

**Forum:** Security Council (SC)

**Issue:** Establishing security measures in the strait of Hormuz

**Student Officer:** Filippos Moysidis

**Position:** Deputy President

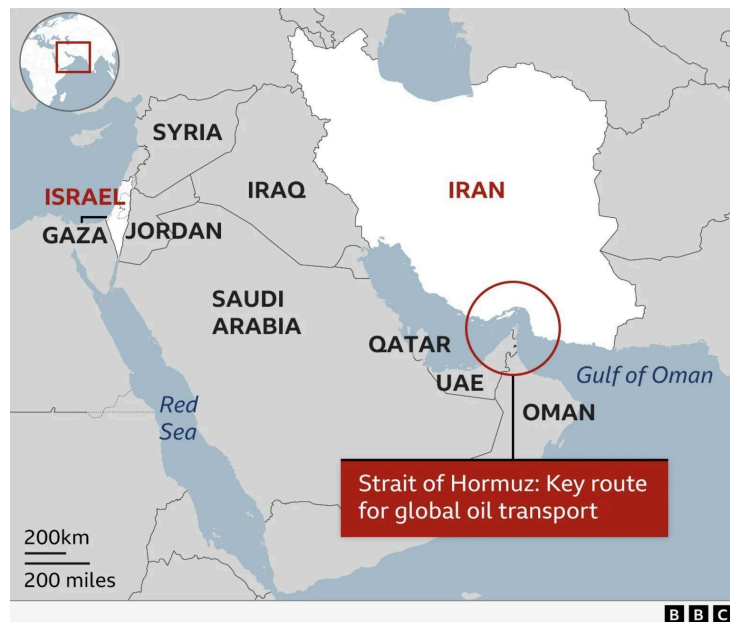
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## INTRODUCTION

With oil being one of the main foundations of the global economy up until now, numerous political disputes have been sparked by this so-called black gold that is mined from the depths of the earth. With some nations becoming overly powerful and dominating as a result of their huge possession of oil, follows the issue in the strait of Hormuz. The strait of Hormuz makes up one of the most significant, if not the most significant global chokepoints for the global oil trades, being a very narrow waterway located between the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman, in the Middle East with only 33 kilometers width at its narrowest.

Due to the Strait's strategic location, it not only makes up a crucial role for the transportation of oil, but also a geopolitical hotspot for conflict and disputes, where rivalries and military presence frequently collide. In past years an unpredictable increase in global powers deployment of naval fleets in the Strait has been noted, making even small misunderstandings a factor for triggering significant global emergencies.

According to reports from the BBC and Reuters in 2018, large tankers traversed those dangerous waters to deliver this commodity to hundreds of states, accounting for almost 25% of global oil exports.<sup>1</sup> Thus the world economy and peace would be immediately threatened by a geopolitical crisis in the region. Political tensions and occasional conflicts between Iran, the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, France, Saudi Arabia, and other nations provoke anxiety and uncertainty in the area.



<sup>1</sup> June. "Oil Market Report - June 2025 – Analysis - IEA." *IEA*, 17 June 2025, [www.iea.org/reports/oil-market-report-june-2025](http://www.iea.org/reports/oil-market-report-june-2025)

Due to the assertive policies of the Trump administration during 2016-2020 and in the present towards Iran, a longstanding enemy of the United States, unsteadiness has been rising in the region in the past decade. The withdrawal of the United States from the Nuclear Deal Framework in 2018, with Iran and Europe's forced support to their transatlantic ally's unpredictable leader has been the basis of Iran's argumentation and justification of its actions in the Strait of Hormuz, which deteriorates even further the diplomatic relations of all countries involved.

The stances of numerous other nations, including some of the European Union, combined with the ongoing political struggle between the world's most powerful military nation and its greatest adversary in the Middle East, has resulted in the dire circumstances in the Strait of Hormuz today, with its origins going back to the 20th century.

## DEFINITION OF KEY-TERMS

### **Chokepoint**

"a strategic narrow route providing passage through or to another region"<sup>2</sup>

### **Geopolitical Hotspot**

"Geopolitical hotspots are areas where political tensions and conflicts arise due to territorial disputes, resource competition, and historical grievances. Understanding these hotspots helps us grasp the complexities of global politics and their impact on regional stability and international relations."

### **Global Oil Trade**

"Trading in oil provides exposure to one of the world's most actively traded commodities, with extensive uses in energy and industrial processes. However, this exposure also reflects economic performance and geopolitical stress."<sup>3</sup>

### **LNG**

Liquefied natural gas (LNG) is natural gas that has been reduced to a liquid state, through a process of cooling

### **Naval Fleets**

"a group of ships, or all of the ships in a country's navy"<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> "Merriam-Webster Dictionary." *Merriam-Webster.com*, 2022, [www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/choke%20point](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/choke%20point).

