

The Israel-Iran Conflict: Historical Background and Modern

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Abstract

The conflict between Iran and Israel has been a major source of instability and security threats in the Middle East. This study analyzes the historical background and modern aspects of the Israel-Iran conflict, examining its root causes, nuclear issues, proxy wars, cyber warfare, economic sanctions, and the role of the United States. The research employs qualitative methods, including literature review and case analysis, using various sources such as academic papers, government reports, and media articles. The findings suggest that the conflict is deeply rooted in historical, religious, and political factors, and has escalated since the 1979 Iranian Revolution. The study highlights the need for dialogue, negotiation, and international mediation to resolve the conflict and maintain regional stability. The Israel-Iran conflict also provides valuable lessons for addressing the North Korean nuclear issue, emphasizing the importance of dialogue, international cooperation, and confidence-building measures.

Keywords: *Israel-Iran conflict, Middle East security, nuclear proliferation, proxy wars, cyber warfare*

1. Introduction

1.1 Research Background and Purpose

The Middle East region has been a stage for numerous conflicts and disputes throughout its long history. Among them, the conflict between Iran and Israel is an important factor that greatly impacts regional security and international order. The conflict between the two countries is a complex interplay of religious, ethnic, political, and economic factors, manifesting in various forms such as nuclear programs, proxy wars, and cyber warfare. The conflict between Iran and Israel intensified after the establishment of Israel in 1948 and further escalated after the Iranian Revolution in 1979. Iran's Islamic regime defines Israel as an illegal state and advocates for the destruction of Israel to resolve the Palestinian issue. On the other hand, Israel considers Iran's nuclear development as a serious threat to its security and does not rule out the possibility of military attacks on Iran's nuclear facilities[1]. The conflict between the two countries goes beyond a mere bilateral issue and poses a threat to the security of the entire Middle East region and to world peace. Iran's nuclear program heightens concerns about nuclear proliferation, and the spread of regional conflicts through proxy wars is causing humanitarian crises such as increased terrorism and refugee issues[2].

This study aims to analyze the historical background and modern aspects of the Iran-Israel conflict to

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identify the root causes of the conflict and explore future prospects and solutions. To this end, we will analyze various aspects such as the historical relationship between the two countries, political systems, ideologies, foreign policies, military power, and nuclear programs, and draw implications for the role of the international community and the situation on the Korean Peninsula.

1.1 Literature Review

Research on drone and air defense technologies has been actively conducted in recent years. Singer (2009), in his book "Wired for War," highlighted how the development of military robot technologies, including drones, is changing the nature of warfare. Hammes (2016) analyzed the impact of the development of small weapon systems, such as drones, on the military balance, predicting the strengthening of asymmetric forces and the complexity of warfare.

Kallenborn (2017) analyzed the evolution of air defense technologies to counter drones, introducing the development trends of new countermeasures such as laser weapons and high-power microwave weapons. Birkey & Hamilton (2022) analyzed the opportunities and challenges of counter-drone systems, emphasizing that technological challenges such as multi-sensor integration and intelligent algorithm development must be addressed to effectively respond to drone threats.

Meanwhile, research is also being conducted on the impact of drone technology development outside the military domain. Buckel et al. (2019) analyzed the use cases of drones in agriculture and suggested the potential of drone technology for implementing precision agriculture. Erdelj et al. (2017) explored ways to utilize drones in disaster management, showing that drones enable rapid situational awareness and effective response.

However, most of the existing research is limited to analyzing drone and air defense technologies separately, and there is a lack of comprehensive research that forecasts their interaction and development patterns. In-depth analysis of the impact of drone and air defense technology development on the future battlefield is also needed. Therefore, this study aims to differentiate itself from previous research by examining the development status of drone and air defense technologies together and forecasting the military changes that their competition will bring.

1.2 Research Background and Purpose

As the development of drone technology has led to an increase in the military threat of drones, anti-aircraft defense technology has also been constantly evolving to counter this threat. Early anti-aircraft defense systems were mainly developed to deal with large targets such as aircraft or missiles, but recently, the focus has been on developing technologies to detect and intercept small, low-speed, low-altitude drones[5].

