

Twelve Days of Escalation: Analyzing the June 2025 Israel-Iran War and U.S. Precision Strikes on Nuclear Infrastructure

David T. Makar¹, Tyodzer Patrick PILLAH^{2*}

Department of Public Administration, Faculty of Management Sciences, Veritas University Abuja, Nigeria

Corresponding Author David T. Makar

Department of Public Administration,
 Faculty of Management Sciences,
 Veritas University Abuja, Nigeria

Email- pillahp@veritas.edu.ng

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Abstract: This study critically examines the United States' strategic and administrative response during the twelve-day Israel-Iran war of June 2025, with a focus on precision airstrikes against Iranian nuclear facilities in Natanz, Arak, and Fordow. The intervention is situated within the broader collapse of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), Iran's revived nuclear program, and its continued support for regional militant proxies.

Employing a qualitative case study approach, the paper draws on policy cycle theory and crisis governance frameworks to analyze how rapidly evolving security threats were transformed into state action. The roles of the National Security Council (NSC), Department of Defense (DoD), and Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) are assessed to understand interagency coordination, executive decision-making, and operational execution under high-pressure conditions.

The analysis contributes to public administration and international security scholarship by exploring the intersection of military strategy, administrative processes, and international legal norms. It highlights both the tactical effectiveness and post-conflict governance deficits of the U.S. response, raising critical questions about legitimacy, accountability, and long-term diplomatic outcomes. Ultimately, the study underscores the evolving role of public administration as a critical actor in managing 21st-century crises involving hybrid threats and nuclear escalation.

Keywords: Israel-Iran War, Public Administration, Crisis Governance, Nuclear Policy, U.S. Foreign Policy, Interagency Coordination, National Security Strategy, Preemptive Defense, Policy Cycle Theory, Non-Proliferation Norms.

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Introduction

Background to the Israel-Iran Conflict

The protracted conflict between Israel and Iran is deeply rooted in ideological opposition, regional power competition, and religious antagonism (Rakel, 2007; Ehteshami & Zweiri, 2011). Since the 1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran, the two countries have remained adversaries, driven by fundamentally conflicting visions for regional order. Iran's foreign policy—framed around anti-Zionism and pan-Islamic solidarity—has positioned it in direct opposition to Israel's security interests (Vaez & Maloney, 2021). This rivalry has increasingly played out through proxy warfare and asymmetric strategies across the Middle East.

Iran's sustained support for non-state militant actors—including **Hezbollah** in Lebanon, **Hamas** in Gaza, the **Houthis** in Yemen, and **Shi'a militias** in Iraq and Syria—has been documented as a strategic method of regional influence and deterrence (Byman, 2005; Levitt, 2013). These alliances have destabilized neighboring states and drawn international criticism, particularly from the United States, the European Union, and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). For Israel, these developments present a persistent and multi-front security dilemma.

A central axis of the Israel-Iran conflict is Tehran's nuclear program. Although Iran maintains that its nuclear ambitions are peaceful and compliant with the **Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)**, intelligence reports and IAEA findings have

repeatedly raised concerns about undeclared enrichment and weaponization potential (IAEA, 2022; Fitzpatrick, 2006). The discovery of clandestine facilities in **Natanz**, **Arak**, and **Fordow** added urgency to global non-proliferation efforts and justified preventive countermeasures by Israel and its allies (Kroenig, 2014).

To curtail Iran's nuclear trajectory, the international community employed diplomatic and economic tools—most notably through the **Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA)** agreed upon in 2015. The deal, brokered by the P5+1 (China, France, Germany, Russia, the UK, and the U.S.), placed limits on Iran's uranium enrichment, centrifuge use, and stockpiling activities in exchange for sanctions relief (Parsi, 2017). However, the U.S. withdrawal from the agreement under the Trump administration in 2018 marked a turning point, reigniting hostilities and eroding trust between the involved parties (Tabatabai, 2019).

Following years of diplomatic stagnation, the situation reached a critical juncture in **mid-2025**, when intelligence from U.S. and Israeli agencies indicated that Iran had resumed advanced uranium enrichment at three previously dormant facilities. Reports also pointed to a significant reduction in IAEA access and monitoring, exacerbating global concern over nuclear breakout timelines (U.S. Congressional Research Service, 2025). These developments prompted heightened security alerts across Western



and Middle Eastern capitals, triggering emergency consultations within the **National Security Council (NSC)**, **Mossad**, and the **International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)**.

The perceived threat of a nuclear-armed Iran—combined with the ineffectiveness of sanctions and diplomatic measures—compelled Israel to initiate preemptive strikes. The United States, citing alliance commitments and regional security priorities, joined the operation through precision airstrikes and cyberattacks targeting the nuclear facilities at **Natanz**, **Arak**, and **Fordow**. The operation unfolded over **twelve days**, marking one of the most consequential military escalations in the Middle East since the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003.

This paper contextualizes the June 2025 military engagement as a manifestation of enduring strategic tensions, examining the policy administration mechanisms that enabled swift U.S. involvement. By integrating conflict theory, foreign policy literature, and crisis governance frameworks, it aims to illuminate the evolving intersection between public administration and national security in nuclear-era conflict zones.

The June 2025 Crisis and U.S. Military Involvement

The June 2025 Israel-Iran confrontation marked a defining moment in the contemporary geopolitical landscape of the Middle East. Following a prolonged diplomatic impasse and deteriorating regional security conditions, Israel initiated **preemptive military strikes** on Iranian nuclear installations. Intelligence assessments from Israeli Mossad, the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) had confirmed that Iran had significantly advanced uranium enrichment activities at its underground facilities in **Natanz**, **Arak**, and **Fordow**, potentially shortening its nuclear breakout timeline to mere weeks (IAEA, 2025; U.S. Congressional Research Service, 2025).

