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The Impact of Iran–Palestine Relations on the Transformation of Regional Security in the Middle East

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The article discusses the impact of Iran-Palestinian relations on the transformation of regional security in the Middle East. The study focuses on the political, strategic, and ideological factors that determine Iran's support for Palestine and its impact on the actors involved in the region and the balance of power. The paper analyzes the main features of Iran's foreign policy, the concept of the "Axis of Resistance," as well as Iran's relations with actors such as Hamas and Hezbollah, which are considered terrorist organizations by a number of states and international actors.

Special attention is paid to the strengthening of proxy conflicts, security dilemmas and regional polarization, as well as interdependence between the states of the region, which significantly affect the security environment of the Middle East. The study is based on the theoretical frameworks of realism, constructivism and the regional security complex, which makes it possible to analyze both power and ideological factors together.

The article demonstrates that the Iranian-Palestinian relationship goes beyond the scope of bilateral cooperation and is an important structural element of the regional security system. The concluding section of the paper highlights that Iran's support for the Palestinian cause contributes to the intensification of proxy wars in the region, the interconnection of conflicts, and the fragmentation of the security architecture, which increases the risk of large-scale escalation in the Middle East.

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ირან-პალესტინის ურთიერთობების გავლენა რეგიონული უსაფრთხოების ტრანსფორმაციაზე ახლო აღმოსავლეთში

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სტატიის შესახებ	აბსტრაქტი
<i>საკვანძო სიტყვები:</i> ირანი პალესტინა რეგიონი უსაფრთხოება კონფლიქტი	სტატიაში განხილულია ირან-პალესტინის ურთიერთობების გავლენა ახლო აღმოსავლეთის რეგიონული უსაფრთხოების ტრანსფორმაციაზე. კვლევა ფოკუსირებულია პოლიტიკურ, სტრატეგიულ და იდეოლოგიურ ფაქტორებზე, რომლებიც განსაზღვრავენ ირანის მხარდაჭერას პალესტინის მიმართ და მის გავლენას რეგიონში ჩართულ აქტორებსა და ძალთა ბალანსზე. ნაშრომში გაანალიზებულია ირანის საგარეო პოლიტიკის ძირითადი მახასიათებლები, „წინააღმდეგობის ღერძის“ (Axis of Resistance) კონცეფცია, აგრეთვე ირანის ურთიერთობები ისეთ აქტორებთან, როგორებიც არიან ჰამასი და ჰეზბოლა, რომლებიც რიგი სახელმწიფოებისა და საერთაშორისო აქტორების მიერ ტერორისტულ ორგანიზაციებად არიან მიჩნეული. განსაკუთრებული ყურადღება ეთმობა პროქსი-კონფლიქტების, უსაფრთხოების დილემისა და რეგიონული პოლარიზაციის გაძლიერებას, ასევე რეგიონის სახელმწიფოებს შორის ურთიერთდამოკიდებულებას, რაც მნიშვნელოვან გავლენას ახდენს ახლო აღმოსავლეთის უსაფრთხოების გარემოზე. კვლევა ეფუძნება რეალიზმის, კონსტრუქტივიზმისა და რეგიონული უსაფრთხოების კომპლექსის თეორიულ ჩარჩოებს, რაც შესაძლებელს ხდის როგორც ძალაუფლებრივი, ისე იდეოლოგიური ფაქტორების ერთობლივ ანალიზს. სტატია ცხადყოფს, რომ ირან-პალესტინის ურთიერთობა სცილდება ორმხრივი თანამშრომლობის ფარგლებს და წარმოადგენს რეგიონული უსაფრთხოების სისტემის ერთ-ერთ მნიშვნელოვან სტრუქტურულ ელემენტს. ნაშრომის დასკვნით ნაწილში გამოკვეთილია, რომ ირანის მხარდაჭერა პალესტინური საკითხისადმი ხელს უწყობს რეგიონში პროქსი-