<sup>3</sup> "What Is Oil Trading and How Do You Trade It? | Pepperstone." *Pepperstone.com*, 2024, [pepperstone.com/en-eu/learn-to-trade/trading-guides/what-is-oil-trading/](https://pepperstone.com/en-eu/learn-to-trade/trading-guides/what-is-oil-trading/).

<sup>4</sup> Cambridge Dictionary. "Fleet." @*CambridgeWords*, 13 Apr. 2022, [dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/fleet](https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/fleet).

## ***Selective Accountability***

Holding some people accountable for their actions, while ignoring or excusing others that do the same thing.

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

### ***Geographic Importance and History***

The Strait of Hormuz is the only sea passage from the Persian Gulf to the open ocean and therefore making it one of the world's most strategically important chokepoints. The Strait's importance is very clear, since as of 2023, 20% of the world's natural gas, amounting to a total of roughly 21 million barrels of oil per day, and 25% of seaborne oil trade passes through the strait.<sup>5</sup>

Geographically, the Strait is deep and relatively free of maritime hazards, with depths reaching over 650 feet, which allows it to accommodate the world's largest oil tankers. The U.S. Department of Energy has also referred to it as the world's most important strategic chokepoint for oil transportation, due to its critical role, especially when it comes to linking major energy producers with global markets, because of countries such as China, Japan and South Korea heavily relying on energy imports. This is the reason for the increased vulnerability in the region, which also brought more international involvement, like the U.S. that has been maintaining a strong naval presence in the gulf for years, and still continuing to do so with the U.S. Fifth Fleet in Bahrain. Not only the United States, but the EU and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) have also been contributing to efforts to ensure freedom of navigation in the Strait.

Looking back, the strategic relevance of the Strait is definitely not new, since it was also speculated to be mentioned in the Periplus of the Erythraean Sea, a maritime guide of the 1st century. More recently, during the Iran-Iraq war, in what is now known as the tanker war, it became a flashpoint in the 1980s. Iran and Iraq targeted each other's oil tankers and merchant ships, which led to tensions escalating and drawing in foreign naval forces, notably the U.S. Navy. However this period is only the beginning of the U.S.'s deep involvement in the issue, as in the 1990s and 2000s, along with their rising tensions with Iraq, especially due to Iran's nuclear program, they have tried to increase their presence in the Strait.

For years now, Iran has thought of the Strait as a very important factor to its national interest. Former Prime Minister Amir Abbas Hoveyda once called it "our jugular vein"<sup>6</sup>, while Iranian officials also have repeatedly warned that if Iran cannot export oil through the Strait, then no one else in the region will be able to do so. So following those statements it can be

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<sup>5</sup> "International - U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA)." *Www.eia.gov*, [www.eia.gov/international/overview/country/IRN](http://www.eia.gov/international/overview/country/IRN).

<sup>6</sup> Haynes, Suyin. "The Strait of Hormuz Is at the Center of Iran Tensions Again. Here's How the Narrow Waterway Gained Wide Importance." *Time*, 23 July 2019, [time.com/5632388/strait-of-hormuz-iran-tanker/](https://time.com/5632388/strait-of-hormuz-iran-tanker/).

interpreted that even though Iran is heavily dependent on the Strait for its own exports, it also sees the ability to threaten other countries with its closure as a form of deterrence. Despite the efforts of other countries and organisations trying to ensure freedom of navigation within the strait, Iran has repeatedly conducted drills, intercepted tankers, and engaged in confrontations in the Strait, especially the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps Navy.

## ***Recent Developments, events and incidents***

### Recent Incidents and Threats

In June 2025, the U.S. intelligence detected that Iran had made preparations to mine the Strait of Hormuz, really showing Tehran's readiness to escalate if its oil exports are threatened. Just shortly later it was confirmed, by an Iranian lawmaker, that military measures concerning the Strait of Hormuz have been completed, but no decision has yet been made regarding its closure and that the matter is still under review.<sup>7</sup> At the same time electronic interference with commercial ship navigation systems was reported in the Strait, prompting some to broadcast unusual identifiers and reroute as tensions rose between Israel and Iran.

The Iranian military loaded naval mines onto vessels in the Persian Gulf, which was seen by the U.S. as a sign that Iran might seriously be considering blocking the Strait. Like mentioned many times this would lead to grave economic consequences, with spiked world energy prices, due to the Straits amount of oil passing. It is important to mention that Iranian MP Esmail Kosari stated "military measures concerning the Strait of Hormuz have been completed," but emphasized that "no decision has yet been made" about closing it.

