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## Iran's Grand Strategy: *A Political History*

Vali Nasr

From the *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Shia Revival*

**A gripping account that overturns simplistic portrayals of Iran as a theocratic pariah state, revealing how its strategic moves on the world stage are driven by two pervasive threats—external aggression and internal dissolution**

Iran presents one of the most significant foreign policy challenges for America and the West, yet very little is known about what the country's goals really are. Vali Nasr examines Iran's political history in new ways to explain its actions and ambitions on the world stage, showing how, behind the veneer of theocracy and Islamic ideology, today's Iran is pursuing a grand strategy aimed at securing the country internally and asserting its place in the region and the world.

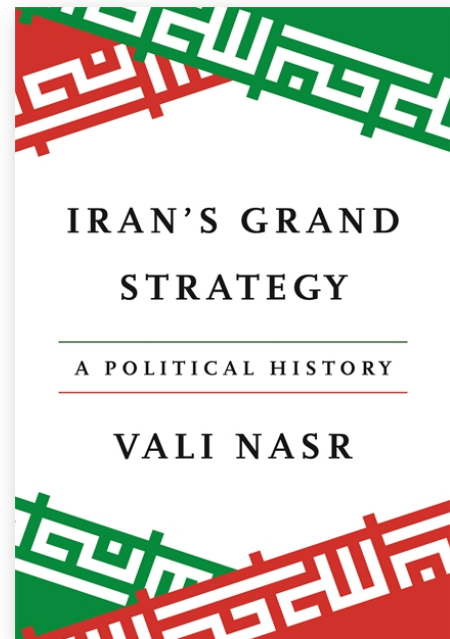
Drawing on memoirs, oral histories, and original in-depth interviews with Iranian decision makers, Nasr brings to light facts and events in Iran's political history that have been overlooked until now. He traces the roots of Iran's strategic outlook to its experiences over the past four decades of war with Iraq in the 1980s and the subsequent American containment of Iran, invasion of Iraq in 2003, and posture toward Iran thereafter. Nasr reveals how these experiences have shaped a geopolitical outlook driven by pervasive fear of America and its plans for the Middle East.

Challenging the notion that Iran's foreign policy simply reflects its revolutionary values or theocratic government, *Iran's Grand Strategy* provides invaluable new insights into what Iran wants and why, explaining the country's resistance to the United States, its nuclear ambitions, and its pursuit of influence and proxies across the Middle East.

**Vali Nasr** is the Majid Khadduri Professor of International Affairs and Middle East Studies at Johns Hopkins University's School of Advanced International Studies. His books include *The Dispensable Nation: American Foreign Policy in Retreat*, *The Shia Revival: How Conflicts within Islam Will Shape the Future*, and (with Ali Gheissari) *Democracy in Iran: History and the Quest for Liberty*. His writing has appeared in leading publications such as the *New York Times*, the *Wall Street Journal*, and *Foreign Affairs*.

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“A lot of discussion in the west of what drives Iran's foreign policy struggles to rise above clichés about Islamist fanatics and mad mullahs. Nasr's detailed study, more relevant than ever, draws on a lifetime of research and new interviews, providing a detailed and nuanced account of the mixture of domestic and international imperatives that really drive Iranian policy. The west's understanding of Iran is, he argues, ‘hopelessly inadequate and dangerously outdated.’”

—Gideon Rachman,  
**Financial Times**

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