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1. Introduction

In the modern international system, the Middle East remains one of the most complex and dynamic regions, where the interaction of state and non-state actors directly affects regional security. In particular, the ongoing internal political developments in Iran have attracted great attention not only from the states of the region, but also from external actors. It should be noted that in 2026, the risk of escalation in the Middle East significantly increased, involving the United States and Iran-aligned actors (Federica, 2026). Iran's policy is mainly characterized by rigid methods, both towards its own citizens and in relations outside the country. History has shown that it has political power to be reckoned with, especially given its geostrategic position. The Middle East is often characterized by two broad camps: Iran and its allies on one side, and Israel and its allies on the other. Iran is an important bulwark for Palestinian society. Accordingly, it is vital for Palestine that the state closest to it be in a politically strong position in order to receive more assistance and resources from it. The development of Iranian-Palestinian relations dates back to the last century, when the territorial borders of the region were redistributed, and the state of Israel was established in 1948. Since then, relations between Iran and Palestinian political actors began to develop. Iran has been constantly trying to weaken Israel and is using this in all possible ways, especially using this idea as a method of protecting the Palestinian people. It should also be noted that the reality of revolutionary Iran's foreign policy is that it is not driven by a "utopian Shiite ideology", but by stubborn realism (Kamrava, 2022).

Since the Iranian Revolution of 1979, the Islamic Republic has consistently pursued a foreign policy that Arab countries often describe as defensively realist and motivated by pragmatic, national-interest considerations. However, the Palestinian case remains the sole exception, as its legitimacy has been questioned since the early stages. In this case, strategic interests are particularly evident, alongside concerns about the available resources and the extent to which it is possible to pursue a policy that avoids causing further harm to the region. In reality, despite its fiery and uncompromising rhetoric, the Islamic Republic has been as pragmatic and realistic on Palestine and Israel as on any other regional or global issue, underpinned by its stance as a regional power that wants to uphold its own ideology and values. (Kamrava, 2026).

A review of Iran's stance towards Israel and Palestine in the Middle East reveals its ideological and identity dimensions and, accordingly, can be explained through constructivist lenses, as well as its security and strategic dimensions, which can also be explained through defensive realism. From Tehran's perspective, Israel's expansionism and its general profile in the world represent the main threat to it, against which it has begun to take defensive measures. Nevertheless, given that the "liberation of Palestine" was one of the organizing principles and aspirations of the Iranian Revolution and remains central to the identity of the Islamic Republic, strategic considerations alone do not explain Iran's foreign policy behavior towards Israel and Palestine today. Like other post-revolutionary states, Iran's foreign

policy is characterized by a sharp tension, often accompanied by a divergence between revolutionary ideals on the one hand and practical strategic considerations on the other. Although ideology and identity appear to be decisive factors in Iranian foreign policy, the essence of Iranian policy remains fundamentally pragmatic and security-oriented, as opposed to creating an enemy. (Kamrava, 2026). Accordingly, Iranian leaders use identity and ideology instrumentally when it suits their strategic goals. It should be noted that, in relation to the Middle East in general and Israel in particular, realist realism best explains Iranian foreign policy (Haji-Yousefi, 2003).

The aim of this article is to analyze the main features of the Iranian-Palestinian relationship and to reveal its role in the security dynamics of the Middle East. The study focuses on contemporary events and their analysis in order to demonstrate how the regional security system is being transformed by the impact of this relationship.

2. Literature Review

The study draws on several theoretical approaches in international relations that allow us to analyze the complex nature of Iranian-Palestinian relations in terms of multifaceted processes. In particular, the theoretical framework of realism, identity/constructivist approaches, and regional security complex theory are used, which complement each other to explain both power and ideological factors in the Middle East region (Buzan & Wæver, 2003).

From a realist perspective, Iran's actions regarding the Palestinian issue are seen as part of a systemic policy dictated by state interests and the logic of the balance of power. Iran seeks to strengthen its positions in the Middle East, deter opposing actors, and increase its influence in the region through direct or indirect means. In this context, it is important to consider the concept of the security dilemma, where an attempt by one actor to enhance security is perceived as a threat by other actors, which increases tensions and the risk of conflict escalation.

However, it is important to note that, along with the power approach, there are elements of identity and constructivism that focus on ideas, narratives, and ideological factors. Iran's narrative, which seeks to promote ideological convergence across the Middle East, is an important factor influencing regional actors. This approach allows us to analyze how political interests are transformed into ideological discourse and how this affects regional processes.