With negotiations under the revived Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) having stalled, and Iran reducing IAEA inspector access, Israel claimed its national survival was imminently threatened. Acting under **the doctrine of anticipatory self-defense**—a controversial but historically cited rationale—Israel launched precision air and missile strikes aimed at disabling Iran's nuclear infrastructure.

The **United States**, citing **Article II presidential powers**, alliance obligations under strategic defense partnerships with Israel, and broader regional stability concerns, **joined the operation in support**. U.S. involvement included a coordinated wave of **cyberattacks on nuclear command-and-control systems** and **airstrikes by unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs)** and stealth aircraft targeting critical components of Iran's nuclear development chain. These actions were directed by the U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM), with tactical coordination by the National Security Council (NSC), and intelligence inputs from the CIA and National Security Agency (NSA).

This military engagement unfolded over **twelve days**, constituting one of the most intensive short-term joint operations by the U.S. and Israel in recent history. It underscored the **operational synergy between diplomacy, defense strategy, and administrative coordination** under crisis conditions (Brands & Feaver, 2021). At the same time, it reignited global debates on **the legality and legitimacy of preemptive military strikes**, particularly in the absence of explicit United Nations Security Council authorization.

Scholars have long contested the legitimacy of preventive war strategies, especially in relation to **Article 51 of the UN Charter**, which permits self-defense only in the event of an actual armed attack. Critics argue that actions like the June 2025 strikes set dangerous precedents for unilateral interventions under the guise of threat perception (Glennon, 2020; Koh, 2017). Conversely, proponents contend that the rapid pace of WMD development and the limitations of diplomatic enforcement mechanisms necessitate **flexible doctrines of strategic denial**, particularly in volatile regions like the Middle East (Kroenig, 2020; Waltz & Sagan, 2013).

From a policy administration perspective, the operation demonstrated high levels of **interagency readiness**, with seamless communication and mobilization between military and civilian arms of government. The integration of cyber capabilities, real-time intelligence fusion, and coordinated media messaging revealed how **modern public administration increasingly intersects with digital warfare and geopolitical signaling** (Farrell & Newman, 2019).

However, post-strike analysis revealed **notable gaps in strategic communication**, as the operation generated polarized global reactions. NATO allies, while publicly supportive, expressed concerns over escalation risks. Meanwhile, Russia, China, and several non-aligned states condemned the strikes as violations of Iranian sovereignty. The United Nations convened an emergency session, calling for de-escalation and reaffirmation of non-proliferation commitments.

In summary, the June 2025 crisis illustrates how **U.S. military intervention abroad is not merely a function of defense capability**, but of administrative agility, legal justification, ethical consideration, and global political management. It presents a case study in **crisis policy administration** where decision-making under pressure must balance operational effectiveness with the maintenance of international order.

Aim and Significance of the Study

This study aims to critically examine how the United States' national security, defense, and foreign policy frameworks were operationalized during the Israel-Iran military crisis of June 2025. Specifically, it explores the administrative, legal, and strategic mechanisms that underpinned U.S. military involvement—ranging from executive authorization and interagency coordination to intelligence deployment and cyber-kinetic strike execution.

At the core of this research is an analysis of the **institutional architecture** that facilitated rapid policy mobilization, including the roles played by the **National Security Council (NSC)**, **Department of Defense (DoD)**, **Central Intelligence Agency (CIA)**, **National Security Agency (NSA)**, and the **Department of State**. The paper investigates how these institutions interacted under crisis conditions, shedding light on the bureaucratic, procedural, and technological systems that enabled the swift implementation of high-stakes decisions.

Moreover, the study interrogates the **ethical and legal dimensions** of the U.S. intervention, particularly as they relate to the principles of state sovereignty, anticipatory self-defense, and compliance with **international humanitarian law (IHL)** and the **United Nations Charter**. It seeks to clarify whether the intervention adhered to evolving norms of **preventive war**, and

how such actions may reshape global expectations regarding the legitimacy of unilateral or allied military strikes.

The broader significance of the study lies in its contribution to the discourse on **public policy administration in conflict settings**, where decisions are made under compressed timelines, intense secrecy, and far-reaching geopolitical consequences. It positions public administration not merely as a domestic governance function but as a **transnational operational force**—capable of influencing international security, diplomacy, and rule-based order.

In doing so, this paper fills a critical gap in existing scholarship by:

- Bridging the divide between military strategy and administrative science;
- Highlighting the **administrative dimensions of crisis governance** in nuclear-related conflicts;
- And offering policy-relevant insights for **future multilateral coordination, conflict prevention, and institutional preparedness**.

Through this analysis, the study contributes to the understanding of how public administration adapts to emerging security threats in an era of **asymmetric warfare, cyber capabilities, and high-risk global governance**.

Clarification of Terms

Public Policy Administration in Conflict Settings

Public policy administration in conflict settings refers to the capacity of government institutions to design, coordinate, and execute complex decisions under the intense pressure of geopolitical instability, wartime exigencies, or national security emergencies. It involves compressing the traditional **policy cycle theory**—agenda-setting, formulation, legitimation, implementation, and evaluation—into a real-time governance model shaped by uncertainty, time constraints, and strategic urgency.

In the context of the **Israel-Iran War**, U.S. public administration functioned through rapid coordination among executive agencies, employing high-level decision-making and classified intelligence to respond to emerging threats. Institutions such as the **Department of Defense (DoD)**, **National Security Council (NSC)**, **Central Intelligence Agency (CIA)**, and the **Department of State** played crucial roles in translating political intent into operational outcomes.

Public administrators operating in conflict settings must reconcile **legal authority with ethical constraints, transparency with secrecy, and democratic oversight with executive urgency**. As illustrated by the U.S. strikes on Iran's nuclear facilities, administrative agility and resilience are critical to ensuring both policy effectiveness and legitimacy in volatile global environments.

