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# Article - 1: Iran's long Game

Iran's Long Game

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## Iran's Long Game

*Decades of Preparation Are Paying Off*

NARGES BAJOGHLI

March 26, 2026



At an anti-U.S. and anti-Israeli rally in Tehran, Iran, March 2026  
MAJID ASGARIPOUR / WEST ASIA NEWS AGENCY / REUTERS

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**Context** Iran is strategically outlasting U.S. & Israeli attacks in the ongoing war through asymmetric tactics & economic disruption, rather than conventional victories.

## Facts

Iran's strategy relies on decentralized IRGC command, non-state actors (Hezbollah) & improvised tactics.

Iran is attempting to drive a wedge between the U.S. & Gulf allies, weakening regional alliances.

It is targeting economic chokepoints like Strait of Hormuz, affecting global oil supply.

Regional confidence has cracked after U.S. failed to prevent a 2025 Israeli strike on negotiators in Doha, Qatar.

## Analytical Crux

The central thesis is that Iran employs a "survive & exhaust" doctrine designed to outlast, rather than outgun, conventionally superior foes. By making the war militarily and economically unsustainable for Washington and its Gulf partners, **Tehran** aims to drive a permanent wedge between them. Paradoxically, the U.S. "decapitation" strategy (Killing senior leaders) may backfire; the new generation of Iranian commanders is younger, more aggressive and combat-hardened from theaters like Syria and Iraq, making them less likely to be deterred than their predecessors.

## Verbatim Quotes

"Iran, locked out of the petrodollar system itself, is now holding that system hostage."

"Iran's strategic doctrine has a phrase at its center: survive and exhaust."

"The United States and Israel may be winning the battles but Iran may be winning the war."

# Article - 2 : West Asia war is a warning

## West Asia war is a warning. It's also a window to securing our energy

**T**HE TURBULENCE in West Asia is a reminder of a structural reality that India has long grappled with: Energy insecurity is not episodic; it is systemic. For a country that imports over 85 per cent of its crude oil, geopolitical volatility is not an external risk. Every disruption in supply chains, every spike in oil prices and every escalation in regional conflict creates inflation, fiscal pressure, and current account stress. But such crises also present opportunities. India has the scale, the policy momentum, and the entrepreneurial capacity to convert this vulnerability into a decisive advantage.

The challenge must be used to redesign India's energy architecture. First, India must accelerate its renewable energy (RE) ambition and move from incrementalism to scale. India's existing target of 500 GW of RE by 2030 was bold when announced. Today, it's no longer sufficient. A revised target of 1,500 GW by 2030 is both necessary and achievable. This pertains to both climate commitments and energy sovereignty. In 2025, China added almost 1,600 GW in clean energy (solar and wind), whereas India added a mere 49 GW.

To enable this increased target, procurement mechanisms must be strengthened. Central agencies must aggregate and contract at least 200 GW+ annually, complemented by aggressive state-level procurement. Renewable purchase obligations and renewable consumption obligations must be expanded and strictly enforced.

Grid infrastructure must, therefore, be treated as a national priority. Renewables-rich states such as Gujarat, Rajasthan, Karnataka, and Tamil Nadu require high-capacity transmission corridors that are seamlessly integrated with storage systems. RE management centres must be expanded

and their capability to manage intermittency enhanced. Last year, over 50 GW of energy capacity remained stranded due to a lack of evacuation and over 35 GW is likely to be curtailed this year. Storage is equally critical. Battery energy storage systems and pumped hydro storage must be deployed in a mission mode. Every renewable tender going forward must mandate storage integration. Storage should be classified as a core RE asset and the GST on it should be brought down.

Second, India must rethink energy consumption at the household level. LPG has played a transformative role in improving health outcomes and reducing indoor pollution. But it is import-dependent. Electric induction cooking offers a pathway to shift household energy consumption towards clean power. This transition requires scale and strategy. Prices of induction cooktops can be reduced through demand aggregation, replicating the success of the UJALA programme. The database of Ujjwala beneficiaries provides a ready platform for targeted distribution.