Moving on the UK Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO) issued warnings about riding electronic interference, which was seen in reported commercial vessels, anomalous signals affecting GPS systems, leading to some ships having to reroute. Meanwhile, Iranian lawmakers and state-linked media began threatening to seize foreign tankers and discussed potential missile strikes on U.S. military infrastructure in the Gulf.

### Security Responses and Naval Measures

With the U.S. finding out, they had to take immediate action, in order to counter these risks, so they contacted the U.S. Fifth Fleet, a major naval force of the U.S., which is based in Bahrain, to increase its naval posture, deploying mine-countermeasure and littoral combat

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<sup>7</sup> Slattery, Gram, and Phil Stewart. "Exclusive: Iran Made Preparations to Mine the Strait of Hormuz, US Sources Say." *Reuters*, 1 July 2025, [www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/iran-made-preparations-mine-strait-hormuz-us-sources-say-2025-07-01/](https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/iran-made-preparations-mine-strait-hormuz-us-sources-say-2025-07-01/).

ships to ensure freedom of navigation in the Gulf. Likewise the EU also had to take action, by protecting maritime flows through the strait, with the European Maritime awareness in the Strait of Hormuz, which is under French leadership. They achieved this by coordinating with nine European countries and offering ships guidance and accompaniment for a safer passage.

U.S. Intelligence detected that Iran loaded naval mines onto vessels in the Persian gulf, reacting to Israel's strikes on Iranian infrastructure, which raised alarms in the U.S. that Iran might be preparing to close the strait completely. Consequently, mine-countermeasures, littoral combat ships and heightened aerial surveillance was deployed by the U.S. Fifth Fleet, looking to deter Iranian aggression and pushing their efforts to achieve freedom of navigation in the Gulf.

Moving away from the U.S., the European Maritime Awareness in the Strait of Hormuz (EMASoH) is a French-led maritime monitoring mission, which was launched in January 2020 with contributions from 9 European countries, that served in the Strait by conducting surveillance, merchant-vessel accompaniment, and navigational guidance to maintain safe passage through it. Taking into consideration Iran's actions, in response to rising tensions in the Gulf, France ordered increased patrols as part of the EMASoH mission.

On the other side, Gulf Arab states have welcomed U.S. and European military efforts to safeguard shipping lanes in the Gulf. Some examples include Saudi Arabia and Bahrain, emphasising on the importance of freedom of navigation, while describing the internal presence of not only the U.S. and the EU but also other states as essential to regional stability. Other Gulf States, expressed a positive reaction to the actions by the U.S. and the EU, voicing their support for international maritime efforts, with the Gulf Cooperation Council welcoming initiatives that protect oil trade routes, like the Strait of Hormuz and reduce the threat of escalation in the region.

## ***Impact of closing the Strait***

### **Economic Impact**

A closure of the Strait of Hormuz would result in a lot of very catastrophic outcomes, with one of the main ones being the disruption of the flow of billions of dollars worth of oil shipments daily, threatening global energy security and economic stability. As mentioned before, the Strait handles around 20 million barrels of oil per day and over 20% of the world's daily oil consumption<sup>8</sup>, and also has a big share in Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) trading, making financial analysts warn that the closure could trigger a rapid increase in oil prices with estimates stating that barrels could end up costing even 150\$, a 30% increase, and with short term disruption costing up to another 31\$, making up a total of a rough 60% increase<sup>9</sup>, sharply raising costs for consumers and businesses worldwide.

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<sup>8</sup> "Amid Regional Conflict, the Strait of Hormuz Remains Critical Oil Chokepoint - U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA)." *Eia.gov*, 2024, [www.eia.gov/todayinenergy/detail.php?id=65504](http://www.eia.gov/todayinenergy/detail.php?id=65504).

<sup>9</sup> Moneycontrol World Desk. "Iran Plans to Shut Strait of Hormuz: How It May Shake Global Oil and Why India Is at Risk Too." *Moneycontrol*, 22 June 2025, [www.moneycontrol.com/world/iran-plans-to-shut-strait-of-hormuz-how-it-may-shake-global-oil-and-why-india-is-at-risk-too-article-13160833.html](http://www.moneycontrol.com/world/iran-plans-to-shut-strait-of-hormuz-how-it-may-shake-global-oil-and-why-india-is-at-risk-too-article-13160833.html). Accessed 1 Aug. 2025.

Other than that the closure of the strait would not only disrupt energy flows, but global supply chains across multiple industries, with Oil, gas, chemicals, manufactured goods, and raw materials all facing price shocks and delivery delays, especially in Europe and Asia. Industries that depend on Gulf shipping lanes, such as plastics, fertilisers, and metals would be impacted the most.

