

Beat: Politics

## Iran's Regional Strategy

### Proxies, Influence, and Challenges

Iraq, 22.08.2025, 21:37 Time

**USPA NEWS** - Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei depends heavily on regional proxies to sustain his regime amid mounting domestic crises, including economic hardship, social unrest, and failing public services. Key instruments of influence include Hezbollah in Lebanon and the Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) in Iraq, which serve as tools to pressure regional powers and the United States.

Iraq:

#### Securing Influence

Iran aims to ensure that Iraqi airspace cannot be used against it in a potential conflict, while also obtaining intelligence and economic support. Pro-Iranian parties and militias are being unified to maintain Tehran's sway over the Iraqi government. Religious events such as the Arbaeen pilgrimage are leveraged to legitimize Iran's presence, although the majority of pilgrims remain independent of the regime.

Lebanon:

#### Protecting Hezbollah

Hezbollah is Tehran's most significant military asset in the region. Disarming it is perceived as a critical threat to Iran's security. Iran employs political, media, and security measures to block disarmament, including creating instability and exerting pressure through regional allies. Despite these efforts, Lebanon's leaders increasingly assert national sovereignty, signaling a decline in Iran's influence.

Yemen:

#### The Houthis as a Proxy Front

In Yemen, the Houthis operate as a low-cost, high-impact proxy under full control of Iran's Revolutionary Guard. Their military actions align with Tehran's strategic objectives, activated to project power or leverage negotiations. Supporting the internationally recognized Yemeni government is the most effective means to curb Iranian influence in the region.

#### Containing Tehran

As internal challenges weaken the Iranian regime, its reliance on proxies grows. Long-term solutions include supporting resistance within Iran, exposing Tehran's regional ambitions, and pursuing strategic measures to disarm Hezbollah and dissolve the PMF. Effective containment of Iran's influence in Iraq, Lebanon, and Yemen is essential to ensuring regional stability and security.

#### Article online:

<https://www.uspa24.com/bericht-25947/irans-regional-strategy.html>

#### Editorial office and responsibility:

V.i.S.d.P. & Sect. 6 MDSStV (German Interstate Media Services Agreement): Mohammed Al Faour

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Official Federal Reg. No. 7442619