

USING THE UK'S AND EUROPE'S BACKYARD

A hypothesis regarding the Islamic Republic, the IRGC and the exploitation of unrest in Europe and the United Kingdom

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Independent political analysis. Alleged connections remain hypotheses.

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ABSTRACT / METHOD / DECLARATION

A hypothesis that can be tested

Could the Islamic Republic and its security apparatus exploit European unrest to displace the costs of regional confrontation onto Western societies? This paper develops that hypothesis without presenting it as a proven explanation of the October 2026 disturbances. Recent British and allied statements provide a substantial public basis for concern about Iranian covert activity, including criminal proxies, intimidation, sabotage and an officially attributed incident near RAF Fairford. They do not establish Iranian authorship of the wider protests in Paris, Marseille or Milan. The paper separates indirect economic consequences, opportunistic propaganda, material assistance and operational direction; considers domestic grievances and other explanations; and identifies evidence that could strengthen or weaken each claim. Its political position is explicit: Britain and Europe should enforce the law against foreign coercion, protect peaceful assembly and threatened communities, and support an Iranian-led secular democratic transition. The author supports Crown Prince Reza Pahlavi, constitutional monarchy and a national coalition whose authority must ultimately rest on free constitutional choice and elections.

Method and evidence boundary

This is a qualitative, exploratory argument using a selected set of open sources checked on 20 October 2026. It is not a systematic review, an intelligence assessment or an empirical attribution study. I have no access to classified intelligence, authenticated instructions to protest organisers, or a verified financial trail connecting Tehran to the disturbances discussed here. Government assessments are attributed to their issuers; arrests, charges, sanctions and convictions are different evidential categories. No probability estimates are assigned. My political commitments are declared so that readers can scrutinise the argument with that knowledge.

Authorial position and affiliations

I write in a personal capacity as an Iranian constitutional monarchist. Professional affiliations identify the author and do not imply endorsement by his employers or any organisation.

Keywords: Iran; IRGC; foreign interference; European unrest; proxy networks; civil liberties; secular democracy; democratic transition.

Reading guide: Sections 1-2 frame the scenarios; 3-4 assess the record; 5-7 develop and test the hypothesis; 8-10 set out the civic and policy response. Numbered references distinguish official assessments, reporting and prior authorial analysis.

THE QUESTION / THE SCENARIOS

1. A fifth possibility within the fourth scenario

Europe must take seriously the possibility that an adversarial state under pressure may seek advantage inside European societies. Its streets, universities, communications networks and financial systems can become arenas of coercion. The phrase 'backyard' describes that strategic vulnerability. It does not imply that citizens exercising their rights are foreign property, or that their grievances require an overseas explanation.

In War for Peace, I argued that a durable settlement requires both resolve against coercive institutions and an Iranian political future grounded in consent. My earlier analysis of the Ommati and Dolati distinction examined competing ideological and state-preserving logics within the Islamic Republic. The present paper extends that work through the four scenarios in my current argument. These scenarios overlap; they are not an exhaustive forecast or a ranking of probabilities. ^{[15], [16]}

Scenario	Proposed development	Analytical limit
1. Wider war	A larger confrontation involving the US, Israel and potentially additional partners.	Participation and escalation cannot be assumed.
2. Domestic uprising	Renewed mass mobilisation in Iran, with a grave risk of repression.	Neither victory nor a casualty total is predictable.
3. Internal division	Conflict between bargaining, state-preserving and ideological priorities.	Labels are interpretive; motives need evidence.
4. External coercion	Terrorist plotting, sabotage or intimidation outside Iran.	Each incident needs specific attribution.

A further possibility sits within the fourth scenario: exploitation of unrest that already exists. A hostile apparatus need not create a mass movement to seek advantage from it. It might amplify polarising material or assist a small violent network. Whether this has happened in the present European disturbances is the question to investigate, rather than the conclusion from which to begin.