The closure of the Strait of Hormuz, if it lasted more than a few weeks, could trigger a global economic shock, with predictions from a 1-2 percent hit to global GDP<sup>10</sup>, according to Oxford Economics. Container shipping costs would rise sharply, and insurers would impose higher war-risk premiums, increasing the price of all goods that rely on safe maritime routes, while others might be forced to switch to other routes, doubling delivery time and fuel usage.

Even non-oil-dependent economies would feel the effects. Due to ripple effects, global production lines would be disrupted, raising transportation costs, and pushing inflation upward, especially in food and manufacturing sectors. Trade in other key commodities, like grain, steel, and machinery would be impacted as well. Finally, especially in currencies of importing nations, financial markets would react with volatility, making central banks face renewed pressure to raise interest rates to offset price surges.

### Regional and Market Impacts

Asian countries, which are heavily dependent on Gulf shipments, would suffer first, since over 80% of crude oil<sup>11</sup>, condensate, and LNG from the Strait is destined for markets in China, India, Japan, and South Korea. Other than that the EU has also cautioned that the closure would result in an extremely dangerous outcome, and highlighted the fact that it would be of benefit to no one. Additionally, prices in right rates and insurance premiums would reach extreme prices and this would only make things worse, especially since shipping companies are already rerouting tankers in response to elevated risk.

In detail, Asia, which consumes most Middle Eastern oil, would be most vulnerable, since as mentioned before, over 80% of crude oil, condensates, and LNG that moved through the Strait of Hormuz headed to Asia, including China, India, Japan, and South Korea. The sudden change in prices would lead to those countries facing immediate logistical uncertainty, and increased re-route costs, while also posing a direct threat to their energy security amidst already tight supply conditions.

Following the market decline in Asia, Europe would also be affected, with the EU Foreign Affairs Chief Kaja Kallas saying that “Any Iranian closure of the Strait of Hormuz would be extremely dangerous and not good for anybody.”, warning that the potential shutdown could spark retaliation, escalate conflict, and cause severe global economic fallout. The EU also

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<sup>10</sup> Maja Garaca Djurdjevic, and Maja Garaca Djurdjevic. “InvestorDaily.” *Investordaily.com.au*, 16 June 2025, [www.investordaily.com.au/markets/57321-modest-economic-hit-major-inflation-headache-oxford-models-oil-supply-risk-scenarios](http://www.investordaily.com.au/markets/57321-modest-economic-hit-major-inflation-headache-oxford-models-oil-supply-risk-scenarios)? Accessed 1 Aug. 2025.

<sup>11</sup> “Amid Regional Conflict, the Strait of Hormuz Remains Critical Oil Chokepoint - U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA).” *Eia.gov*, 2024, [www.eia.gov/todayinenergy/detail.php?id=65504](http://www.eia.gov/todayinenergy/detail.php?id=65504).

emphasises that such disruption would be of benefit to no one, stressing about volatility in both oil and LNG markets.

### Military Escalation

It is clear that a closure of the Strait would not only result in impacts in the economy and in the market, but would most certainly create a military escalation, especially with the U.S. wanting to respond, as the Strait is considered a red line for the United States and its allies.<sup>12</sup> The U.S. Fifth Fleet, which is based in Bahrain, has stated that its role is to ensure freedom of navigation in international waters, especially when it comes to in response to any threats in the region.<sup>13</sup> The area is often described as highly volatile and vulnerable, with any interruption of maritime transit potentially triggering armed escalation involving naval forces from Iran, the U.S., and Gulf states. Other than that it is important to state that the involvement of the U.S. could have more implications, by further complexifying the situation, and other global powers being prompted to also intervene, since the more visibly the U.S. projects force in the Gulf, the more likely it is that powers like China, Russia, or even Turkey will seek to expand their own presence under the guise of counterbalancing or peacekeeping.

When it comes to military action, specifically the U.S., has warned Iran not to close the Strait of Hormuz, calling it a clear red line and pledging to respond militarily. The U.S. military has made their readiness to use naval and air assets to maintain open transit in the Strait very clear. Moving on, in response to previously mentioned events, the U.S. “accelerated deployment of an additional aircraft carrier and other naval assets in the region, signaling heightened U.S. commitment to deterrence and protection of maritime lanes.

Concerning Iran, they may have entered the very early stages of an escalation campaign against international shipping around the Strait of Hormuz. This is proven by Iran’s recent deployment of drones, GPS-jamming operations, and visits by IRGC commanders to coastal sites, along with public threats and missile launches targeting regional U.S. bases, intending to signal military escalation without actually starting a full on war.

