



## TALKING POINTS

Asan Plenum 2013: “New World Disorder”  
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**Panel:** Syria and the International Community (Grand Ballroom III)

**Date/Time:** Tuesday, April 30, 2013 / 15:30-16:45

**Talking Points for:** Kayhan Barzegar, Director, Institute for Middle East Strategic Studies

### Iran and the Syrian Crisis

Iran’s policy in dealing with the Syrian crisis involves a combination of preserving geopolitical and ideological interests in three aspects. The first point is to retain a strategic ally. Apart from the long history of close political-security relations, Syria plays a strategic role in connecting Iran to the Mediterranean region and the Levant for economic exchanges, as well as transferring energy products via Iraq and Syria, to the Mediterranean and Europe—the “Islamic Pipeline.” Second, there is Iran’s concern about the likelihood of undermining the “resistance movement,” including Hezbollah and Hamas. From this perspective, any regime change in Syria would rapidly affect the resistance movements, enhancing the role and influence of Iran’s main regional rivals: Saudi Arabia and Israel. Support for the resistance movement has always been a strategic principle in Iran’s foreign policy, throughout the tenure of various governments in Tehran. Now, Iran needs to find out how to maintain a balance between the prospective political transformation in Syria and the continuation of the resistance movement. And the third point is to prevent the promotion and spread of Western trends. Basically, Iran’s approach in Syria advocates regional approaches to solving regional crises in the context of political solutions, as favored to a great extent by Russia and China.. From this perspective, the problem is not future changes in Syria: it is the limits and lines within which Western interference in regional crises can be allowed to take place.

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\* The views expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the views of the Asan Institute for Policy Studies.