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### Article Title

## Maritime Stability of Strait of Hormuz: A Critical Analysis

### Abstract

Energy commerce is crucial for both developed and developing nations due to the rising need for energy worldwide. Energy may be transported economically and environmentally via maritime routes, particularly those that cross the Strait of Hormuz. The only marine route for exporting to Europe, Asia, Africa, and major powers is the Persian Gulf, which is home to enormous oil and gas deposits. Because of its strategic importance, any disruption like an Iranian blockade could have a significant effect on the blue economy worldwide. Europe's dependence on Middle Eastern oil has increased as a result of the recent conflict between Russia and Ukraine. During diplomatic problems involving Iran and other significant exporters, the strait attracts international attention. This study looks at how the Strait of Hormuz affects Iran's foreign policy and ties with other countries, as well as its topographical, strategic, economic, and geopolitical significance.

**Keywords:** The Strait of Hormuz, Major Powers, Persian Gulf, Blue Economy, Middle East, Europe, Asia, Africa

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## Title

### Maritime Stability of Strait of Hormuz: A Critical Analysis

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#### Abstract

Energy commerce is crucial for both developed and developing nations due to the rising need for energy worldwide. Energy may be transported economically and environmentally via maritime routes, particularly those that cross the Strait of Hormuz. The only marine route for exporting to Europe, Asia, Africa, and major powers is the Persian Gulf, which is home to enormous oil and gas deposits. Because of its strategic importance, any disruption—like an Iranian blockade—could have a significant effect on the blue economy worldwide. Europe's dependence on Middle Eastern oil has increased as a result of the recent conflict between Russia and Ukraine. During diplomatic problems involving Iran and other significant exporters, the strait attracts international attention. This study looks at how the Strait of Hormuz affects Iran's foreign policy and ties with other countries, as well as its topographical, strategic, economic, and geopolitical significance.

#### Keywords:

[The Strait of Hormuz](#), [Major Powers](#), [Persian Gulf](#), [Blue Economy](#), [Middle East](#), [Europe](#), [Asia](#), [Africa](#)

#### Introduction

Energy trade plays a vital role in international relations, It's a global issue that needs the attention of states and civil societies as well. The current century is characterized by the dependency of the globe on oil and other natural resources which shape the geopolitics of the century. In the era of globalization, the transportation of oil and national gas plays strategic importance in the shipping of resources. For this shipping, the world Watergates

played a crucial role and were seen as very effective for the Great Powers. These Watergates are the narrow openings in the sea through which trade carried for the circulation of resources.

As we all know the major powers in the world are dependent on energy and the main source of energy for these superpowers like China, India, Turkey, France as well as the US in the Strait of Hormuz plays a crucial role in the economy of the US and its allies. As we know the maritime trade is cheap as



compared to air, road, or rail and a more effective way of transportation. Almost 20% of the world's oil is shipped through the Strait of Hormuz daily. An average of 14 ships of crude oil pass through the Strait of Hormuz with the destinations of Japan, India, China, and Korea per day (Briney, 2020). The Strait of Hormuz has great importance due to its geographical location. There are a lot of narrow choke points in the Hormuz Strait which are used for transportation. The narrowest choke point in SH is 29 nautical miles wide, and the widest choke point is 60 miles. The international economy of most Middle Eastern countries is dependent on the Strait of Hormuz and currently, there is no other way for the transportation of this region's product through sea. Almost 1 million barrels of oil pass through SH on a daily basis and 6 billion barrels of oil pass annually (Mheidat, 2021).