Following the U.S.’s actions in the Strait, China and Russia called for restraint, warning that “if the Middle East is unstable, the world will not be at peace. Although China and Russia have refrained from direct military intervention in the Iran-Israel conflict, it is clear that their absence so far underscores the durability of U.S. influence, while also leaving open the possibility of future counterbalancing moves by either power.

### ***Risks for Iran of closing the Strait***

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<sup>12</sup> Crowley, Michael. “Iran’s Dire Strait.” *POLITICO*, Politico, 2021, [www.politico.com/story/2015/05/irans-dire-strait-117566](http://www.politico.com/story/2015/05/irans-dire-strait-117566). Accessed 1 Aug. 2025.

<sup>13</sup> ---. “U.S. Fifth Fleet Says Won’t Allow Hormuz Disruption.” *Reuters*, 28 Dec. 2011, [www.reuters.com/article/world/us-fifth-fleet-says-wont-allow-hormuz-disruption-idUSTRE7BR0K2/](http://www.reuters.com/article/world/us-fifth-fleet-says-wont-allow-hormuz-disruption-idUSTRE7BR0K2/).

## Economic Collapse

Closing the Strait of Hormuz would not only have profound economic and market implications affecting the rest of the world but Iran itself as well, due to their long served lifeline of ghost tankers, which was achieved using covert ship-to-ship transfers and false documentation to bypass Western restrictions. Considering that up to 50% of Iran's oil exports are now managed by the IRGC's shadow fleet, a full closure of the Strait would shut down these clandestine routes, making smuggling nearly impossible. Millions of barrels are enabled to flow undetected, due to Iran's informal network, including reflagged vessels, front companies like VS Tankers, and wide use of flag hopping. Without that flow, the regime loses its sanctions-evasion buffer, threatening a collapse in both formal and informal revenue streams.

## Military Risks

With Iran considering the Strait as a major pressure point, shutting it down would most definitely ignite a global oil shock and escalate tensions regionally, with both the U.S. and other Gulf countries being forced to respond with military action. Even though Iran possesses thousands of naval mines, missiles, and UAVs to disrupt transit, they highly lack the ability to completely block the straight, meaning a short but high impact anti-access or area denial action would be much more plausible than a total closure. Nevertheless, even the slightest action from Iran's side could likely trigger arm escalation, including drone strikes, naval manoeuvres or missile use, therefore continuing to raise a risk of a wider conflict.

## Legal Consequences

Other than economic and military consequences, Iran would likely face legal consequences as well. Under the United Nations convention on the law of the sea (UNCLOS), the Strait of Hormuz is legally defined as an international strait, and transit passage may not be suspended, since coastal states bordering the strait cannot impede the right of transit passage, even in times of crisis. Although Iran has not ratified UNCLOS yet, it is nonetheless obligated under customary international law, a principle recognised by the U.S., which prohibits the closure of such waterways. Therefore, Iran would be risking legal consequences since any attempt to close or block the Strait would be a clear breach of these legal obligations. It is also important to mention that taking such measures would be an even higher risk for Iran, since this step could grant other states the right to military action under the U.N. Charter's self-defense provisions.

## **MAJOR COUNTRIES AND ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVED**

## **Iran**

Iran has repeatedly threatened to close the Strait, due to western or Israeli actions. As recently as June 22, 2025 the Iranian parliament has voted to close the Strait of Hormuz, which decision is still awaiting approval from the Supreme national security, a move described as protection of national sovereignty. Though still not executed, analysts warn that it would be strategically catastrophic for both global oil markets and Iran's own energy exports.

Moreover, Iran's government is insisting that the closure of the strait is not to seek escalation, but to guarantee the security of the strait, as long as its interests remain secured and no threats are posed. Iran has always ensured the safety and security of this waterway and blamed western military presence for instability, saying that foreign forces in the Strait are threatening regional peace.

## **Kuwait**

Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled al- Jarallah states that Kuwait is looking at Iranian threats to block the Strait of Hormuz with concern and hoping as always to distance our region from this tension, reflecting Kuwait's worries over the security of vital maritime lanes. Kuwait's early approach during the Tanker War underscores its request to the U.S. to protect its oil tankers under Operation Earnest Will, which was part of a mission to safeguard Kuwaiti shipping from Iranian attacks.

Kuwait, being a major Gulf oil exporter, recognises the Straits strategic value, while also trying to maintain a diplomatic balance, by developing an excellent and historical relationship with Iran, and partnering with Gulf neighbors on regional security.