In order to fundamentally study the issue, it is important to consider Iranian-Palestinian relations not in isolation, but within the framework of broader regional interdependencies through the theory of the regional security complex. According to this theory, security issues develop in geographically closely connected regions and the behavior of one actor directly affects others. Accordingly, Iran, as one of the region's major powers, possesses significant resources to support its regional partners through various means.

The correlation of these theoretical frameworks allows us to consider the general politics of the Middle East region and to outline the interrelationship of Iranian-Palestinian relations.

3. Materials and Methods

The study is based on qualitative research and uses historical-descriptive, comparative, and content analysis methods.

Using the historical-descriptive method, the main stages of the formation and development of Iranian-Palestinian relations, as well as the political and security processes that have influenced the dynamics of their relations, have been studied.

Based on a comparative analysis, changes in Iran's policy towards the Palestinian issue during different periods of its relations are discussed.

Using the content analysis method, the main political issues of Iranian-Palestinian relations and security systems in regional processes have been identified.

The study also uses a case study method, which analyzes specific regional events that demonstrate the interrelationship between Iranian-Palestinian relations and the security dynamics of the Middle East.

4. Discussion of Results

The Middle East remains one of the most dynamic and at the same time unstable regions of the modern international system, where the security environment is constantly transforming as a result of multifactorial influences. The regional security system is no longer determined solely by relations between states and is increasingly dependent on the involvement of non-state actors, ideological networks and external forces. In this context, the Iranian-Palestinian relationship is gaining particular importance, going beyond the scope of bilateral ties and emerging as one of the important factors in the dynamics of regional security. Iran's policy towards Palestinian actors, including political, financial and military support, affects both the development of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the broader regional balance of power. In addition, from the current political environment, it is worth noting the tense Iran-US relationship, which has a huge impact on the stability of the region. For years, the use of Iran's economic potential has been hindered by the US policy of sanctions. Despite the fact that the goal was to restore political relations, the final goal and agreement could not be achieved. The situation became especially complicated in 2026, when the situation between the two states became significantly tense. The internal political and social tensions in Iran were reflected in its foreign policy activities, as a result of which the unstable environment was reflected in its neighboring states, especially Palestine. In addition to domestic policy, Iran's goal is to weaken the state of Israel and uses all resources to do this, helping Palestine to stop it, and in addition, it is important for it to unite the states of the Middle East on the basis of the Islamic religion. Relations between Iran and the Palestinian national movement began after the 1979 Iranian revolution. Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat became the first head of state to visit Tehran after the overthrow of Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi. During the visit, Iran symbolically handed over the Israeli embassy building in Tehran to the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and converted it into a Palestinian embassy. At the time, the relationship seemed promising (Baroud, 2026). It should also be noted that in the Middle East, the state of Israel is a country with Western values and a key

strategic ally of the United States. It has a great influence on the conduct of US foreign policy in the region (Sanikidze et al., 2011). This is quite unacceptable for Iran, although Iran has an important geostrategic location. It controls the northern coast of the Strait of Hormuz and, therefore, can block the movement of ships through the strait if necessary (Shoshiashvili & Kapanadze, 2024). This would threaten the economic well-being of the United States and its allies in the Gulf Cooperation Council, including Israel.

Iran's revolutionary leadership considered the Palestinian cause central to its regional vision, portraying Israel as a colonial project and Palestine as a symbol of the global anti-imperial struggle (Baroud, 2026). Today, Iran's support for its non-state allies in the region, including Hezbollah, Hamas, and the Houthis, is justified as a pro-Palestinian opposition. In fact, these processes contribute to the expansion of its political and military influence in the region within the ideological boundaries of the Islamic Republic. Iran's policy towards Palestine should be consistent with its geostrategic interests in order to prevent the strengthening of Israel and, at the same time, strengthen relations with the Palestinian people.