Third, transport electrification should become a national economic strategy. India must announce a clear and time-bound roadmap: Full electrification of new two-wheelers and three-wheelers by 2030, buses in the near term, and cars and trucks by 2035. Electrification cannot succeed without fixing the battery ecosystem. The Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme for advanced chemistry cells has not succeeded and must be urgently restructured. Under-performance must be addressed, timelines rationalised, and credible global and domestic players brought in. Charging infrastructure must be scaled across urban and highway networks. This requires



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coordination across central, state, and municipal levels, supported by clear standards and viable business models.

Fourth, nuclear energy must be scaled as a long-term backbone of India's energy mix. Renewables and storage will form the bulk of future capacity. But nuclear power provides the firm, non-intermittent supply that is essential for grid stability. India's ambition to reach 100 GW of nuclear capacity by 2047 is strategic and necessary. Small modular reactors offer a scalable pathway. With the enabling policy now in existence, the priority must be to operationalise the reforms by starting bidding for projects and creating a predictable pipeline. Private-sector participation, global partnerships, and streamlined regulatory processes will be critical.

Fifth, India must build end-to-end capabilities in critical minerals. The challenge is not just access to raw materials, but also processing and refining. Today, global supply chains are heavily concentrated, creating strategic vulnerabilities. India must develop domestic processing capabilities at scale. This will require assured offtake mechanisms, price support frameworks, and long-term contracts that provide certainty to investors. Strategic partnerships with resource-rich countries must be deepened, not just for extraction but for integrated value chains. Equally important is human capital.

Training programmes at leading institutions must create a pipeline of skilled professionals in mineral processing, battery chemistry, and advanced manufacturing.

Sixth, and this is where India's current discourse remains underdeveloped — the country must position itself as a clean energy manufacturing hub. Solar modules, batteries, electrolysers, grid

technologies and green hydrogen represent the next wave of global manufacturing.

India must leverage its scale, policy incentives, and domestic demand to attract and build world-class manufacturing ecosystems. PLIs must be aligned across sectors, logistic costs reduced, and export competitiveness enhanced.

Seventh, financing the transition must become a core strategic priority. India must deepen its green finance ecosystem, including green bonds, blended finance structures, and sovereign-backed risk mitigation instruments. India's renewable sector has attracted private capital from across the world. This was feasible because of predictable policies and actions through the Solar Energy Corporation of India. Similar policy frameworks are necessary across sectors to enable the private sector to attract capital and technology. Domestic financial institutions must be incentivised to lend to clean energy projects. Multilateral development banks and global climate funds must be leveraged more effectively. Carbon markets can play a catalytic role if designed with integrity and scale.

Finally, execution must be anchored in institutional coordination and accountability. India has demonstrated its ability to deliver at scale, whether through digital public infrastructure, financial inclusion, or RE deployment. Energy transition now requires a similar whole-of-government approach. The turbulence in West Asia is a warning. But it is also a window. The choices made today will determine whether India remains vulnerable to external shocks or becomes a nation that shapes its energy destiny.

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India's existing target of 500 GW of RE by 2030 was bold when announced. Today, it's no longer sufficient. A revised target of 1,500 GW by 2030 is both necessary and achievable

**Context** This article outlines a strategic roadmap for India to achieve "energy sovereignty" by transforming its systemic energy insecurity into a national advantage.

## Facts

■ **Import Dependency**: India currently imports more than 85% of its crude oil, making it vulnerable to global supply chain disruptions.

■ **Manufacturing Gap**: In 2025, China added 1600 GW of clean energy, while India added 49 GW.

■ **Infra bottlenecks**: Over 50 GW of energy capacity remained 'stranded' last year due to inadequate evacuation & grid infrastructure.