## **Saudi Arabia**

Saudi Arabia rejects any threat to the freedom of navigation in the Strait of Hormuz and calls maritime security a top priority for regional stability. Saudi Arabia states that Iran has a big lack of understanding, that its acts of intercepting ships, attacking them, are completely unacceptable, describing them as violations of international law. Even Saudi officials state that any attack on the freedom of navigation is a violation of international law and must be addressed through a firm international response.<sup>14</sup>

Saudi Arabia also reopened an old pipeline to bypass the Strait of Hormuz and export natural oil from the Red Sea, to protect oil exports. The importance of cooperation on regional security, especially the security of maritime navigation, was stressed by prince Faisal bin Farhan in June 2023, while also adding that the region must be free of weapons and mass destruction.

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<sup>14</sup> Reuters Staff. "Saudi Arabia Urges Improved Maritime Security in Gulf as Ties with Iran Resume." *Reuters*, 17 June 2023, [www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/saudi-foreign-minister-arrives-tehran-amid-rapprochement-iran-tv-2023-06-17/](http://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/saudi-foreign-minister-arrives-tehran-amid-rapprochement-iran-tv-2023-06-17/)

## **United States of America**

One of the two main countries that triggered recent crises in the Strait of Hormuz is the United States. In an attempt to extend its influence in geopolitically important states, they informed their imperialistic policy, after World War II. Iran with its enormous potential of oil extraction was therefore victimised. After the Islamic Revolution and during the tanker war the relations of those two countries deteriorated.<sup>15</sup> Then, the Bush administration favoured the escalation of the conflict, which was later on eased during the presidency of Barack Obama. His phone call to the leader of Iran and the Nuclear Deal Framework were two very crucial diplomatic steps in the approach of the two countries. Nonetheless later on, the nationalistic policy of the Trump administration and its offensive stance against some of the Middle Eastern countries, especially Iran, culminated in the recent crisis in the Strait of Hormuz.

Looking into the future, the U.S. government is continually assessing the maritime security situation in the region to be able to identify and differentiate any threats in order to save guard freedom of navigation and be able to ensure the free flow of commerce, and protect U.S. Vessel personnel and interests. Wherever international law allows the United States is ready to ensure the freedom of navigation and the free flow of commerce. Taking into consideration the fact that the closure of the strait would be an economic suicide for the world, the U.S. Has urged international partners to deter Iran.

## **European Union**

With the EU having repeatedly warned that any Iranian move to close the Strait of Hormuz would be extremely dangerous and not good for anybody, it has highlighted the serious risk to global energy supplies and the broader international economy.

The EU has also contributed to the issue by creating a mission to support a naval and diplomatic presence in the region, namely the European Maritime Awareness in the Strait of Hormuz , which operates under French leadership, in order to protect maritime flows through the Strait and pursue de-escalation, non-state facing approach, transparency, in accordance with international law and freedom of navigation.

Additionally the EU defines maritime security as a state of affairs in which international law freedom of navigation is guaranteed and citizens, infrastructure, transport, are protected, through the European Union Maritime Security Strategy (EUMSS), explicitly citing the Strait of Hormuz among its priority regions.

## **Gulf Cooperation Council**

The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), was founded in 1981 and consists of a total of 6 Asian countries, namely Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE. Its main

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<sup>15</sup> Congressional research service. CAS Report. [sgp.fas.org/crs/mideast/R45795.pdf](http://sgp.fas.org/crs/mideast/R45795.pdf)

goal was to provide a common defense against the threat of the Tanker war with collective security binding an attack on one as an attack on all. In past years, efforts to protect shared commercial interests were made by the GCC, by implementing sea and air defense around the Strait of Hormuz. With the GCC having promoted joint calls for de-escalation and protection of vital oil trade routes, in which category the Strait of Hormuz definitely falls into, they have been able to voice their concern that Iran's opening move in a regional conflict would be to block the Strait of Hormuz, especially during high regional tensions. They have also stated their stance, which aligns with the U.S. on external threats to their security, as well as against threats to vital waterways, especially the Strait of Hormuz, namely wanting to prevent them by all means, signaling firm support for freedom of navigation and regional cooperation.

### ***Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps***

The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) is one of the most powerful organizations in Iran tasked with preventing foreign interference and plays a vital role in defending Iran in the strait of Hormuz. The IRGC is positive that they are ready to implement Iran's threat to block the Strait of Hormuz, insisting that everyone should be able to use the strait or one one should. As part of its policy it wants to create a mix of naval mines, fast attack craft and anti-ship cruise missiles, which will help to make a safe passage to foreign vessels almost impossible. These measures serve as a form of strategic deterrence, with Iranian lawmakers emphasising on the fact that the closure of the Strait would only be to put into reality if their vital interests were endangered, nevertheless the final decision rests with the Security Council.