The United States and Iran relations disrupted by the Islamic revolution in Iran more than four decades ago started to grow into a recovery process through the Iranian nuclear deal with Europe and especially the United States. Unfortunately, this agreement couldn't last for long and was terminated with the announcement of President Trump's administration, who individually withdrew from this deal in May 2018. In addition, he also claimed to recall all of the Iranian sanctions that were terminated in 2015 and asked countries like China, India, and Turkey to withdraw from this agreement and to cancel their trade with Iran. Trump administration also threatened them to apply the same sanctions on them if they will cancel their trade deals with Iran. Further on US also blocks the oil trade with Iran which causes more devastation in the relationship between the US and Iran. Iran responded to these sanctions by announcing to continue its nuclear agreement with other countries and in response to blocking the oil trade of Iran, Iran threatened to block the Hormuz strait which is located in the south of Iran and known as the main Watergate for the transport of Arabian oil and gas towards Europe, Asia, Africa and the major powers (Sayin & Kilic, 2020).

The complex web of regional conflicts that shape the security dynamics of the Strait of Hormuz is essential to understanding its geopolitical significance. While major countries such as the US, China, and Russia have strategic interests in the strait, the stability of the strait is mostly determined

by the ongoing and often increasing tensions among regional entities. The Persian Gulf region is in a perilous security position due to long-standing rivalries, sectarian divisions, power struggles, and competing national interests. Of them, the rivalry between Saudi Arabia and Iran stands out as a major source of regional conflict, influencing proxy wars in Yemen, Syria, and Lebanon and creating hostile alliances across the Middle East (Wehrey, 2017).

Additionally, incidents of oil tanker harassment, drone attacks, and threats to block the strait during periods of heightened animosity demonstrate how tensions between the US and Iran have frequently spread into the maritime industry (Cordesman, 2020). Territorial sovereignty disputes, like the one between Iran and the United Arab Emirates over the Tunb islands, further increase mistrust and regional division. The 2017 Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) crisis, in which Qatar was blockaded by its neighbors, further demonstrated the deep divisions among the Arab Gulf states. At a critical juncture, this undermined regional security cooperation (Ulrichsen & Coates, 2020).

Here we will discuss the major proxy and interstate conflicts, their root causes, their impact on regional maritime security, and how they contribute to the increasing strategic vulnerability of the Strait of Hormuz. It argues that by jeopardizing continuous oil supply and reinforcing the necessity of an external military presence, regional instability heightens the strait's prominence as a focal point of global geopolitical contestation.

## Literature Review

The article "*Securing European Interests from the Mediterranean to the Persian Gulf: Rethinking EU Strategic Autonomy at Sea*" emphasizes how the EU must fight piracy, terrorism, and competition from nations like China and Russia, among other major maritime security threats. European naval capabilities have drastically decreased in spite of these threats; for example, the French Navy's fleet shrank from 147 ships in 1985 to 80 by 2022. In response, the EU is working to strengthen its maritime presence through programs like Operation Asides and higher defense spending, which reached \$345 billion in 2022. However, the need for the EU to reevaluate its strategy and attain more strategic autonomy at sea is highlighted by global

rearmament trends and gaps in naval modernization (Samaan, [2024](#)).

The authors of the article *“Geopolitical conflict threatens yet another shipping choke point”* highlight the concerns about threatening another shipping choke point known as the Strait of Hormuz between Iran and Western powers. This crucial water channel holds approximately 20% of the world's total oil exports and shared LNG, essential for global stability. Any threat or conflict can raise oil prices and can disturb the oil chain. The article also discusses its impacts on other straits and regions such as the Red Sea, the Panama Canal, Bab-el-Mandeb, and the Suez Canal, which could be harmful to global trade (Fechner, Luman, & Patterson, [2024](#)).

The article *“Fear of Strait of Hormuz Oil Gateway in Iran Israel Face-off”* by Eva Levesque analyzes the heat of fear around the Strait of Hormuz due to the recent conflict between Iran and Israel. This narrow opening is a gateway for the world's 36% of the oil the global oil trade, and any disruption in it can cause a major loss for the oil market. If this conflict continues, Iran could block or harass the oil shipments, and it could impact countries like Qatar, Kuwait, Iraq, UAE, and Saudi Arabia which rely on this route. This may raise the oil prices above \$100 per barrel, particularly affecting developed nations dependent on energy imports. The region is monitored by Western powers but prolonged conflict in this region could strain alliances and sever environmental risks (Levesque & Eva, [2024](#)).