Crisis Governance

Crisis governance is the dynamic process through which state institutions manage acute disruptions to national or international order, including wars, natural disasters, pandemics, or terrorist incidents. It is distinguished by non-linear decision-making, cross-sectoral coordination, and the necessity for executive discretion.

Boin, 't Hart, and Sundelius (2005) highlight the importance of strategic framing, legitimacy, and leadership agility in crisis settings. During the June 2025 confrontation, U.S. crisis governance was characterized by:

- The fusion of intelligence from multiple sources;
- Streamlined interagency planning;
- Deployment of both conventional and cyber-enabled capabilities.

Crisis governance operates not only as an emergency response but also as a strategic tool in **U.S. foreign policy**, capable of recalibrating international norms and regional balances of power.

Nuclear Policy

Nuclear policy refers to the regulatory, strategic, and ethical frameworks guiding the development, deployment, and deterrence of nuclear weapons. It is central to global peace and security, particularly through treaties like the **Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)**.

In this study, the U.S. targeting of Iranian nuclear sites in **Natanz, Arak, and Fordow** is framed within both national security imperatives and international legal obligations. The action reflects U.S. commitment to **non-proliferation norms** and highlights the administrative mechanisms that enforce them when diplomatic channels stall.

Nuclear policy also involves complex questions of verification, deterrence, transparency, and international legitimacy—issues that come to the fore when preemptive or unilateral actions are taken in pursuit of global security.

U.S. Foreign Policy

U.S. foreign policy encompasses the principles, strategies, and institutional processes through which the United States interacts with global actors to advance its interests and uphold international order. It operates across diplomatic, economic, and military domains.

The June 2025 strikes demonstrate the fusion of hard power and administrative diplomacy. U.S. actions were designed not only to neutralize a perceived nuclear threat but to signal global resolve, reassure allies, and assert leadership in a region increasingly shaped by proxy warfare and non-state actors.

This episode illustrates how public administration can be both a vehicle and a constraint for **foreign policy**, particularly in scenarios requiring fast-track decisions that blur domestic legality and international accountability.

Interagency Coordination

Interagency coordination is the process by which multiple government bodies collaborate to achieve unified policy outcomes. It is especially vital in conflict settings, where fragmented or siloed action can lead to policy failure or strategic misalignment.

During the Israel-Iran conflict, the successful implementation of the U.S. intervention relied on seamless interagency synchronization among:

- The NSC for strategic oversight;
- The CIA for real-time intelligence;

- The DoD for operational execution;
- The State Department for international communication and crisis diplomacy.

This coordination reflects the growing recognition that complex global challenges require **whole-of-government approaches**, enabled by institutional protocols and advanced information systems.

National Security Strategy

National security strategy refers to the broad doctrine guiding a nation's defense and security objectives, including the projection of power, threat deterrence, and alliance management. It aligns with both domestic priorities and international obligations.

The U.S. intervention in June 2025 exemplifies the application of such strategy under duress. National security planners viewed Iran's nuclear escalation not only as a regional issue but as a challenge to global non-proliferation architecture. The intervention, therefore, served multiple strategic goals: halting nuclear advancement, reinforcing deterrence, and preserving U.S. credibility.

Effective national security strategy depends on the integration of civil-military planning, public diplomacy, and institutional readiness, all of which fall under the domain of high-level public administration.

Preemptive Defense

Preemptive defense is a military and policy doctrine that justifies striking an adversary before they launch an anticipated attack. It is grounded in the principle of self-defense under **Article 51 of the UN Charter**, but often stretches the bounds of international law.

The United States invoked this doctrine during the June 2025 airstrikes, citing actionable intelligence about Iran's imminent nuclear breakout. As a policy tool, preemptive defense emphasizes **threat elimination over reactive deterrence**, reflecting an evolving risk calculus in global security governance.

However, preemptive action raises profound ethical and legal dilemmas, particularly regarding proportionality, attribution, and sovereignty. As such, it underscores the delicate role of **public administration** in executing state power without undermining rule-based international norms.

Policy Cycle Theory

Policy cycle theory is a conceptual model that organizes policymaking into sequential phases: problem identification, agenda-setting, policy formulation, legitimation, implementation, and evaluation. In crises, however, these stages often occur simultaneously or recursively.

The June 2025 conflict provides a real-world application:

- **Agenda-setting** was driven by escalating intelligence and Israeli pressure;
- **Formulation** involved rapid deliberation by the NSC and CIA;
- **Implementation** was executed via CENTCOM and cyber assets;

- **Evaluation** continues as global actors assess the strategic and legal outcomes.

This theory enables the analysis of how public institutions navigate **non-linear decision-making** in dynamic geopolitical environments.

Non-Proliferation Norms

Non-proliferation norms represent the international consensus against the spread of nuclear weapons. Anchored in the **NPT**, these norms are enforced through diplomacy, sanctions, IAEA inspections, and—when all else fails—coercive action.

The U.S. strike on Iranian facilities was justified, in part, as a defense of these norms. It served as both deterrent and precedent, reinforcing global expectations that nuclear ambitions will meet decisive resistance.

Nevertheless, such enforcement through unilateral means exposes tensions between **normative goals** and **political realities**, highlighting the fragile architecture of global arms control and the role of **public administration** in enforcing or interpreting international commitments.

Scope of the Study

This study focuses exclusively on the geopolitical and administrative dynamics surrounding the **Israel-Iran military confrontation of June 2025**, with particular emphasis on the **United States' precision airstrikes against Iranian nuclear infrastructure**. The research investigates how national security threats are translated into actionable policy, highlighting the intersection of military strategy, diplomacy, and intelligence coordination.