STRATEGIC CONTEXT / CAUSAL LIMITS

2. Pressure can create incentives in opposite directions

The regional confrontation is real. The House of Commons Library records that US and Israeli strikes began on 28 February 2026, followed by Iranian attacks and severe disruption around Hormuz. Its July briefing describes a June memorandum intended to enable negotiations; its August assessment records continuing fighting, blockades and pressure on Iran's economy. These dated accounts establish the background, rather than the exact military situation at every subsequent moment. ^{[1], [2]}

The latest reporting consulted also contains diplomatic signals. Reuters reported on 19 October that Iran's foreign minister called for diplomacy while blaming Washington for insecurity in the strait. That is evidence of his stated position, not proof of a settlement or of the sincerity of every participant. The choice facing Europe therefore includes the terms, verification and political purpose of diplomacy. ^[13]

Economic pressure might encourage accommodation, elite conflict, domestic repression or external risk-taking. It could also reduce the resources available for overseas operations. An academically credible hypothesis must allow for these competing effects. Describing an economy as strangled cannot establish that covert budgets are exhausted, or that every remaining disturbance is an operation financed from Tehran.

The proposed mechanism is strategic displacement: a leadership facing mounting costs could try to increase the political costs borne by its opponents. If European governments become absorbed by insecurity at home, their capacity or willingness to sustain external pressure might decline. This is a plausible incentive, not evidence that the leadership adopted that strategy or successfully implemented it.

There is also an important indirect pathway. War and disrupted shipping can worsen prices and household insecurity; citizens can then protest those conditions without foreign direction. A crisis associated with Iran can help cause economic hardship while an Iranian intelligence service plays no organisational role in the resulting demonstration. Confusing those two causal routes would make the central allegation almost impossible to test.

My criticism of policy is firm: European leaders must not assume that distance from a battlefield insulates their societies from coercion. They must also recognise that every decision to escalate pressure has consequences for civilians, allies and domestic resilience. Resolve requires an account of those consequences, alongside a credible political destination.

PUBLIC RECORD / ATTRIBUTED ASSESSMENTS

3. The threat record is substantial and specific

On 12 October, a joint statement published by the UK government endorsed Britain's attribution of Iranian involvement in the 27 September incident at RAF Fairford. It described an IRGC willingness to operate abroad through covert networks and proxies, alongside lethal plotting, arson, sabotage and cyber activity. This is a consequential collective governmental assessment. It is not a published account of all underlying intelligence or a criminal judgment. ^[3]

MI5's 13 October threat update provides further detail. Its Director General described Iran's use of criminal proxies against oppositionists, media organisations and Israeli sites, an expansion towards military targets, and more than fifty UK arrests arising from Iran-linked operations over the preceding twelve months. He also attributed a front claiming spring attacks against Jewish communities to IRGC members. These statements concern a defined threat portfolio. Arrests are not convictions, and the speech does not attribute the general European protest wave to Iran. ^[4]

There is an earlier relevant precedent. In March 2025, the US Treasury sanctioned a Swedish criminal network and its leader, alleging that it had attacked the Israeli embassy in Stockholm on Iran's behalf and cooperated with Iran's Ministry of Intelligence and Security. The point is the alleged use of a criminal intermediary; it cannot identify the organisers of an unrelated riot. The ministry, the IRGC and the IRGC-Quds Force must not be treated as interchangeable agencies. ^[5]

The Quds Force is the IRGC's external operations arm. Treasury reporting also describes financial facilitators and overseas front companies supporting the IRGC-Quds Force and other Iranian military institutions. This establishes a public record of official allegations concerning financial capability. It supplies no verified payment link to the October disturbances considered here. ^[10]

Iran has denied involvement in the Fairford incident, according to Reuters' 12 October report. Both that denial and the British assessment belong in the record. The proper response is continued investigation and scrutiny of evidence, with the presumption of innocence preserved for individual suspects. ^[14]

The disciplined conclusion is already serious: Britain and its allies publicly identify an Iranian covert threat requiring action. Moving from that conclusion to a claim that Tehran organised mass European unrest requires additional evidence.