## **TIMELINE OF EVENTS**

<b>DATE</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION OF EVENT</b>
19 August 1953	The coup in Iran
11 February 1979	Islamic Revolution in Iran
1984-1987	The tanker war
29 January 2002	American president George W. Bush delivers a speech attacking the Islamic Republic of Iran, thus weakening the two countries relations

24 November 2013	The P5 countries, The European Union and Iran ratify the joint declaration plan of action (Nuclear Deal Framework)
8 May 2018	American President Donald Trump announces the withdrawal from the nuclear deal framework.
8 May 2019	The President of Iran, Hassan Rouhani threatens that Iran's nuclear program will be continued and the US government imposes sanctions.
May-June 2019	More than six vessels were hit by mines or speedboats in the Strait of Hormuz
4 July 2019	British Marine forces detain an Iranian oil tanker accusing Iran of transporting oil to Syria thus breaking the economic sanctions
19 July 2019	Iran seizes an English vessel in the Strait of Hormuz in retaliation for the detainment of the Iranian oil
3 January 2020	The commander of the Iranian revolutionary guard corps (Qasem Soleimani) Is murdered by a US missile attack.

## RELEVANT UN RESOLUTIONS, TREATIES AND EVENTS

### [Resolution 616, 20 July 1988](#)

After Iran Air Flight 655 was shot down by the United States Navy across the Strait of Hormuz, leading to a total of 290 deaths, the UN Security Council passed this Resolution. Officially the resolution expressed “deep regret” over the incident, along with urging all countries to respect international aviation rules. Nevertheless the resolution failed to directly blame someone, creating a case of selective accountability, by especially not directly blaming the United States.

The ineffectiveness of this resolution, along with the region already experiencing tense environments due to the Tanker War, where Iran and Iraq had both attacked oil tankers in the Gulf, further increased the tensions in the area.

### [Resolution 2231, 20 July 2015](#)

This UN Security Council resolution, introduced the Iran Nuclear Deal or the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), aiming to prevent the construction of nuclear weapons of Iran, by offering them a moderation to their sanctions. By easing the economic straitjacket, calming the tensions in the region, and most importantly limiting Iran's nuclear program, this resolution ensured its success.

However this did not come out as it should have, since long term stability was destroyed, following the US's withdrawal from the deal in 2018. Then, Iran, wanting to strike back, threatened the US, continued aggressive action in the Strait, and increased military presence within the area.

### ***The United Nations Convention on the Law of Sea (UNCLOS)***

The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, is a convention, by the UN, which sets out the legal framework for maritime conduct and navigation, and is often referred to as the constitution of the oceans. One of their main goals is to allow ships and aircraft of all nations the right to pass through international straits like the Strait of Hormuz in a continuous and expeditious manner, which is the concept of transit passage. This means that the right to navigate on the surface, under the water, or in the air, is included and may not be impeded.

Nevertheless as usual the things, especially the legal situation remains complicated in the Strait of Hormuz, since although Iran has signed the treaty, it has not been able to fully go by it. The United States, while also not a party, considers UNCLOS provisions on navigation to be part of customary international law. Therefore a further dispute is created as both major actors disagree on enforcement, making the treaty unable to be of help in that case.

## **PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE THE ISSUE**

### ***Mutual restraining policy in the Strait of Hormuz***

A mutual restraint policy has been thought to be a crucial element in avoiding open conflict in the strait of Hormuz, although it has never been formalised. After the U.S. withdrawal from the nuclear deal, Iran was put under pressure, nevertheless deliberately avoided aggressive actions. Furthermore U.S. documents that were found from the Cold War era, referenced the need for tacit Soviet American restraints in maritime chokepoints, under which the Strait of Hormuz counts as well. Therefore, it is notable that powers tend to adopt restraint oriented behaviour, in order to avoid economic and military losses in such zones with high risk, as evidenced despite reoccurring provocations, their consistent avoidance of direct military

confrontation. In conclusion this policy was able to succeed in preventing a large conflict to break out in the region, even though it was unable to fully eliminate tensions.

### ***Strategic balance through the straits economic importance***

As mentioned before, the Strait of Hormuz functions as a critical economic lever, shaping strategic balance in the region. China, the USA., Europe have shown interest in stabilising the Strait by leveraging economic interdependence, having recognised this economic importance of the region. We have seen China wanting to actively promote stability in the Strait, something that they do not out of their own will to ensure peace, but mostly because it not only benefits their own economy, but also because they rely on it. Similarly the U.S. is aiming to prevent disruptions that would hurt all stakeholders, by deploying military in the Gulf, making it clear that major powers use the situation to their advantage.

This strategic balance is crucial, since it guarantees that any escalation that threatens the Strait would be detrimental to all parties, making restraint the most sensible course of action. As a result, repeated crises have been managed without resorting to military action because economic self-interest was present.

