Iran Didn't Win the War: Tehran Is Still Losing the Long Game

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Jun 25, 2026

Also published in Foreign Affairs

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The task now is not to achieve an unattainable final victory, but to consolidate allied gains, prevent bad outcomes on the nuclear and navigational files, and ensure that Iran remains weaker than when conflict first broke out in 2023.

Much of Washington has greeted the Iran cease-fire deal with scorn. After more than three months of war, the United States and Israel failed to achieve many of their objectives, which included overthrowing the regime in Tehran and ending a potential Iranian nuclear threat. But when viewed from a broader perspective, the outcome looks different. The almost three-year-long regional conflict that started with Hamas's attack on Israel in October 2023 and culminated in Operation Epic Fury this spring has put the United States and its partners in a far stronger position in the Middle East and left Iran much weaker. This is not to say that the war was perfectly executed or that it has gone according to plan. But the cumulative effect of three years' worth of efforts to defang a dangerous regime has left the United States in a strong position to solidify its gains. Rather than a foreign policy failure, the war could be the final piece of a successful effort to contain Tehran's regional threats and achieve a long-term cease-fire...

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