THE DISTURBANCES / THE EVIDENCE GAP

4. Paris, Marseille, Milan and the British question

Reuters' 18 October account describes violence and looting in Paris and Marseille after protests concerning living costs and public services. It reports the French government's attribution of violence to ultra-left groups and criminals. That is not an attribution to the Islamic Republic. The existence of violent participants and serious damage cannot, on its own, determine a foreign sponsor. ^[7]

Le Monde's 20 October reporting places clashes in Milan and other Italian cities within a wider setting of energy costs, school conditions and political grievances. These accounts justify concern about public order. They also establish substantial domestic explanations that any external-interference hypothesis must address. Neither article, as consulted, establishes Iranian direction of these protests. ^[8]

The British position should be described with equal care. On 9 October, the Metropolitan Police announced conditions for a London Palestine Coalition march and a counter-protest. The force stated that most participants in the coalition's large demonstrations had attended peacefully and lawfully, while a small minority had been arrested for serious offending. This police account does not support treating the entire mobilisation as a violent or foreign-controlled enterprise. ^[9]

The sources reviewed do not establish that a single Iran-directed uprising has spread from continental Europe into the United Kingdom. The appropriate description is a set of separate events, threats and possible connections requiring investigation. The shared use of a slogan, platform or cause cannot merge them into one operation.

Support for Palestinian rights, opposition to Israeli policy, student protest and labour organising are political positions or activities. Islamism is an ideological category; Islam is a religion. None of these, nor immigrant background, establishes participation in a security operation. Where individuals commit violence, their conduct can be investigated without converting a broad identity into a finding of guilt.

I condemn looting, arson, attacks on civilians and attacks on emergency services without qualification. Their victims deserve protection, restitution and justice. That demand is stronger when responsibility is established accurately. A spectacular image can document destruction while revealing little about the money, instructions or decisions behind it.

THE HYPOTHESIS / DISTINCT MECHANISMS

5. Exploitation is a different claim from orchestration

My central hypothesis is that elements of the Islamic Republic's security apparatus may seek to exploit existing European unrest to increase domestic pressure on governments confronting Tehran. Possible mechanisms include selective information amplification, covert material assistance or the direction of specific criminal acts. Each mechanism is a separate proposition. Evidence for one would not automatically establish the others.

The weakest claim is opportunistic political exploitation: officials or aligned media portray disorder as Western failure. Such messaging may occur after an event and demonstrate no influence over its origin. A stronger claim is coordinated amplification: attributed networks deliberately increase the visibility or inflammatory framing of selected material. Establishing its reach would still leave open whether it changed behaviour offline.

Material assistance is stronger again. It would require a verified connection between a state-linked source, an intermediary, a recipient and an identifiable activity. A transfer might support lawful advocacy, an unrelated commercial transaction or criminal conduct; its purpose must be established. Shared rhetoric cannot replace that inquiry.

Operational direction is the most demanding allegation. It would require credible evidence connecting a state-linked actor to instructions, planning or control of a specific offence. Proof concerning one recruited cell would not demonstrate command of a crowd or of a national protest movement.

A fifth possibility is political pressure without covert involvement: unrest arising from the economic consequences of conflict may benefit Tehran's negotiating position. Benefit establishes neither intent nor responsibility. To infer authorship because a state gains advantage would be to mistake an outcome for an instruction.

Timing matters as a clue. It cannot carry the argument alone. Researchers must compare the proposed link with ordinary mobilisation patterns, previous domestic crises and the behaviour of unrelated actors. The relevant question is whether evidence makes a particular mechanism more credible than its alternatives, rather than whether events can be arranged into a compelling narrative.

I therefore advance a researchable suspicion about selective exploitation. I do not claim that an Iranian command centre has been demonstrated behind the October protest wave.

RESEARCH DESIGN / FALSIFIABILITY

6. What would strengthen or weaken the claim?

The unit of analysis should be a specific incident, transaction, communication network or documented decision. City-level footage and continental totals are too coarse to attribute responsibility. A defensible investigation would build a dated event record, authenticate original material and compare the proposed state connection with alternative explanations.

Claim	Evidence that would strengthen it	Evidence that would weaken it
Coordinated amplification	Authenticated account links and coordinated dissemination before the relevant event.	Independent diffusion from domestic organisers; amplification only after the event.
Material assistance	Verified transfers, linked recipients and evidence of the intended use.	Documented domestic funding or a transaction unrelated to the alleged conduct.
Operational direction	Authenticated instructions corroborated by communications and incident evidence.	A substantiated independent planning history or a disproved proposed link.
Effect on participation	Evidence linking exposure or assistance to a measurable change in behaviour.	Comparable mobilisation without the suspected intervention.
Policy coercion	Evidence of an intended pressure campaign and a demonstrated policy effect.	Policy decisions explained by independent factors; no supported connection.