### ***Military naval presence***

In June 2025, the U.S. intelligence detected that Iran loaded naval mines onto vessels and the Persian gulf, though the mines were not deployed, signalling serious consideration of disrupting trade, which would significantly impact global energy markets. The U.S. Navy has not yet confirmed if Iran's action was strategic posturing or genuine military preparation, however it still maintains a naval presence in the region to ensure navigation of freedom, with mine countermeasures and combat ships based in Bahrain. Other than that to ensure they aren't boxed and if Iran tries to close the street, they have already begun repositioning forces, since if mines were to be laid they would need weeks to get cleared and cost millions. Iran is able to cause a significant disruption due to a considerable array of asymmetric capabilities, including mines, drones, speedboat and coastal missile systems. Lastly, in order to protect freedom of navigation in support of regional International efforts, the international Maritime security construct (IMSC) was created in 2019.

## **POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS**

### ***Diplomatic negotiations for a new nuclear deal***

A renewed diplomatic initiative, which will ideally be led by the European E3 (France, Germany, UK), the U.S., and Iran, whose main initiative would be to aim to build a comprehensive framework similar to the JCPOA. There's a short window for effective diplomacy to transform the U.S. intervention into a turning point that can be achieved by coordinating with Europe and involving regional powers . The key will be restoring rigorous International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) inspections and limiting enrichment levels, with Europe leveraging its role as the current custodian of the JCPOA mechanism.

Iran has previously expressed its opinion on this stating that if zero nuclear weapons were present, they would agree, however, not if there is no enrichment, clarifying that any future deal must preserve limited enrichment capabilities. Iran is working on a balanced counter-proposal and demands watertight guarantees that the U.S. will not quit a new nuclear pact. Therefore, even if difficult, a realistic negotiation strategy would involve the implementation of incremental sanctions relief, stepped-down enrichment, return of inspections, and mutual security assurances and all of the above, while addressing Iran's demands for enforceable U.S. commitments.

### ***International legal action against perpetrators***

The International Criminal Court and potentially even the International Court of Justice, could deter attacks on vessels and maritime infrastructure by holding individuals and states accountable. Investigation, prosecution and trying individuals in court, accused of committing the most serious crimes of concern to the international community as a whole, is one of the main reasons the ICC was created, and its jurisdiction also covers war crimes, crimes against humanity, and aggression, which could all be applied to deadly attacks against vessels, something that the Rome Statue does not list yet. Maritime terrorism or piracy are not recognised as stand-alone crimes.

Looking back on the issue in Darfur and Palestine, it has been demonstrated that a Security Council referral can extend ICC jurisdiction even to non-States-party, which would in this case allow them to seek arrest warrants against suspects from any nationality, by an investigation conducted by an ICC Prosecutor.

### ***Neutral patrols by the International Maritime Bureau (IMB)***

The goal of this solution would be to keep a low profile and neutral positions in the Strait of Hormuz in order to de-escalate and reduce tensions in the region. The International Maritime Bureau would be the best organisation for this, taking into consideration their life map that shows all piracy and armed robbery incidents reported to them. They also serve as a crucial 24 hour point of contact to report crimes or piracy and lend support to ships under threat. Actions such as quick reactions and focus on coordinating with response agencies and sending out the warning broadcast and email alerts to ships have all helped ensure security. The IMO supports reporting any incident, even low-level opportunistic ones, as early as possible to protect and ensure the safety of regional and international shipping and trade.

Therefore, a neutral presence by the IMB would likely build restraint, preserving security stability and ensure freedom of navigation in this critical chokepoint. By offering constant coverage, stopping commercial tank ships from being seized, maintaining readiness to prevent any vessels from being seized and holding sea lanes open, neutral patrols could deter hostile actions, especially when it comes to Iran's asymmetric threats using mines, drones or missiles.

### ***Advanced Surveillance and monitoring systems***

The only reason real time analysis of vessel behaviour is only possible due to the decision support systems provided with event and anomaly detection methods. Machine Learning-Assisted Anomaly Detection in Maritime Navigation using Automation Identification System (AIS) data models archive around 99.9% overall accuracy<sup>16</sup>. By tracking targets at sea, combining AIS and X-band marine radar, which would be enhanced by image processing systems, can be a great way to improve maritime security in the Strait. Due to visual fusion technologies, Space-based sensor technologies installed on satellites, such as satellite AIS data, synthetic aperture radar, and optical sensors provide detailed maritime information.

Consequently, seeing the success of those mechanisms it is clear that deploying such systems in the Strait could enable continuous situational awareness, rapid anomaly detection, and robust vessel identification, which would pre-empt covert threats and deter hostile actions. When it comes to the implementation it would require integrating AIS, marine radar, satellite sensors, visual tracking and machine-learning, with data sharing among naval and civilian authorities or even better a neutral international body.

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