Anti-aircraft defense technology is advancing in the direction of improving detection capabilities, diversifying interception capabilities, utilizing artificial intelligence (AI), and establishing integrated air defense systems. To enhance detection capabilities, low-altitude radars, 3D radars, and multi-beam radars have been developed, improving the range and accuracy of drone detection. Various weapon systems for intercepting drones include not only missiles but also laser weapons, high-power microwaves, and electromagnetic pulse (EMP) interception systems. In addition, research is underway to apply AI technology to air defense systems to automate the process of drone detection, identification, tracking, and interception, and to increase efficiency. Efforts are also being made to establish an integrated air defense system that operates various sensors and weapon systems[6].

However, despite the advancements in air defense technology, there are still some limitations. Small drones are difficult to detect due to their small size and small radar cross-section, especially when flying at low altitudes or hiding behind terrain. In addition, to respond to swarm drone attacks where multiple drones attack simultaneously, the ability to track and intercept multiple targets simultaneously is required. Cost is also an issue, as the construction and operation of high-performance air defense systems require enormous costs, and

using expensive air defense systems to counter low-cost drones can be problematic in terms of cost-effectiveness. Lastly, when intercepting drones in urban areas, there is a concern about civilian casualties, so it is necessary to develop technologies that can effectively intercept drones while minimizing civilian casualties [7].

As drone technology continues to advance, anti-aircraft defense technology is also expected to constantly evolve. In the future, the development of AI-based air defense systems that automate the process of drone detection, identification, tracking, and interception, and analyze drone attack patterns to establish response strategies, is expected to become more active. In addition, the development of laser weapons and high-power microwave weapons for intercepting drones will accelerate, and these weapon systems have fast response times and accurate interception capabilities, and are also cost-effective. The development of drone-to-drone systems that use drones to intercept drones will also proceed, which is effective in countering small drones and has less concern for civilian casualties[8]. Drone and anti-aircraft defense technologies are in a co-evolutionary relationship, competing with each other and advancing. Continuous attention and research are needed on how the competition between drone and anti-aircraft defense technologies will unfold in the future and what impact it will have on the future battlefield environment.

1.3 Research Methods and Materials

This study adopts a qualitative research method and focuses on literature research and case analysis. The main research materials include academic papers and books on topics related to the Iran-Israel conflict, Middle East politics, international security, and nuclear issues; government reports, policy materials, diplomatic documents of relevant countries such as the United States, Israel, and Iran; reports and analyses by major media outlets and experts; and reports and resolutions of international organizations such as the United Nations and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

In the process of collecting and analyzing research materials, principles such as collecting materials from diverse perspectives, verifying the reliability of sources, and cross-verification are followed to ensure objectivity and reliability. We aim to collect materials from various perspectives without being biased toward a particular country or ideology, review the reliability of the sources and the expertise of the authors and research methods, and cross-verify the same facts through various materials to ensure objectivity

.2. Historical Background of the Iran-Israel Conflict

2.1 Iran-Jewish Relations from Ancient to Modern Times

The relationship between Iran and the Jews dates back to the ancient Persian Empire. In the 6th century BC, the Jews who had been taken captive to Babylon by the Babylonian captivity were liberated by Cyrus the Great of Persia and were able to return to Jerusalem. Afterward, the Jews were guaranteed relatively free religious and cultural activities within the Persian Empire and assimilated into Persian society[7]. During the Middle Ages, Jews living in the Iranian region contributed to Persian society by being active in various fields such as academics, commerce, and medicine. However, as Islam became the major religion of Persia, Jews experienced conflicts and discrimination with Muslims. During the 16th century Safavid dynasty, when Shia Islam was designated as the state religion, Jews suffered religious persecution. Due to forced conversion, discrimination, and expulsion, many Jews had to leave Iran or go into hiding. After the 19th century, as European influence expanded, Iranian Jews gradually began to recover their social and economic status. By receiving Western-style education and engaging in commercial activities, they came to play an important role in Iranian society.