This is a proposed evaluation framework, not a report that these evidential conditions have been met. Investigators would also need to distinguish independent corroboration from several publications repeating one official statement. Repetition does not create additional witnesses.

Failure to find public evidence would not conclusively establish that no covert activity occurred. It would, however, leave the attribution unsubstantiated. Secrecy cannot become a universal explanation that protects a hypothesis from contrary evidence. If reliable findings exclude the proposed connection, the claim must be withdrawn or narrowed.

ALTERNATIVE EXPLANATIONS / ANALYTICAL DISCIPLINE

7. Pattern recognition must survive contradiction

As a surgeon, I recognise the value of identifying patterns early. I also recognise the danger of becoming attached to the first explanation that appears to fit. A clinical analogy can explain my method of questioning; it does not confer intelligence expertise or substitute for evidence about political actors.

At least four alternatives require serious consideration. First, genuine domestic hardship can generate mass protest. Second, opportunistic criminals can exploit a gathering without sharing its political purpose. Third, domestic ideological networks can coordinate across borders through shared convictions without receiving foreign instructions. Fourth, other hostile actors, or commercial systems that reward sensational material, could contribute to information disorder. No alternative should be assumed true merely because it weakens my preferred hypothesis.

The causes may also coexist. A largely autonomous movement might contain a separately recruited individual or a small assisted network. Conversely, an external propaganda campaign may exaggerate its own influence over disorder it did not cause. The useful inquiry concerns the marginal contribution of an identified intervention, rather than an all-or-nothing contest over who owns a protest.

This matters politically because false attribution has costs. It can misdirect investigative resources, discredit later substantiated warnings and deepen the social divisions a hostile actor would welcome. Dismissing every foreign-interference concern as fantasy also has costs: the official threat record is too substantial for complacency. Analytical discipline serves security in both directions.

A persuasive account must explain what its rivals explain poorly. If domestic grievances, established organisers and ordinary criminal opportunity account for an incident, an additional state-sponsorship claim needs additional explanatory evidence. If verified payments or instructions emerge, those findings should change the assessment.

For this reason, the paper assigns no percentage probability to Iranian involvement in the wider disturbances. The reviewed material cannot sustain one. My confidence is stronger in the need for focused investigation and protection than in any present attribution of the protest wave itself.

IDEOLOGY / RECONCILIATION / CIVIL LIBERTIES

8. Confront political inconsistency without collective accusation

My earlier Ommati-Dolati framework distinguished an ideological, transnational mission from a logic concerned with preserving state administration and limiting national costs. These are analytical tendencies, which may coexist within institutions or individuals. They are not verified membership lists. Negotiation does not certify a democrat, and religious language does not by itself prove an intention to produce mass civilian casualties. ^[16]

I remain concerned that some activists who speak in the language of liberation minimise clerical authoritarianism when it opposes a Western government. Such inconsistency deserves direct political criticism. Anyone defending social justice should be able to condemn repression in Iran, attacks on Jewish communities, anti-Muslim hatred and the killing of Palestinian civilians by the same standard. Moral seriousness cannot depend on the identity of the perpetrator.

A tactical convergence between radical-left and Islamist arguments is a legitimate subject of political study where it is evidenced. It may reflect shared opposition to a policy rather than a common programme. It does not establish covert coordination, financial dependence or control by Tehran. Democratic leftists, Muslims and immigrants cannot be collapsed into one hostile constituency.

European law also requires precision. Article 11 protects peaceful assembly, subject to lawful and necessary restrictions. The European Court of Human Rights Registry's guide explains that isolated violence by others does not automatically strip peaceful participants of protection. Enforcement must consider individual conduct and proportionality. This legal framework permits protection against disorder while preserving democratic participation. ^[11]

My call is for a government strong enough to protect a synagogue, an Iranian dissident, a Muslim family and a lawful protester with the same determination. A state that substitutes identity for evidence weakens equal citizenship. A state that leaves violent coercion unanswered abandons it.