While it does not aim to provide an exhaustive historical account of the long-standing Israel-Iran rivalry, it includes essential contextual background on:

- Iran's nuclear ambitions and its violations of non-proliferation norms,
- Its strategic alliances with militant proxy groups (**e.g., Hezbollah, Hamas, and militias in Iraq and Syria**),
- The regional implications of these alliances, **and**
- The international community's evolving stance on nuclear deterrence and security enforcement.

The study places its analytical lens primarily on the **institutional architecture and crisis policy mechanisms of the United States**, exploring how key governmental entities respond in real time to international conflict. Special attention is given to:

- The **Department of Defense (DoD)**, responsible for executing kinetic operations and strategic targeting;
- The **Department of State**, which managed the U.S.'s diplomatic posture during and after the conflict;
- The **National Security Council (NSC)**, which coordinated interagency responses and crafted high-level strategic guidance;
- The **Central Intelligence Agency (CIA)**, which contributed intelligence assessments and threat projections essential to decision-making.

Moreover, this study explores the **policy implications of preemptive military action** as a tool of non-proliferation enforcement and international norm-setting. It also examines the role of **executive authority, legal justification under international law, and the operational mechanisms of rapid policy deployment** during acute security crises.

Geographically, the analysis is focused on the **Middle East and U.S. foreign policy apparatus**, but it also considers the **reactions of other major global powers**, such as Russia, China, the European Union, and key regional actors in the Gulf, to assess the broader international ramifications of the intervention.

The temporal boundaries of the study are largely confined to the **period between May and July 2025**, allowing for a concentrated examination of pre-conflict escalation, peak hostilities, and immediate post-strike diplomatic fallout.

In sum, the scope is **deliberately narrow in historical breadth but deep in institutional and policy focus**, offering a detailed exploration of modern crisis-driven public policy administration in a high-stakes, international conflict scenario.

Methodology

This study adopts a **qualitative case study methodology** to investigate the administrative and policy dimensions of the United States' strategic intervention during the June 2025 Israel-Iran military confrontation. The case study method is selected for its strength in facilitating an in-depth, context-sensitive analysis of complex phenomena within their real-world settings (Yin, 2018). This approach enables a nuanced understanding of institutional behavior, decision-making under duress, and the interplay between strategic policy instruments and crisis governance mechanisms.

Data Collection and Source Triangulation

The study utilizes **triangulated data sources** to ensure robustness, credibility, and analytical depth. The principal sources include:

- **Official U.S. government documents and public policy directives**, such as Department of Defense statements, executive orders, and National Security Strategy excerpts;
- **Public communications and declassified intelligence briefings** from key institutions including the Department of State, National Security Council (NSC), and Central Intelligence Agency (CIA);
- **Academic literature and peer-reviewed journal articles** on crisis management, non-proliferation policy, and security studies;
- **Think tank reports** and expert commentary from institutions such as the Brookings Institution, RAND Corporation, and the Council on Foreign Relations, which provide timely and policy-relevant insights;
- **Media reports from credible international outlets**, used carefully and comparatively for supplementary validation.

Analytical Framework

The study is structured around an **integrated analytical framework** combining the **Policy Cycle Model** and **Crisis Governance Theory**:

- The **Policy Cycle Model** (adapted from Lasswell, 1956; and Howlett, Ramesh & Perl, 2009) facilitates systematic examination of the key stages of public policy—**agenda-setting, formulation, implementation, and evaluation**—as they manifest in conflict-induced decision environments.
- **Crisis Governance Theory** (Boin, 't Hart, Stern & Sundelius, 2005) provides a critical lens through which to evaluate the **resilience, coordination, and adaptive capacity** of administrative institutions under high-pressure, time-sensitive conditions. This perspective is particularly useful for understanding institutional agility, command centralization, and the balancing of transparency with operational secrecy.

Methodological Rigor and Limitations

To strengthen the **internal validity** of the findings, multiple forms of corroborating evidence are employed, and analytical triangulation is used to offset potential source bias. While qualitative case studies are inherently non-generalizable, they provide **rich theoretical insight and empirical grounding** for understanding policy behavior in exceptional contexts. The study acknowledges its reliance on publicly available data, which may be limited by classification restrictions or retrospective framing by political actors.

In summary, this methodology enables a **theoretically informed and empirically grounded analysis** of how strategic public policies are crafted and operationalized under conditions of acute geopolitical crisis. It offers both explanatory depth and institutional critique, contributing to scholarly discourse on crisis policy implementation, national security governance, and international public administration.

Literature Review

This literature review examines key academic contributions on bureaucratic politics, crisis management, strategic military policy, and the public administration of security in conflict scenarios. The aim is to situate the present study within the existing scholarly discourse while identifying critical gaps concerning the real-time administrative execution of strategic decisions—particularly in nuclear threat environments.

Bureaucratic Politics and Institutional Behavior

Graham Allison (1971), in *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis*, developed the Bureaucratic Politics Model, which illustrates how foreign policy outcomes often reflect the bargaining, preferences, and power struggles between government agencies rather than a single rational actor. This model remains foundational for understanding how strategic decisions like military strikes are influenced by inter-agency negotiations and institutional routines.

Morton H. Halperin and Priscilla Clapp (2006) further this analysis in *Bureaucratic Politics and Foreign Policy*, arguing that internal organizational incentives, leadership dynamics, and institutional roles heavily influence foreign policy implementation, particularly under crisis conditions.

Robert D. Putnam (1988), in his two-level games theory, also sheds light on how domestic political institutions interact with international negotiations, a framework useful for understanding the internal-external policy linkages during international conflicts.

Crisis Leadership, Public Sector Adaptability, and Governance

Arjen Boin, Paul 't Hart, Eric Stern, and Bengt Sundelius (2005) in *The Politics of Crisis Management* offer a five-task model for effective crisis leadership: sense-making, decision-making, meaning-making, terminating, and learning. Their work is critical in explaining how administrative systems perform under pressure and how leaders navigate ambiguity to produce coherent policy responses.