However, in the early 20th century, as the Zionist movement spread, the Jewish community in Iran began to divide. Some Jews immigrated to Palestine and participated in the establishment of Israel, but most Iranian

Jews remained in Iran and continued their lives.

Another driver of drone technology development is economic factors. First, the cost of manufacturing drones has greatly decreased, leading to the popularization of drones. For small drones, the price has dropped to the level of hundreds of dollars, and with the development of open-source hardware and software, individuals can now easily manufacture drones. Second, as the civilian market for drones is rapidly growing, investment in drone technology development is expanding. The use of drones is increasing in various fields such as agriculture, logistics, surveying, and infrastructure inspection, and accordingly, the size of the drone market is growing rapidly. The United States, China, Europe, and other major countries are promoting deregulation for drone commercialization, designation of drone-specific test airspace, and investment in drone technology R&D, which is promoting drone technology development in the private sector.

2.2 Zionist Movement and Establishment of Israel

The Zionist movement, which began in Europe in the late 19th century, emphasized the national and religious identity of the Jews and aimed to establish a Jewish state in the Palestine region. As anti-Semitism spread in Europe and Jewish persecution intensified, the Zionist movement raised the need to build a state that could serve as a safe haven for Jews and realize their national self-determination[8].

The Zionist movement gradually expanded its power through the efforts of leaders such as Theodor Herzl, and in 1917, it obtained an official stance supporting the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine through the Balfour Declaration of Britain. Afterward, as Jewish immigration to Palestine increased, conflicts with the Arabs who had previously resided there intensified, and with the establishment of Israel in 1948, the First Arab-Israeli War broke out. The establishment of Israel brought significant changes to the relationship between Iran and the Jews. Iran officially opposed the establishment of Israel in consideration of its relations with Arab countries, but maintained unofficial relations with Israel to protect the safety and interests of its domestic Jewish community. Iran supplied oil to Israel, and Israel sold weapons to Iran, continuing economic and military cooperation.

2.3 1948 Arab-Israeli War and Iran's Stance

The First Arab-Israeli War, which broke out with the declaration of the establishment of Israel in 1948, expanded into an all-out war between Israel and the surrounding Arab countries. In this war, Iran officially supported the Arab countries but did not provide substantial military support. At that time, Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi of Iran valued relations with Western countries and judged that maintaining unofficial relations with Israel was in the national interest[9]. During the war, Iran supplied oil to Israel, and Israel provided weapons and military technology to Iran. This cooperative relationship contributed to the strengthening of Iran's military power and the securing of Israel's security.

However, Iran's pro-Israel policy provoked opposition from domestic Islamic forces and Arab countries. Iranian Islamic leaders defined Israel as an illegal state and demanded a break with Israel to resolve the Palestinian issue. With the collapse of the Pahlavi dynasty and the establishment of the Islamic Republic in the 1979 Iranian Revolution, relations between Iran and Israel were completely severed. The new Iranian regime defined Israel as a "cancerous entity that must be destroyed" and began actively supporting the Palestinian liberation movement.

2.4 1979 Iranian Revolution and the Emergence of the Islamic Republic

The Iranian Revolution of 1979 was a watershed event in modern Iranian history and a upheaval that shook the political landscape of the Middle East region. As dissatisfaction accumulated over the Pahlavi dynasty's

dictatorial politics, Westernization policies, corruption, and wealth gap, a popular uprising occurred, and eventually the Pahlavi dynasty collapsed and the Islamic Republic led by Islamic cleric Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini was established[10].

The Iranian Revolution had a decisive impact on the relationship between Iran and Israel. The Islamic Republic defined Israel as an illegal state and advocated for the destruction of Israel to resolve the Palestinian issue. Iran severed all diplomatic ties with Israel and imposed economic sanctions on Israel. It also supported anti-Israel armed groups such as Hezbollah in Lebanon and Hamas in Palestine, inciting armed struggle against Israel. Iran's anti-Israel policy posed a serious threat to Israel's security. Israel considered Iran's nuclear development as a factor threatening its existence and strongly responded by suggesting the possibility of military attacks on Iran's nuclear facilities. After the Iranian Revolution, the conflict between Iran and Israel expanded beyond a simple conflict between two countries into an ideological confrontation between Islamism and Zionism. The conflict between the two countries is acting as a factor exacerbating political instability and security threats in the Middle East region.