4.1 Iranian-Palestinian relations in the modern stage

Iranian-Palestinian relations at the modern stage significantly go beyond the framework of classical diplomatic ties and are developing as a multidimensional cooperation that includes political, ideological and military components. This relationship has become especially active in recent years, when the security environment in the Middle East has become even more fragmented and polarized. Iran actively supports Palestinian armed and political groups, especially Hamas and Islamic Jihad. This support is expressed both in financial assistance and in military-technological cooperation, which includes the supply of weapons, military training and strategic consulting. Such a policy allows Iran to strengthen its influence in the region without direct military intervention and use the Palestinian factor as an instrument of pressure on Israel. Modern events, especially the escalations in the Gaza Strip after 2023, have made the relationship between Iran and Palestinian groups even clearer. Hamas's military activities and Israel's retaliatory operations have not only taken on the character of a local conflict, but have also become one of the hotbeds of regional confrontation, where Iran's indirect participation is clearly visible. These processes show that the Palestinian issue is no longer just a bilateral Israeli-Palestinian conflict, but is part of a broader geopolitical competition. At the same time, Iranian-Palestinian relations are significantly conditioned by ideological factors. Iran presents itself as a supporting force of the "resistance" that opposes Israel and Western influence in the region. Palestinian groups, in turn, perceive this support as a necessary resource to continue their struggle. As a result, a mutual dependence is formed that strengthens both Iran's regional positions and the duration of the conflict. Finally, at the modern stage, the Iranian-Palestinian relationship should be considered not as an isolated event, but as an important element of the regional security dynamics that affects the balance of power, the escalation of conflicts, and the transformation of the Middle East security system. (It would be good if we include and mention the "Axis of Resistance". This term was generally used in relation to France during World War II, but in the context of the Middle East, the "Axis of Resistance" is a political-ideological concept formed and used by Iran, and not a direct continuation of the historical "resistance". The term is actively used in the official Iranian discourse and refers to a set of forces that oppose: Israel and the influence of

the United States in the region. The "axis" includes: Iran, Hezbollah (Lebanon), the Syrian government, Hamas and "Islamic Jihad" (Palestine).

The Palestinian issue is not only of ideological or religious significance for Iran. It is also an important strategic tool within the framework of regional policy. Iran uses the Palestinian issue to strengthen its regional influence, change the balance of power against Israel, and form an "Axis of Resistance" in the Middle East. By supporting Palestinian groups, Tehran seeks, on the one hand, to maintain pressure on Israel, and on the other, to strengthen its own political legitimacy in the Muslim world. In addition, the Palestinian issue is also an important and consistent element in Iran's foreign policy, since after the 1979 Islamic Revolution, "defending Palestine" was established as one of the main directions of the Islamic Republic's revolutionary foreign policy (Alavi, 2019). Accordingly, Iran's support for Palestinian actors is based on both security and geopolitical interests, as well as ideological and symbolic factors.

Iran has been Israel's main adversary since the Islamic Republic came to power in 1979. Anti-Zionism and staunch opposition to the United States are core components of the regime's ideology and serve Tehran's foreign policy and military efforts. Iranian leaders regularly call on the Arab world to wipe Israel off the map and weaponize the Palestinian issue. Over the past few decades, Iran has made significant investments in proxy militias and terrorist organizations throughout the Arab world, known as the axis of resistance to Israel and the defence of Palestine. The Quds Force of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps operates in Syria, Iraq and other countries alongside local Iranian-backed proxies (Israel Policy Forum, 2023). At the same time, Jerusalem, Washington and other Western powers view Iran's pursuit of nuclear weapons as a major strategic threat; With sanctions and sometimes negotiations, Iran is now considered a state with a nuclear weapons threshold. Terrorist groups such as Hamas and Hezbollah emerged in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The relationship between Iran and Hamas is special. This relationship developed during the 1990 Gulf Crisis. In February 1992, Hamas opened an office in Tehran (United States Institute of Peace, 2024), although it was not based on a public international agreement and was based on a secret bilateral agreement signed in the city of Qom. This indicates that Iran recognized Hamas's special role in the Palestinian opposition (Shoshiashvili & Kapanadze, 2024). As the GWU analytical report notes, the formation of the early alliance and the creation of the infrastructure of ties between Iran and Hamas were significantly linked to the figure of Musa Abu Marzouk, who, through a series of meetings in 1990–1991, secured Iranian support against Israel (Vidino & Burns, 2024). Iran funds and supports these groups, but the need for Israel to deal with the traditional military threats posed by Iran and its allies does not preclude Israel from resolving the Palestinian issue. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict exists despite Iran's attempts to destroy Israel, and progress in resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict will not diminish the Iranian regime's anti-Zionism (Israel Policy Forum, 2023).

