



# Squandered Opportunity: Neoclassical Realism and Iranian Foreign Policy

By Thomas Juneau

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In *Squandered Opportunity*, Thomas Juneau develops a variant of neoclassical realism, a theory of foreign policy mistakes, to explore the causes and consequences of Iran's sub-optimal performance. He argues that while rising power drove Iranian assertiveness—as most variants of realism would predict—the peculiar nature of Iran's power and the intervention of specific domestic factors caused Iran's foreign policy to deviate, sometimes significantly, from what would be considered the potential optimal outcomes.

Juneau explains that this sub-optimal foreign policy led to important and negative consequences for the country. Despite some gains, Iran failed to maximize its power, its security and its influence in three crucial areas: the Arab-Israeli conflict; Iraq; and the nuclear program. Juneau also predicts that, as the window of opportunity steadily closes for Iran, its power, security, and influence will likely continue to decline in coming years.

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## Squandered Opportunity: Neoclassical Realism and Iranian Foreign Policy By Thomas Juneau Bibliography

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#### Review

"Sophisticated and theoretically-informed analysis of Iranian foreign policy is rare. Thomas Juneau remedies this, developing an explanation of Iran's behavior in the international environment that takes account of power politics, those features unique to Iran's domestic politics, and the interaction of the two." (Brian Rathbun, School of International Relations)

"*Squandered Opportunity* is a valuable work that offers interesting theoretical advancement and important insights into Iranian foreign policy . . . [T]his work is an important contribution to the foreign policy decision-making literature and should be widely read." (W.A. Rivera *Middle East Journal*)

"[T]he author's 'neo-classicalism' theory adequately addresses nuances by advancing four 'intervening' variables - ideas, individuals, identity, and institutions. Juneau analyzes three case studies of Iranian foreign policies to test his argument: Iran's policies in Iraq, the Arab-Israeli conflict, and Iran's nuclear program . . . In short, Iran provides little threat to the US, Europe, or even to Middle Eastern countries such as Israel and Saudi Arabia. This is an important book . . . Highly recommended." (R. W. Olson)

#### About the Author

Thomas Juneau is an Assistant Professor in the Graduate School of Public and International Affairs at the University of Ottawa.

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