National reconciliation is relevant in Europe as well as Iran: democracies need citizens who can disagree without becoming enemies. The response to a hostile state's covert activity must strengthen public trust and the authority of law. It must not supply that state with the social fracture it seeks.

POLICY / RESOLVE WITH ACCOUNTABILITY

9. Britain and Europe must make coercion fail

The policy response need not wait for proof of the broadest hypothesis. The officially identified threat already justifies determined protective and investigative work. The objective should be concrete: deny hostile networks the ability to intimidate communities, finance criminal activity or purchase political concessions through fear.

Investigate specific connections. Governments should combine financial, criminal and digital evidence through lawful channels and improve cross-border cooperation. Public attribution should explain its evidential status and preserve fair trials. Parliamentary scrutiny should examine both failures to detect foreign activity and failures to justify allegations.

Enforce the measures already adopted. The EU Council formally added the IRGC to its terrorist list on 19 February 2026, with asset-freezing and funding restrictions. That decision must be assessed through implementation, not repeatedly proposed as though it had never occurred. Authorities should use the distinct powers available in their jurisdictions against demonstrated financing and criminal facilitation, while preserving lawful humanitarian activity. [6]

Protect those already threatened. Jewish communities, Iranian journalists and dissidents, and other identified targets need accessible reporting routes, timely protection and sustained support. Police also need the resources to prevent arson and protect emergency services. Threatened people should not have to wait for a geopolitical consensus before receiving help.

Address domestic grievances. School conditions, household insecurity and housing pressures deserve political responses on their merits. Reducing real grievances strengthens resilience; it is not a concession to a foreign sponsor. Effective policing and responsive government must work together.

Refuse concessions extracted through unlawful coercion. Diplomatic contact can serve prisoner releases, humanitarian access, verification and de-escalation. Its success should be measured through observable compliance and protection of people, rather than the ceremony of another signature. Europe should state that covert violence will bring investigation, disruption and lawful consequences, while maintaining channels capable of preventing avoidable deaths.

Support Iranian democratic agency. Assistance should strengthen access to information, independent civil society, humanitarian relief and preparations for accountable institutions. It should not make ordinary Iranians collateral instruments of pressure. Any military decision requires its own lawful basis, necessity assessment and civilian safeguards; this paper supplies no such authorisation.

A policy of resolve has to be sustained when headlines move on. Its credibility lies in enforcing boundaries, publishing defensible findings and keeping a future free Iran within view.

THE IRANIAN ALTERNATIVE / THE POLITICAL DEMAND

10. A free Iran is a strategic opportunity

I support Crown Prince Reza Pahlavi and an Iranian-led transition to a modern secular democracy. My preferred constitutional outcome is a parliamentary constitutional monarchy. Its legitimacy must be secured through the Iranian people's free choice, alongside the right of republicans and other democrats to campaign for their own proposals.

Four foundations guide that position: Iran's territorial integrity; secular democratic government; the rule of law; and equal citizenship before the law. Free elections and a credible constitutional process must give those principles practical authority. Civic nationalism should build a state belonging equally to its citizens, with modern institutions, scientific competence and the capacity to reconstruct the economy.

At the Council on Foreign Relations in October 2025, Crown Prince Reza Pahlavi described his role as supporting transition and enabling Iranians to choose through the ballot box and a referendum. That statement supports democratic self-determination as a declared objective. It is not evidence of the size of his present support or a guarantee of any future political outcome. ^[12]

The diaspora mobilisation I invoke in Toronto, Munich, London, Paris and other cities expresses political energy and a demand to be heard. This paper offers no independently audited turnout series. Nor can demonstrations establish what every resident of Iran believes. The assertion that an entire population of approximately 93 million supports one constitutional outcome cannot be sustained from the evidence reviewed here; a population total, even if verified, would not measure political consent.

For me, 'Javid Shah' expresses an affirmative constitutional monarchist commitment. I want that commitment to earn trust through equal citizenship, restraint and an honest ballot. A national coalition must have room for people who share the democratic foundations while rejecting monarchy. National feeling becomes a force for reconstruction when institutions can contain disagreement without repression.