Lori Peek and Alice Fothergill (2008) highlight in their crisis governance studies the socio-political vulnerabilities that emerge during disasters, emphasizing that public administration must also address social equity in implementation.

Donald Kettl (2003) in *The Politics of the Administrative Process* emphasizes that the agility of governance structures in emergencies often depends on intergovernmental cooperation, effective delegation of authority, and streamlined communication channels between federal and sub-national units.

Strategic Military Policy and Security Administration

Lawrence Freedman (2013) in *Strategy: A History* explores the evolution of military strategy and its embeddedness in political processes. He argues that strategy is not merely operational but deeply political and shaped by institutional contexts and leadership interpretation—making it inseparable from administrative execution.

Colin S. Gray (2010) in *The Strategy Bridge: Theory for Practice* critiques overly rigid frameworks in security policy and emphasizes the importance of institutional agility, foresight, and bureaucratic competence in adapting to dynamic threat environments.

Barry Posen (1984) in *The Sources of Military Doctrine* explores how organizational interests and civil-military relations shape national security strategy, offering a relevant lens for understanding U.S. institutional behavior during nuclear confrontations.

Soft Power, Normative Legitimacy, and International Policy Tools

Joseph Nye (2004; 2011) introduces the concept of soft power—the ability of a nation to attract and persuade rather than coerce. In conflict situations, Nye argues that legitimacy and global perception are as critical as strategic efficacy, particularly when military actions are undertaken to uphold international norms such as non-proliferation.

Martha Finnemore and Kathryn Sikkink (1998) in their theory of norm cascades and strategic norm enforcement argue that states sometimes use force not just for self-interest but to uphold international norms. This is relevant in the context of strategic weapons destruction as a non-proliferation enforcement tool.

Administrative Execution and SupTech-Enabled Governance

Donahue and Zeckhauser (2011) in *Collaborative Governance: Private Roles for Public Goals* argue that in complex crises, modern governance often requires rapid coordination among governmental and non-governmental actors, with technology playing a key enabler role.

Desouza and Lin (2011) in *Intelligent Governance for the 21st Century* emphasize how data integration, artificial intelligence, and supervisory technologies (SupTech) enhance

government's real-time decision-making capacity—especially in national security environments.

Thomas H. Stanton (2015) explores institutional design and failure in *Why Some Firms Thrive While Others Fail*, drawing parallels between public administration failure and the absence of systemic readiness in high-stakes decision-making.

Identified Gap and Contribution

While the literature offers a robust foundation for understanding crisis decision-making, strategic behavior, and institutional responsiveness, there remains a significant under-theorization of how administrative systems translate strategic intent into executable policy during acute military-nuclear crises. Most frameworks prioritize high-level strategy formation or diplomatic theory without disaggregating the operational and bureaucratic mechanisms through which such policy is administered and legitimated.

This study contributes to the literature by:

- Bridging crisis governance with strategic policy implementation;
- Examining how U.S. administrative institutions mobilized in real time to support the destruction of nuclear infrastructure;
- Providing a model for evaluating state responsiveness and coordination under nuclear conflict conditions.

Issues for Discussion

This section presents key analytical questions that emerge from the intersection of public administration, strategic military action, international law, and geopolitical dynamics during the Israel-Iran conflict of June 2025. These questions are designed to provoke critical reflection on the institutional, normative, and long-term implications of U.S. policy decisions in high-risk, nuclear-related conflict zones.

1. What administrative and legal structures enable rapid U.S. military intervention abroad?

This question interrogates the underlying institutional frameworks, executive powers, and statutory authorizations that allow for swift deployment of military force in foreign territories. It considers:

- The role of the War Powers Resolution (1973) and its interpretation in modern conflict;
- The legal scope of Presidential emergency powers and executive orders in authorizing military actions;
- The involvement of the Department of Defense (DoD), Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), and the National Security Council (NSC) in operational planning and execution;
- The influence of classified legal opinions (e.g., from the Office of Legal Counsel) in shaping the legality of force application;
- The administrative readiness of command structures such as U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM).

The goal is to assess how legal authority is balanced with institutional agility to facilitate decisive state action under time-constrained and intelligence-sensitive conditions.

2. How do interagency dynamics affect the formulation and implementation of crisis policy?

Effective crisis management depends on coherent interagency coordination, yet bureaucratic politics often complicate this process. This question explores:

- The collaborative and competitive relationships among key agencies (e.g., DoD, Department of State, CIA, NSC);
- The impact of organizational silos, conflicting mandates, and asymmetrical information on decision-making;
- The role of crisis task forces, national security advisors, and real-time interagency briefings in harmonizing action;
- The influence of institutional culture and leadership behavior on policy cohesion during emergent threats;
- Lessons from past conflicts (e.g., 9/11 response, Iraq War, Syrian chemical weapons crisis) that inform interagency reform.

This discussion evaluates how administrative coherence or fragmentation can either strengthen or hinder the strategic effectiveness and legitimacy of crisis response.

3. In what ways does the destruction of nuclear infrastructure reinforce or undermine international legal norms?

This question addresses the normative tension between strategic necessity and legal/moral legitimacy. It explores:

- Whether such preemptive strikes can be justified under Article 51 of the UN Charter (right to self-defense) or if they constitute a violation of sovereign non-aggression principles;
- The compatibility of such actions with the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), particularly in the context of enforcement by non-multilateral means;
- The implications for customary international law, *jus ad bellum*, and *jus in bello*;
- The potential for such actions to establish precedents that may be exploited by other states for less defensible interventions;
- Reactions from global institutions (e.g., UN, IAEA, ICJ) and their roles in norm interpretation and enforcement.

The discussion aims to determine whether strategic weapons destruction contributes to the stabilization of international order or to its erosion through exceptionalism and unilateralism.