■ **Electrification**: of new two- and 3 wheelers by 2030 & all cars & trucks by 2035.

## Analytical Crux

The article argues that India's energy problem is not temporary but structural, rooted in heavy import dependence. Instead of treating crises as disruptions, India should use them as an opportunity to redesign its entire energy system.

This means rapidly expanding renewables, improving grid and storage systems, electrifying transport and households, boosting nuclear energy, securing critical minerals and becoming a global manufacturing hub for clean energy technologies. The core idea is that energy security, economic growth and climate goals must be pursued together, with strong policy coordination and financing support.

### Verbatim Quotes

"Energy insecurity is not episodic; it is systemic."

"Geopolitical volatility is not an external risk."

"The choices made today will determine whether India remains vulnerable or becomes a nation that shapes its energy destiny."

# Article - 3 : The key to India's multi-domain deterrence

## The key to India's multi-domain deterrence, capabilities

China's military poses a serious challenge to India. New Delhi has no choice but to pursue a robust industrial strategy to offset China's military advantage. Otherwise, it risks the widening of the capability gap. But bridging this gap requires political expediency to make urgent, hard policy choices – what to buy, what to build, and the potential costs and benefits. The challenge is that technology is evolving faster than doctrine, making precise choices even more difficult. The question is how India should reconceptualise its doctrinal and technological choices and adopt a credible defence-industrial strategy to deter the People's Liberation Army (PLA).

**Hard choices, systemic vulnerabilities**  
There could be three contrasting ways to approach the issue. First, India could adopt a bold approach. It would imply betting on the right technological trends and investing in a completely new bundle of war-fighting technologies. The risk is if implementation fails, it can create acute capability vulnerabilities and further weaken the margin of deterrence with India's adversaries. Besides, India lacks the industrial heft to produce technologies at scale and speed to neutralise China's advantage. But, if successful, it could help reduce the capability gap.

Second, India could consider a more conservative strategy. This would entail integrating a wide range of emerging technologies with those in-service to make the existing force more effective. It would also entail enhancing India's cyber, space and electronic warfare capabilities to digitise the battlespace, to streamline and condense the kill chains. This is entirely doable, but it would not alter the balance of power. Perhaps, this strategy is more suited to fight a short war with Pakistan, not a protracted conflict.

Third, India could explore the middle path. While it continues to rely on legacy platforms, it invests in the creation and deployment of enabling layers, to enhance its ability to deter China. While, multi-domain operations (MDO) should be the obvious choice, India is not there yet for a mix of reasons. Besides, MDO as a concept is difficult to define, and even more difficult to operationalise. This would entail fielding a set of crucial enabling layers – of Command and Control (C2), Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR), deep-strike, close-battle, infrastructure and logistics, which are critical to war outcomes. As these layers evolve, India's military would shape



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into a syncretic, multi-domain force. Historically, military transformations have adopted well-known paths. It entails aligning research, development and industrial capacity, doctrines and structures and technology and tactics across institutions, and over time, to deter threats. National security institutions, including the military, have to work together to develop a common picture of the deterrence that the state wishes to create. Since India's margin of deterrence against China is uncertain, India's endeavour should be to analyse the factors that explain the systemic challenges to building a robust posture. Two aspects stand out. First, India's industrial challenges are well known. Its ability to translate its military requirements into industrial targets is doubtful. The issue is not its technological competence but its defence-industrial base, which is not structured to deliver at speed and scale. Missiles, munitions and drones are urgent industrial investments of the day, so are the ISR and C2 networks and shortfalls in legacy platforms. India needs to expand its defence-industrial base in conjunction with private industry; otherwise, it may continue to face constraints.

While there is no one-off solution to coordinating industrial capacity, technology and doctrine, incremental steps can generate benefits in the long term. Removing red tape, ensuring budgetary stability, and providing long-term contracts especially for specialised platforms could prove helpful. A mindset change recognising that private players can build military systems more efficiently than the government sector, is needed. It is never too late to shore up the system, but the window for industrial reform is clearly shrinking.