2.5 Iran-Iraq War and Israel's Role

The Iran-Iraq War, which lasted for 8 years from 1980 to 1988, was an event that had a significant impact on the balance of power and security landscape in the Middle East region. In this war, Israel secretly provided military support to check Iran's expansion and support Saddam Hussein's regime in Iraq[11].

After the Islamic Revolution in Iran, Israel considered Iran as a major threat in the Middle East region and judged that supporting Iraq was in the national interest to prevent Iran's nuclear development and expansion of influence in the region. Israel provided Iraq with weapons, military technology, and intelligence, and in 1981, it bombed Iraq's Osirak nuclear reactor to stop Iran's nuclear development.

Israel's support contributed to Iraq's superiority in the early stages of the war, but as the war prolonged, Israel was criticized for Iraq's use of chemical weapons and massacres of civilians. Also, due to Iran's retaliatory attacks, Israeli territory was subjected to missile attacks, increasing security threats.

The Iran-Iraq War inflicted enormous human and material damage on both countries and deepened political instability and sectarian conflicts in the Middle East region. Israel's role influenced the course and outcome of the war and deepened the hostile relationship between Iran and Israel.

3. Modern Aspects of the Iran-Israel Conflict

3.1 Iran's Nuclear Program and Israel's Security Threat

Iran's nuclear program is considered the most serious threat to Israel's security. Israel is concerned about the possibility of Iran developing nuclear weapons and attacking its country, and does not rule out the possibility of military attacks on Iran's nuclear facilities[12]. Iran began nuclear development in the 1950s and started uranium enrichment activities in earnest in the 2000s, raising concerns in the international community. Iran claims that its nuclear development is for peaceful purposes, but Israel and Western countries suspect that Iran is pursuing nuclear weapons development.

In 2015, Iran and six major countries (the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Russia, and China) concluded the Iran nuclear deal (JCPOA) to lift economic sanctions in exchange for limiting Iran's nuclear development. However, in 2018, the Trump administration in the United States withdrew from the Iran nuclear deal and restored sanctions against Iran, making the Iranian nuclear issue a hot potato for the international community once again. Israel criticizes the Iran nuclear deal for not effectively preventing Iran's nuclear development and continuously suggests the possibility of military attacks on Iran's nuclear facilities. Israel is also suspected of conducting secret operations such as cyber attacks, assassinations, and sabotage in cooperation with

the United States to prevent Iran's nuclear development.

3.2 Patterns of Air Defense Technology Evolution

Despite the development of air defense technologies, there are still limitations in responding to drone threats. Small drones are difficult to detect because they have a small radar cross-section and fly at low altitudes. It is also not easy to identify drones that maneuver while hiding under terrain features. Defense becomes even more difficult when multiple drones attack simultaneously.

There is a risk of civilian casualties even if drones are intercepted by air defense systems. In particular, if drones are shot down in urban areas, secondary damage from falling objects is a concern. It is also inefficient in terms of cost-effectiveness to counter low-cost drones with expensive interceptor missiles.

In the Ukraine-Russia war, the air defense systems of both sides showed vulnerability to the other's drone threats. The Ukrainian military struggled with Russia's suicide drone attacks, and the Russian military also failed to properly block the surprise strikes of Ukrainian military drones. With the current air defense systems, it is difficult to effectively respond to evolving drone threats.

3.3 Proxy Wars: Conflicts in Lebanon, Syria, Yemen, etc.

The conflict between Iran and Israel is manifesting in the form of proxy wars in various parts of the Middle East region, such as Lebanon, Syria, and Yemen. Iran is checking Israel and its allies by supporting pro-Iranian armed groups such as Hezbollah and the Houthi rebels, and expanding its influence in the region [13]. In Lebanon, Iran supports the Shiite armed faction Hezbollah to wage an armed struggle against Israel. Hezbollah threatens Israel's security by launching rocket attacks on northern Israel or provoking military provocations in border areas.