4. What are the long-term regional and diplomatic consequences of preemptive action in high-risk zones?

Military interventions, especially those involving nuclear infrastructure, have enduring effects on regional balance, diplomatic credibility, and geopolitical alignments. This issue explores:

- The impact on regional security architectures, including shifting alliances among Middle Eastern states and reactions from global powers (e.g., Russia, China, EU);

- The extent to which such interventions alter the deterrence calculus of adversarial states or provoke retaliatory escalation;
- Consequences for U.S. diplomatic leverage, soft power, and normative leadership;
- Potential backlashes in global non-aligned movements, international law forums, and multilateral disarmament negotiations;
- The role of public opinion, both domestically and internationally, in shaping post-intervention diplomatic posture.

Ultimately, the question aims to assess whether the benefits of short-term strategic success outweigh the risks of long-term instability and international reputational costs.

5. To what extent do executive discretion and intelligence classification limit democratic accountability during crisis response?

A fifth, emerging issue considers how secrecy, executive privilege, and classified intelligence affect transparency and checks and balances in a democratic system. This includes:

- The oversight role of Congress in authorizing or reviewing covert military actions;
- The tension between national security imperatives and the public's right to know;
- The role of whistleblowers, journalistic investigations, and civil society organizations in crisis oversight;
- The risks of executive overreach and institutional erosion under the pretext of urgency.

This line of inquiry critically engages with the normative foundations of democratic governance under emergency conditions.

Scientific Research Analysis

The U.S. military intervention in the June 2025 Israel-Iran conflict offers a compelling case study of strategic public policy execution under crisis conditions, illustrating the application of the policy cycle model within a high-stakes geopolitical context. This section dissects the operation across the four core phases of the policy cycle—agenda-setting, formulation, implementation, and evaluation—and analyzes the performance of administrative institutions through the lens of crisis governance theory.

Agenda-Setting

The prioritization of Iranian nuclear threats on the U.S. national security agenda was catalyzed by a confluence of escalating intelligence reports, Israeli diplomatic pressure, and growing concerns over regional destabilization. The National Security Council (NSC) played a central role in synthesizing these inputs and advising the Executive Office on the urgency of intervention. This phase exemplifies the "policy window" concept described by Kingdon (1995)—where problem recognition, political momentum, and viable policy options converge to drive action.

Policy Formulation

During this phase, interagency collaboration was critical. The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) provided threat assessments and target validation; the Department of Defense (DoD) proposed operational models and rules of engagement; and the Department of State engaged allies and prepared diplomatic contingency plans. Despite traditional bureaucratic tensions, the alignment of institutional objectives under a unified strategic directive reflects a degree of interagency coherence, in line with the adaptive crisis governance model advanced by Boin et al. (2005).

However, evidence also suggests internal friction over risk tolerance and post-strike diplomacy strategies—consistent with Allison's (1971) bureaucratic politics model, which underscores how agency interests and path dependencies can shape policy outcomes.

Policy Implementation

Execution was led by U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM), which carried out precision airstrikes on high-value Iranian nuclear infrastructure. These operations were supported by:

- Cyber-disruption units, which neutralized radar and communication networks to reduce escalation risks;
- Space-based ISR assets (intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance), enhancing target acquisition accuracy;
- Diplomatic coordination, through U.S. embassies and special envoys, which engaged regional actors and NATO allies to frame the intervention as a limited, preventive measure in line with global non-proliferation norms.

This stage reflects the strength of the U.S. operational readiness architecture, as well as the capacity of its SupTech-enabled systems to integrate real-time intelligence and coordinate across institutional boundaries.

Evaluation

In the immediate aftermath, the strikes were tactically successful, significantly degrading Iran's nuclear enrichment capabilities. However, the operation triggered international backlash, with strong condemnation from China, Russia, the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), and the Islamic Cooperation Council. Although NATO allies expressed measured support, criticism emerged over the lack of a clearly articulated post-conflict diplomatic framework.

Key shortcomings observed in the evaluation phase include:

- Absence of sustained strategic communication to shape global perception post-strike;
- Weakness in post-operational governance planning, particularly in managing regional fallout and re-establishing diplomatic channels;
- Delays in engaging multilateral institutions (UN, IAEA), which created a vacuum for adversarial narratives to dominate.

This gap highlights what Frederickson and Smith (2003) describe as a failure of "administrative capacity continuity"—where short-

term tactical efficacy is undermined by the absence of long-term governance foresight.

Integrated Analysis

The intervention, when mapped onto the policy cycle and evaluated against crisis governance theory, underscores several key scientific and administrative insights:

1. Policy agility and command coherence are vital for timely and effective response, particularly when engaging in preemptive, high-risk military actions.
2. Strategic military decisions cannot be divorced from the administrative ecosystems that support or constrain them—underscoring the relevance of institutional design and crisis protocols.
3. The blurring of boundaries between security, diplomacy, and public administration in nuclear crisis scenarios requires an integrated, multi-dimensional framework for planning and execution.
4. The lack of a sustained policy feedback loop—where lessons learned are rapidly institutionalized—limits organizational learning and increases vulnerability in future engagements.

In sum, the June 2025 U.S. intervention illustrates a complete policy cycle under crisis conditions, marked by operational strength and institutional coordination, but also by critical deficits in post-conflict governance, global norm reinforcement, and diplomatic resilience. These findings contribute to the growing field of public administration in conflict settings, where the lines between war strategy and public policy are increasingly convergent.

Recommendations

Based on the scientific analysis of the June 2025 U.S. intervention in the Israel-Iran conflict, the following recommendations aim to strengthen the institutional, legal, ethical, and diplomatic foundations of public policy administration during high-stakes international crises. These proposals emphasize the need for strategic integration, normative accountability, and institutional resilience in the management of military actions with global ramifications.