Hamas is a Palestinian nationalist political party and militant group, a Sunni Islamist organization, the de facto government of the Gaza Strip, and a terrorist organization (considered a terrorist organization by Western states) (Sirbiladze, 2020). Founded in 1987 as an offshoot of the Muslim Brotherhood, Hamas has ruled the Gaza Strip since violently seizing control of it in 2007 (Israel Policy Forum, 2023). In addition to its presence in the Palestinian territories, Hamas has political offices in Qatar and Turkey,

and is also active in Lebanon. Iran is one of Hamas's main financiers. The United States, England, France, and several other countries have designated Hamas as an international terrorist organization.

For Iran, the greatest source of deterrence against Israel is the Lebanese Hezbollah, which it helped establish in the early 1980s, particularly during the civil war in Lebanon and at the same time fighting against Israel. For Iran, Hezbollah soon became the "tip of the spear", and the Islamic Republic's presence in Lebanon became part of its strategic depth, since Hezbollah plays a major role in Iran's defence (Kamrava, 2026). Therefore, Israel is the greatest threat to Iran; this importance lies in ensuring Iran's strategic goals, deterring and politically weakening Israel, and also reducing the possibility of Israel attacking Iran. Hezbollah has contributed to increasing Iran's direct and indirect deterrence capabilities.

4.2 The impact of Iran-Palestinian relations on regional security

The Iranian-Palestinian relationship has a significant impact on the stability of the Middle East security system, as it changes the regional balance of power and enhances the interconnected nature of conflicts. This relationship creates a multi-layered security environment, where the escalation of one conflict often leads to an increase in tension in other hotbeds. First, Iran's involvement in the Palestinian issue increases the risk of direct and indirect Israeli-Iranian confrontation. The activity of Palestinian groups supported by Iran is often viewed as a direct threat to Israeli security, which leads to a cycle of military and political responses. This process can expand the conflict from the local level to the regional level. Another important factor is regional polarization. The strengthening of Iran and its partners (Hezbollah, Hamas, etc.) on the one hand, and the rapprochement of Israel and a number of Arab states on the other, creates a sharply divided security architecture. Under such conditions, the possibilities for dialogue and de-escalation are reduced, and the logic of bloc confrontation is increasing. Third, the Iranian-Palestinian relationship contributes to the spread of proxy conflicts. Various armed groups in the region operate with the support of external forces, which further complicates conflict management. This is especially evident in Lebanon, Syria, and the Gaza Strip, where local and external interests intersect. In addition, the involvement of global powers—especially the United States and its allies—further exacerbates the security dilemma. Attempts to limit Iranian influence often lead to reciprocal escalation, which destabilizes the entire regional system. Ultimately, the Iranian-Palestinian relationship is not just a link between two actors, but also one of the structural factors of the regional security system, affecting the intensity of conflicts, the geopolitical balance, and the sustainability of the Middle East security architecture.

Iran has developed cooperation with Palestinian non-state armed groups as part of a strategy to exert indirect influence against Israel. Tehran often pursues its interests in the region through its proxies, Hamas, Islamic Jihad, and Hezbollah, particularly in the Palestinian territories and Lebanon, in order to increase its strategic depth in the Arab world and use them as a deterrent. Having an ally that can directly strike Israel increases Iran's leverage in the event of a conflict. In this way, Tehran employs a proxy war strategy that allows it to reduce the risk of direct military confrontation while simultaneously influencing the dynamics of the conflict. This approach allows Iran to avoid direct responsibility for military action and manage the level of escalation in the region. Accordingly, by using Hamas and Hezbollah as proxies, This strategy may increase the possibility of Israel facing simultaneous pressure on multiple fronts, both

in Lebanon and in the Palestinian territories. Thus, by avoiding a direct and costly conflict with its most important rival in the region, Israel, it serves Tehran's strategic interests and ideological values. Despite the tensions that have arisen since 2026, Iran has sought to pursue indirect confrontation with Israel through groups designated as terrorist organizations by several states (Kazdal, 2025).

Iran's support for Hamas and Islamic Jihad can be analyzed using Andrew Mumford's proxy war theoretical framework, which suggests that support for proxy actors takes several main forms: human resources, military materiel and weapons, financial assistance, and non-military support, including political, informational, and strategic support (Mumford, 2013). This approach suggests that Iran uses cooperation with Palestinian groups as a mechanism for exerting indirect influence in the region.