Second, India's procurement system has to focus on evolving and not constraining the fighting force. The system has to adapt faster and be rooted in an efficient defence-industrial base that can produce what an evolving force needs. India needs to spend more, but spend smarter by making hard choices in prioritising key deterrent capabilities. This will require the broadest possible debate and consensus on what needs to be done, and why. It is also the military's job to explain its roles and tasks to the political leadership, the costs of inaction and possible trade-offs, and how they impact the deterrence that India wishes to achieve.

**Fixing the enabling layers**  
Strengthening India's deterrence would mean altering China's military confidence, while preventing it from assuming that any single

capability could prove decisive. This is more so when India has no single capability which is exquisite enough to alter the military balance. By creating and operationalising the enabling layers – C2, ISR, deep-strike, close-battle and others – India can aspire to field a capable multi-domain force, to deter the Chinese.

India must have two top priorities. First, to identify those military vulnerabilities that present an advantage to China. Its fledgling C4ISR (Command, Control, Communications, Computers, Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance) is one such concern. Dominating the C4ISR battle is key: the side that can see can continue to fight. India needs cheap ISR platforms, in numbers which it can afford to lose, yet maintain ISR capacity. It even needs superior cyber, space and electronic warfare capabilities to deceive and degrade the adversary's ISR platforms. A layered C4ISR – one that enhances one's ISR capacity, while limiting an adversary's ability – is vital.

There are other layers, as well. For instance, the integration of missiles, aircraft and drones as the strike layer to dislocate the enemy in depth. The coordinated employment of land-based platforms such as tanks, guns, and infantry vehicles as a layer to fight front-line battles is crucial. A robust logistic layer that integrates all rear-zone elements including logistic installations, supply chains, and infrastructure is essential for fighting a protracted war. Equally important, in India's case, will be its nuclear deterrent, and how much nuclear capability it needs to compensate for a lack of conventional deterrence to dissuade a nuclear adversary such as China.

Second, India needs to incentivise the right parts of the defence industrial base, by making one-off budgetary allocations in select capabilities. China has a sizeable missile inventory and has the industrial capacity to produce thousands more, during conflict. If a conflict erupts, it can use these against India, with devastating effect. Even if India were to withstand the initial PLA strikes, it would put severe pressure on India's surge capacity. This inventory gap is a risky bet. India has to incentivise defence production, in the absence of which, China might be tempted to drag India into a protracted fight.

India should, therefore, be spending less time admiring the service-specific acquisitions, and fix the critical enabling layers in the deterrence system. Besides, theatre-isolation alone might not help create these layers, unless it is rooted in deep doctrinal convergence.

## Context

India faces a widening military gap with China's PLA, requiring urgent doctrinal shifts and industrial reforms to build deterrence through multi-domain enabling layers like C4ISR and strike capabilities.

## Facts

India faces a capability gap in missiles, drones, ISR and C4ISR systems.

India's defence - industrial base lacks scale, speed & private - sector integration.

Three strategic options : bold tech leap, conservative integration or middle path enabling layers.

China has large missile inventories & rapid production capacity, creating a surge disadvantage for India.

## Analytical Crux

The article argues that India cannot match China through conventional force alone and must instead build smart deterrence by focusing on "enabling layers" like intelligence (ISR), command systems (C4ISR), logistics and strike capabilities. Rather than choosing between risky technological leaps or limited incremental improvements, India should adopt a balanced approach - modernising existing forces while investing in critical systems that improve coordination and effectiveness across domains. The real problem is not just technology, but India's weak defence industrial ecosystem and slow procurement system. Without urgent reforms and better integration of private industry, India risks falling further behind China in a long-term conflict scenario.

### Verbatim Quotes

"Technology is evolving faster than doctrine."

"The side that can see, can continue to fight."

"The window for industrial reform is clearly shrinking."

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