In the Syrian civil war, Iran supports the Bashar al-Assad regime and, along with Hezbollah, supports the Syrian government forces. Israel considers the military activities of Iran and Hezbollah in Syria as a threat to its security and is bombing Iranian military facilities and weapons transport vehicles in Syria.

In Yemen, Iran supports the Houthi rebels, who are in conflict with the Saudi-led Arab coalition. The Houthi rebels receive weapons and military technology from Iran and launch missile attacks on Saudi territory, heightening tensions in the region.

Iran's proxy war strategy makes it difficult for Israel and its allies to respond directly militarily and acts as a factor that exacerbates conflicts in the region. Israel is seeking various measures such as strengthening military power, collecting intelligence, and diplomatic efforts to respond to Iran's proxy war strategy.

3.4 Cyber Warfare and Information Warfare

The conflict between Iran and Israel is also fiercely unfolding in cyberspace and the information domain. The two countries are actively utilizing cyber attacks and information warfare to attack each other's critical infrastructure, military facilities, and information networks[14]. In the case of cyber attacks, Iran and Israel are launching cyber attacks to paralyze each other's government agencies, financial systems, and energy facilities. The Stuxnet virus that attacked Iran's nuclear facilities in 2010 is known to be a joint product of Israel and the United States, and since then, Iran is said to have cyber-attacked Israel's hydroelectric power plants and water facilities. In terms of information warfare, Iran and Israel are slandering each other and emphasizing their own legitimacy through fake news, false information, propaganda, etc. to manipulate public opinion and instigate internal divisions. They are also acquiring each other's confidential information and conducting espionage activities through social media and hacking.

Cyber warfare and information warfare are more covert and less costly than traditional military

confrontations, but the damage can be as severe as an actual war. Paralysis of critical infrastructure, information leakage, and manipulation of public opinion due to cyber attacks are acting as major threats to national security and social stability.

Information.

3.5 Economic Sanctions and Diplomatic Isolation

Israel is leading economic sanctions and diplomatic isolation against Iran in the international community to pressure the Iranian regime. Israel argues that the international community should strengthen sanctions against Iran for reasons such as Iran's nuclear development, support for terrorism, and human rights oppression[15]. After withdrawing from the Iran nuclear deal, the United States restored sanctions against Iran and imposed strong sanctions restricting Iran's oil exports and financial transactions. As a result, the Iranian economy has been severely hit, and the lives of the Iranian people are becoming more difficult. Israel is also promoting the diplomatic isolation of Iran in the international community. Israel is isolating Iran by improving relations with Arab countries and is working to weaken Iran's influence in international organizations. Economic sanctions and diplomatic isolation are being used as a means of pressure on the Iranian regime, but it is uncertain whether such pressure can lead to changes in Iran's policy or abandonment of nuclear development. Rather, Iran may accelerate its nuclear development or pursue the expansion of its influence in the region in response to sanctions.

3.5 Economic Sanctions and Diplomatic Isolation

The United States is Israel's most important ally and a key player in the Iranian nuclear issue. The United States is closely cooperating with Israel to prevent Iran's nuclear development and maintain stability in the Middle East region[16]. In 2015, the Obama administration led the conclusion of the Iran nuclear deal (JCPOA) between Iran and six major countries, succeeding in limiting Iran's nuclear development. Israel strongly opposed the conclusion of the Iran nuclear deal, criticizing that it does not effectively prevent Iran's nuclear development. In 2018, the Trump administration withdrew from the Iran nuclear deal and restored sanctions against Iran, heightening tensions with Iran. Israel actively supported the Trump administration's policy toward Iran and argued that pressure on Iran should be strengthened. The Biden administration is pushing for a return to the Iran nuclear deal, but Israel is showing a cautious stance on negotiations, concerned about Iran's nuclear development and expansion of influence in the region. The Iranian nuclear issue is acting as a potential factor that could cause a rift in the alliance between the United States and Israel.