Britain and Europe should engage credible democratic Iranian voices, including Crown Prince Reza Pahlavi, and judge every proposal by its safeguards, inclusiveness and practical preparation. An accountable Iran could offer a relationship founded on open commerce, regional peace and cooperation. Those are political possibilities requiring work, not promised dividends of regime collapse.

My demand is uncompromising: stop treating the Iranian people as a variable to be managed in bargains with their rulers. Confront substantiated covert threats, defend the rights of people on European soil and support Iranians' right to determine their future. The right side of history must be made concrete through evidence, law and democratic courage.

The present hypothesis remains unproven. The documented threat warrants resolve. A free Iran deserves a serious strategy.

SOURCES / EVIDENCE NOTES

References

All sources were consulted on 20 October 2026. Linked titles open the source. Government statements and sanctions notices establish attributed official assessments; prior essays establish authorial continuity.

1. House of Commons Library / Philip Loft

US-Iran ceasefire and nuclear talks in 2026

2 July 2026. Dated parliamentary research briefing on the conflict and June memorandum.

2. House of Commons Library / Philip Loft

Iran in 2026: Six months after the US/Israeli strikes

27 August 2026. Used for the economic, blockade and continuing-conflict context at that date.

3. Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office / participating governments

Joint Statement on Iran, 12 October

12 October 2026. Official collective attribution and policy position; underlying intelligence is not fully public.

4. MI5 / Director General Sir Ken McCallum

MI5 Director General Delivers Annual Threat Update

13 October 2026. Iran discussion: criminal proxies, arrests, front activity and harder targets. An attributed security assessment.

5. US Department of the Treasury

Treasury Sanctions Swedish Gang and Leader Serving Iranian Regime

12 March 2025. Official sanctions announcement and allegations about the Foxtrot Network; not evidence about the October 2026 protests.

6. Council of the European Union

EU terrorist list: Council designates the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps as a terrorist organisation

19 February 2026. Formal listing after January political agreement; asset-freezing and funding restrictions.

7. Reuters

Macron urges calm as France counts cost of worst unrest in years

18 October 2026. Contemporaneous reporting of French unrest and the French government's account; no Iranian attribution established here.

8. Le Monde

Italy, Spain, Belgium, Portugal: Social unrest spreads across Europe amid soaring energy prices and a housing crisis

20 October 2026. Used for Italian disturbances and domestic grievance context, without treating them as one foreign operation.

SOURCES / EVIDENCE NOTES

References / continued

9. Metropolitan Police

Met announces conditions for Palestine Coalition protest

9 October 2026. Police planning and statement that the majority attend peacefully and lawfully; not proof of foreign sponsorship.

10. US Department of the Treasury

Treasury Targets Financial Network Supporting Iran's Military; Treasury Sanctions the IRGC Cooperative Foundation and Senior Iranian Officials Connected to Protest Suppression (companion announcement)

16 September 2025 financial-network announcement; 23 January 2023 foundation announcement. Official accounts of financial facilitators and the IRGC-Quds Force's external role; no traced protest payment is supplied.

11. European Court of Human Rights, Registry

Guide on Article 11 of the European Convention on Human Rights: Freedom of assembly and association

Updated 28 February 2026. Especially paragraphs 25-34 and 116-117. Registry guide to case law; it does not bind the Court.

12. Council on Foreign Relations

A Conversation With Reza Pahlavi

3 October 2025. Primary transcript of Crown Prince Reza Pahlavi's remarks on transition, referendum and democratic choice; not a poll.

13. Reuters

Iran's Araqchi blames US for Strait of Hormuz tensions, calls for diplomacy

19 October 2026. Reporting of the Iranian foreign minister's stated position.

14. Reuters

UK PM Burnham says Iran's IRGC likely behind RAF Fairford incident

12 October 2026. Used for the disputed attribution and Iran's denial, preserving distinctions between assessments and criminal findings.

15. Mr Peyman Bakhshayesh

War for Peace: Ukraine, Iran and the responsibility of the West

20 October 2026. Earlier authorial argument consulted for continuity; not independent corroboration of new allegations.

16. Mr Peyman Bakhshayesh

The Conflict Between Ummati and Dowlati

June 2026 manuscript; website record published 6 October 2026. Earlier analytical distinction between ideological and state-preserving logics. Current paper uses the author's Ommati and Dolati transliteration.