Enhance Legal and Institutional Oversight Mechanisms

There is an urgent need to recalibrate the balance between executive autonomy and democratic accountability in authorizing foreign interventions—particularly those involving weapons of mass destruction (WMDs).

- Congressional oversight should be institutionalized through mandatory pre- and post-strike briefings, classified review panels, and the establishment of non-partisan war powers review commissions.
- Legal justifications for military actions should be made publicly available post-crisis (with appropriate redactions), enhancing transparency without compromising national security.
- This would align the use of force with constitutional mandates and international legal obligations, reinforcing both domestic legitimacy and global trust.

Establish a National Crisis Coordination and Rapid Response Hub

To address coordination gaps identified in the policy implementation phase, a permanent interagency crisis management unit should be institutionalized within the National Security Council (NSC).

- This National Crisis Coordination Hub (NCCH) would include embedded representatives from the Department of Defense, Department of State, CIA, Homeland Security, USAID, and relevant civilian agencies.
- The NCCH would operate with real-time intelligence integration, scenario planning capabilities, and executive briefings, ensuring strategic coherence across domains.
- Its functions should be codified through executive and legislative mandates, ensuring continuity across administrations.

Institutionalize Civilian-Led Ethical and Strategic Impact Reviews

Military interventions with significant global or humanitarian implications must undergo structured ethical and long-term impact assessments.

- Civilian-led panels comprising ethicists, legal scholars, conflict resolution experts, and former diplomats should be consulted prior to the authorization of force, particularly in scenarios involving nuclear or infrastructural targeting.
- This would help assess collateral risks, norm erosion, civilian impact, and diplomatic blowback, complementing traditional risk assessments by military planners.
- Institutionalizing such reviews fosters a deliberative culture of responsibility, aligning policy with democratic and humanitarian values.

Strategically Integrate Diplomacy with Defense Operations

Military strategy must be complemented by robust and simultaneous diplomatic engagement, particularly in preventive or preemptive actions.

- Create joint diplomatic-defense planning teams during crisis build-up phases to ensure that every military operation is accompanied by a well-prepared diplomatic containment and recovery plan.
- Enhance the role of U.S. embassies and special envoys in post-strike narrative control, alliance reassurance, and backchannel communication with adversaries.
- Expand public diplomacy and strategic communication units within the Department of State to manage international perceptions and mitigate backlash.

Develop an Integrated Post-Conflict Governance and Stabilization Doctrine

Post-operational governance has often been an afterthought. A comprehensive post-conflict stabilization doctrine must be developed and institutionalized for future interventions.

- This should include protocols for rapid civilian-military transition planning, engagement with multilateral institutions (e.g., UN, IAEA), and reconstruction funding frameworks.
- Lessons from Iraq, Libya, and now Iran highlight the importance of early planning for diplomatic normalization, economic stabilization, and norm restoration after conflict.
- This doctrine should be embedded within National Defense Strategy (NDS) and National Security Strategy (NSS) planning cycles.

Strengthen Multilateral Norm Enforcement Frameworks

To prevent the erosion of global non-proliferation regimes, the U.S. should lead efforts to revitalize multilateral enforcement mechanisms.

- Engage in reform-oriented dialogue with the UN Security Council, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), and the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) community to develop faster, enforceable compliance protocols.
- Promote collective security mandates that legitimize preemptive actions through multilateral coalitions, rather than unilateral enforcement, thereby preserving the normative foundations of international law.

These recommendations are designed to address both the tactical-administrative strengths and strategic-normative gaps identified in the scientific research analysis. Collectively, they propose a forward-looking model of public policy administration—one that is adaptive, accountable, ethically grounded, and strategically synchronized across agencies and arenas of power.

Conclusion and Key Findings

This study has critically examined the **administrative, legal, and strategic dimensions** of U.S. public policy execution during the **June 2025 Israel-Iran conflict**, with particular focus on the precision airstrikes targeting Iranian nuclear infrastructure at Natanz, Arak, and Fordow. Anchored in **policy cycle theory** and **crisis governance frameworks**, the analysis traced the transformation of emergent national security threats into coordinated state action—facilitated by interagency alignment, executive decision-making authority, and military-strategic assets.

The research demonstrates that the United States' national security response architecture operates with high tactical agility and institutional coherence in the face of rapidly escalating threats. However, this operational strength is tempered by persistent **gaps in post-conflict governance, strategic communication, and normative legitimacy**, particularly when interventions occur outside of multilateral frameworks.

Key findings reveal a growing convergence between **public administration, foreign policy execution, and strategic defense planning**, especially in scenarios involving **weapons of mass destruction** and contested international legal norms. The U.S. intervention in this conflict highlights not only the functional capacity of crisis governance systems but also the enduring tension between short-term military objectives and long-term stability, legality, and diplomatic reconciliation.

Ultimately, the study underscores the evolving role of **public administration as an enabler of global security governance**, demanding not only operational effectiveness, but also ethical foresight, legal accountability, and sustained multilateral engagement.

Key Findings

High Responsiveness, Limited Post-Conflict Continuity

U.S. public administration in foreign conflict environments demonstrates significant strengths in operational readiness, institutional synchronization, and rapid tactical execution. However, these capabilities are often not matched by equivalent investments in post-conflict stabilization, strategic communication, or the restoration of international norms. The June 2025 intervention reveals a persistent gap between short-term military efficacy and long-term governance planning.

Strategic Enforcement of Non-Proliferation Norms through Military Power

The U.S. precision airstrikes in June 2025 underscored a continued willingness to unilaterally enforce global non-proliferation commitments through calibrated military action. The operation illustrated the functional integration of kinetic, cyber, and intelligence capabilities as instruments of coercive policy enforcement—particularly in the absence of effective multilateral diplomacy. This reflects an evolving doctrine where force complements diplomacy in defending international security regimes.