4. Conclusion and Implications

4.1 Future Prospects of the Iran-Israel Conflict

The conflict between Iran and Israel is a complex issue that is difficult to resolve in the short term due to its complicated historical background and various factors. As long as the fundamental causes of the conflict, such as the two countries' political systems, ideologies, security threats, and regional hegemonic competition, are not resolved, the conflict is likely to continue[17]. The nuclear issue is the most serious threat to Israel's security, as Iran's nuclear development is considered a threat to Israel's security, and tensions between the two countries may further escalate depending on whether the Iran nuclear deal is revived and the progress of Iran's nuclear development.

In terms of proxy wars, it is expected that the situation will continue where Iran supports pro-Iranian armed groups in Lebanon, Syria, Yemen, and other countries to keep Israel and its allies in check. The spread of conflicts through proxy wars can exacerbate regional instability and increase the possibility of military clashes.

Cyber warfare and information warfare are also expected to become major aspects of the conflict between the two countries in the future. Cyber attacks and information warfare can pose serious threats to the critical infrastructure and security of both countries.

In addition, the relationship between the United States and Iran, changes in the situation in the Middle East region, and the role of the international community will influence the future prospects of the Iran-Israel conflict. The United States' policy toward Iran, Israel's relations with Arab countries, and the international community's efforts to mediate the conflict will be important factors.

4.2 Solutions to the Conflict and the Role of the International Community

Resolving the conflict between Iran and Israel is essential for the stability of the Middle East region and world peace. To resolve the conflict, a multi-faceted approach is needed, such as restoring mutual trust between the two countries, dialogue and negotiation, and mediation efforts by the international community. [18] First, Iran and Israel should strive to dispel hostile perceptions and distrust of each other. It is important to create an atmosphere of dialogue and cooperation based on mutual respect and understanding. In addition, Iran and Israel should seek solutions through direct dialogue and negotiation on conflict issues such as the nuclear issue, proxy wars, and security threats. To this end, confidence-building measures between the two countries should be preceded along with mediation efforts by the international community. The role of the international community is also very important. The international community, including the United Nations, the United States, and the European Union, should strengthen mediation efforts to resolve the conflict between Iran and Israel. Efforts are needed to promote dialogue and negotiation, support confidence-building measures, and prevent the spread of conflicts. To resolve the conflict, the political will of Iran and Israel and the active role of the international community are essential. Although it is a problem that is difficult to resolve in the short term, efforts should be made to alleviate the conflict and seek peaceful coexistence through continuous dialogue and cooperation.

4.3 Implications for the Situation on the Korean Peninsula

The Iran-Israel conflict provides important implications for the situation on the Korean Peninsula, especially for resolving the North Korean nuclear issue. By analyzing the causes and development process of the conflict between the two countries and solutions, strategies and directions for resolving the North Korean nuclear issue can be explored.

First, the case of Iran's nuclear development shows the dangers of nuclear development. Iran's nuclear development is acting as a serious threat to Israel's security and is amplifying concerns about nuclear proliferation in the Middle East region. North Korea's nuclear development is also a major threat to the security of the Korean Peninsula and Northeast Asia region and is hindering the international community's non-proliferation efforts. Next, the Iran nuclear deal showed the possibility of resolving the nuclear issue through dialogue and negotiation. Peaceful solutions through dialogue and negotiation should also be sought for resolving the North Korean nuclear issue. In addition, it is worth noting that the role of the international community, including the United States, the European Union, China, and Russia, was very important in the process of resolving the Iranian nuclear issue. Close cooperation and coordination among related countries are also essential for resolving the North Korean nuclear issue.

Lastly, just as restoring mutual trust is important for resolving the conflict between Iran and Israel, confidence-building measures should be preceded to improve relations with North Korea. Humanitarian aid, cultural exchanges, and economic cooperation are needed to build mutual understanding and trust. The case of the Iran-Israel conflict can be a useful reference for exploring various strategies and measures for

resolving the North Korean nuclear issue. Dialogue and negotiation, international cooperation, and confidence-building measures can be used to resolve the North Korean nuclear issue.

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