Accordingly, the current political reality in the Middle East, Iranian-Palestinian relations, have developed the following characteristics, namely;

- Iran's growing support for Palestinian groups is perceived by Israel as a direct security threat, leading to the strengthening of military capabilities and the activation of preventive policies. As a result, a security dilemma is emerging in the region, where defensive steps by one actor are perceived by the other as aggressive actions, creating a constant risk of escalation;
- The Iranian-Palestinian relationship contributes to the fragmentation of the regional security system, as security issues increasingly shift from classic confrontations between states to multi-actor and networked conflicts, where state and non-state forces operate simultaneously;
- The use of proxy actors makes regional security more unpredictable, as conflict participants often act indirectly and avoid taking direct responsibility. This complicates the process of de-escalation and diplomatic negotiations;
- The Iranian-Palestinian cooperation is influencing the formation of regional political blocs, where on the one hand an "axis of resistance" supporting Iran is being formed, and on the other hand, a security system of partnership between Israel and the West. This polarization reduces the possibility which may constrain prospects for regional stability and cooperation.
- The ongoing processes in the Middle East do not remain solely at the regional level and also affect the international security environment, especially in the context of energy security, international terrorism, and competition between global powers.

5. Conclusion

At the current stage, the security environment in the Middle East is increasingly shifting from classic interstate wars to hybrid and proxy conflicts, where states pursue their interests through non-state actors. The Iranian-Palestinian relationship is one of the most prominent examples of this process.

It should be noted that Iranian-Palestinian relations are a systemic challenge and go beyond the framework of bilateral political cooperation and represent an important dynamic factor in the security system of the Middle East. Contemporary regional processes indicate that this relationship is integrated into a broader geopolitical context, where state and non-state actors are in complex interaction with each other.

The study shows that Iran's support for Palestinian groups extends beyond short-term tactical considerations, but is part of a strategic approach aimed at expanding regional influence and influencing the balance of power. In turn, for Palestinian actors, this relationship represents an important resource in terms of both political legitimacy and military capabilities. From a realist perspective, the study shows that one of the main determinants of Iran-Palestinian relations is power and security interests: through support, Iran seeks to strengthen its strategic influence in the region and balance the positions of opposing forces, while Palestinian actors use this support to strengthen their own security and operational capabilities.

The analysis also reveals that the Iranian-Palestinian relationship significantly contributes to the fragmentation of the regional security system, increases the risk of proxy conflicts, and enhances polarization in the Middle East. As a result, conflicts in the region are becoming increasingly interconnected, which reduces the ability to manage them locally. The use of a constructivist perspective has revealed that the sustainability of relations is not determined solely by material interests; an important role is assigned to common ideological and religious-political narratives, identities, and perceptions of each other, which contribute to the legitimacy and maintenance of cooperation.

The study also showed that the role of non-state actors in the regional security system has significantly increased, which is changing traditional security models and making conflict management more complex. From the perspective of the Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT), the study showed that the Iranian-Palestinian relationship cannot be considered in isolation, as it is connected to other security relationships and conflicts in the Middle East. Accordingly, security dynamics emerging in one space affect other actors and processes, which strengthens the interdependence of regional security and the interconnected nature of conflicts.

Iran maintains its influence in the region not only through military and financial support, but also through the dissemination of ideological narratives and religious-political identity, which is an important component of its "soft power." The impact of the Iranian-Palestinian relationship is not limited to regional security and is directly related to issues of international security, energy stability, and global geopolitical competition.

Thus, the theoretical framework used in the study shows that explaining the impact of the Iran-Palestinian relationship in terms of changes in the balance of power alone is not enough. Realism emphasizes the importance of power and strategic interests; constructivism emphasizes the role of identities, narratives, and perceptions; and RSCT emphasizes the interdependence of regional security and the interconnectedness of conflicts. The study concludes that the Iran-Palestinian relationship is not an isolated political relationship, but rather an important element of the regional security architecture, the evolution of which affects the stability and geopolitical dynamics of the Middle East. This dynamic has been particularly evident in the context of the recent confrontation between Iran and the United States, the diplomatic and security consequences of which are still developing.

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