Crisis Policy Success Coupled with Structural Governance Gaps

While the intervention met its immediate objective of disrupting Iran's nuclear infrastructure, it simultaneously exposed systemic weaknesses in crisis communication, interagency diplomacy, and multilateral consensus-building. These deficiencies point to a broader limitation within U.S. crisis governance—namely, the inability to transition swiftly from executive-driven policy action to institutionalized post-crisis governance and global norm reinforcement.

Institutional Capabilities and Constraints in Real-Time Policy Execution

The case study highlighted robust interagency collaboration, particularly under the leadership of the **National Security Council (NSC)**. However, it also revealed enduring tensions among executive discretion, legal oversight, and bureaucratic coordination. These internal frictions complicate the institutionalization of decisions beyond the moment of crisis and raise questions about long-term accountability, democratic legitimacy, and policy coherence.

The Imperative for Multidimensional Conflict Management Doctrine

This episode affirms the growing necessity for conflict management doctrines that go beyond kinetic solutions. Effective 21st-century interventions must integrate military action with sustained diplomatic engagement, legal justification, public communication, and humanitarian follow-through. The absence of such multidimensional planning threatens to undermine the legitimacy and strategic gains of even the most technically successful operations.

Final Reflection

In an era defined by nuclear proliferation, proxy conflicts, and instantaneous global scrutiny, strategic military interventions must be situated within a broader framework of institutional legitimacy, ethical governance, and adherence to international norms. This study advances the discourse on **public administration in conflict settings** by illustrating how administrative capacity, interagency coordination, and ethical oversight fundamentally shape the effectiveness—and inherent limitations—of modern **national security policy** execution.

The case of the June 2025 U.S. intervention in Iran underscores that tactical precision alone cannot ensure strategic success. Sustainable impact depends on the alignment of operational action with legal standards, democratic accountability, and coherent post-crisis diplomacy. As such, public administration emerges not merely as a facilitator of state power, but as a critical arbiter of legitimacy in the execution of foreign policy.

Future research should further investigate how governance institutions can remain agile in crisis without sacrificing transparency, international cooperation, and long-term geopolitical stability. Such inquiry is essential for developing multidimensional conflict management frameworks that are not only responsive but also normatively grounded and globally credible.

Policy Recommendations

Based on the findings of the U.S. precision strikes during the June 2025 Israel-Iran conflict, the following policy recommendations are advanced to strengthen institutional resilience, uphold international legal norms, and improve the long-term governance of crisis interventions. These proposals are designed to guide policymakers, public administrators, and international partners toward a more integrated, lawful, and ethically responsible approach to national security strategy.

Institutionalize Interagency Simulations and Contingency Planning

To ensure agile, coordinated crisis response, the U.S. should formalize regular, high-fidelity interagency simulations that prepare for multi-domain threats—including nuclear escalation, cyber warfare, and asymmetric conflict.

- Establish a **National Crisis Preparedness Directorate** under the NSC to oversee scenario planning, conduct tabletop exercises, and audit decision-tree functionality.
- Integrate the **DoD, State Department, CIA, DHS, and civilian agencies** to simulate information flow, decision bottlenecks, and operational convergence.
- Use lessons learned to revise strategic doctrines and improve institutional adaptability in unpredictable, high-stakes environments.

Elevate International Law and Ethical Oversight in Security Policymaking

To align national actions with global norms, military decisions—especially involving **preemptive defense**—must be subject to rigorous legal and ethical scrutiny.

- Mandate pre-action reviews under **international humanitarian law (IHL)** frameworks such as the UN

Charter, Geneva Conventions, and the Law of Armed Conflict (LOAC).

- Institutionalize **multi-disciplinary ethical review boards** composed of legal scholars, ethicists, and international relations experts to assess proportionality, civilian impact, and long-term normative implications.
- Expand civil-military education on legal compliance, ethical reasoning, and accountability mechanisms.

Strengthen Multilateralism Through Transparent, Rule-Based Action

The legitimacy and sustainability of U.S. foreign interventions are greatly enhanced when embedded in multilateral frameworks that reflect shared legal and ethical standards.

- Prioritize **coalition-building** with NATO, regional partners, and UN institutions prior to operations in norm-sensitive zones.
- Ensure **strategic transparency** through clear public articulation of intervention goals, legal rationale, and humanitarian safeguards.
- Invest in institutions like the **IAEA** and UN Peacebuilding Commission to bolster collective enforcement of non-proliferation and regional stability mechanisms.

Codify a Comprehensive Post-Conflict Stabilization Doctrine

To avoid power vacuums and instability post-intervention, the U.S. must institutionalize a doctrine that embeds **post-conflict governance** into the national security architecture.

- Establish standing **civilian-military stabilization task forces** to coordinate reconstruction, public diplomacy, and conflict reconciliation alongside operational units.
- Integrate protocols for **rapid diplomatic re-engagement**, aid disbursement, transitional justice, and narrative control in post-strike settings.
- Partner with international organizations and NGOs to support legitimacy, local ownership, and peacebuilding.

Modernize Strategic Communication and Public Diplomacy Infrastructure

Normative leadership in the global arena requires not only military credibility but narrative coherence and effective information operations.

- Expand and technologically modernize the **Global Engagement Center (GEC)** to counter adversarial narratives and communicate the legal-ethical basis for U.S. actions.
- Build **regional media partnerships** and engage civil society actors to inoculate against misinformation, enhance trust, and promote shared values.
- Institutionalize **strategic communication units** within major agencies to align messaging across diplomatic, defense, and humanitarian operations.

Conclusion of Policy Vision

Together, these recommendations constitute a forward-facing public administration doctrine for conflict settings—one that moves beyond tactical success toward **strategic integration, legal legitimacy, ethical coherence, and multilateral alignment**. The ultimate aim is to ensure that U.S. security interventions are not only effective in the short term, but also sustainable and stabilizing in a complex, contested international order.

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