms classical realist principles, while Iran counters with asymmetric tactics and proxy alliances to enhance its influence. Lebanon emerges as a principal example of balance of power theory, experiencing as a battleground where Israel and Iran involve indirectly, with Hezbollah's role showing the complexities of proxy warfare in an anarchic international system. The neorealist idea of security dilemmas is evident, as Israel's defensive actions unintentionally escalate militarization and add to Lebanon's instability. Furthermore, Lebanon's hybrid sovereignty and fragmented political landscape are provoked by external interventions, reflecting the far-reaching regional challenges. The impressions of technological militarization, such as the use of drones and cyber warfare, have considerably reshaped conflict dynamics. These technologies authorize non-state actors like Hezbollah, modify traditional power balances and extend Lebanon's internal divisions. The effects extend to civilian life, where fear, insecurity and mistrust are augmented, while the adoption of innovative military capabilities fragments Lebanon's already fragile political structure, undermining its governance and sovereignty.

To address these concerns, future research should highlight several areas. Scrutinizing the role of international law in regulating disruptive technologies, such as cyber capabilities and drones, could create global norms to lessen their impact on civilian populations and proxy conflicts. Conflict de-escalation strategies, plus confidence-building measures, regional arms control agreements and third-party mediation warrant more exploration to address security dilemmas between Israel and Iran. Research should also emphasize enhancing Lebanon's state sovereignty by strengthening governance capacity, reducing reliance on external actors and addressing the contests and challenges being posed by non-state proxies. Furthermore, accepting how state-sponsored technological advancements empower non-state actors can offer insights into changing power balances and conflict trajectories. Finally, examining the long-term social and psychological impacts of modern warfare on civilian populations, predominantly in Lebanon, can help outline the humanitarian responses to alleviate the societal toll of sustained conflict. These research avenues can solely contribute to addressing the multidimensional challenges sketched in this discussion and encouraging stability in the Middle East.

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