The study article *“Evolutionary Game Model of Strategic Maritimes Transport Passages: A Case of Strait of Hormuz”* written by Daozheng Huang, Shun Wang, Sean Loughney, and Jinn Wang explains the game model to analyze the strategic importance of the Strait of Hormuz and the major stakeholders involved in blue trade through Strait of Hormuz. He says that Middle Eastern countries are majorly dependent on SH for their oil supply. He analyzes how the stakeholders like the states and other commercial entities respond to the threats in the Persian Gulf. The article examines both the cooperative and non-cooperative behavior of the parties and how the conflicts change the decisions. He further explains the strong and reliable policy alignment among the major players such as cost of the oil and gas, risk tolerance, and the political

relationships between the states (Huang, Wang, Loughney, & Wang, [2022](#)).

The article *“United States-Iran Shared Interest and the Stability of SH”* by Angle Damayanti, Alexander Mersin, and Bryan Libertho Karyoprawiro examines the study of the stability of SH by Iran and the United States in the Bill Clinton administration. Both of the countries have a lot of disputes and conflicts but both are interested in keeping the Hormuz Strait open for the global market and economic stability of the region. The authors analyze how the conflicts between US-Iran on economic sanctions and military posturing can increase the risks in the region. Iran relies on the Strait of Hormuz for its exports, especially the exports of oil and natural gas and the US is aiming security for the secure transportation of its alliances from these small Watergates. The article also studies the different scenarios as cooperative or conflicting, suggesting the stability of the region for both Iran and the Major Powers. The authors also explain the tensions in the region after the assassination of the top Military leader Qasim Solmani in 2020 (Damayanti, Mersin, & Karyoprawiro, [2022](#)).

Given that 21% of the world's petroleum passes through the Strait of Hormuz, the essay explores the vital role this waterway plays in ensuring global energy security. Energy supplies are disrupted and oil prices rise as a result of geopolitical tensions, particularly those between the United States and Iran, which jeopardize maritime stability. The writers draw attention to dangers like armed wars and unstable economies. They place a strong emphasis on international collaboration, multilateral diplomacy, and energy route diversification. Reliance on the Strait can be decreased by bolstering security protocols and encouraging renewable energy. In order to guarantee stable energy commerce, the text urges cooperation. It emphasizes the necessity of long-term plans to preserve the stability of the world economy (Ramadhani, Riva, & Marzaman, [2024](#)).

## Research Questions

1. What are the major challenges to the stability of the Hormuz Strait in the Persian Gulf?
2. What are the Issues for the region regarding regional and Global Security?

## Research Objectives

- The researcher analyzes the importance of the Strait of Hormuz for the Global oil and natural gas market.
- To explore the cooperation and conflicts in the Persian Gulf of Iran with Major Powers.
- To examine the Importance of the Strait of Hormuz and stability in the region.
- The researcher evaluates the fluctuations of prices in the oil market due to the threats from Iran to block the Strait of Hormuz.
- The researcher works on the investment and the policies of the major powers for stability.

## Research Methodology

The researcher used the descriptive-analytical method, as this method evaluates all the concerns that make up the whole issue. The researcher had a literature review of the books and articles relevant to the oil and gas trade through the Strait of Hormuz. The researcher also studied the case studies of the region and its impacts on Ukraine-Ukraine-Russia war. The researcher is also looking forward to the interviews with the experts on the region's energy politics. The research also analyzes the economic impact of the strait on the international markets and the security policies of the great powers for the proper transportation through this strait. The researcher also aims to demonstrate the involvement of the major powers in the region and their role in stabilizing the region for the betterment of the blue trade economy.

## Major Challenges Faced for the Maintenance of the Strait of Hormuz

The continuous flow of Gulf oil exports to Europe, the US, and Asia is made possible by the Strait of Hormuz. The vast amount of oil that passes through it highlights its strategic significance since delays in this vital transit route have an impact on worldwide supply networks. The strait is the most important oil chokepoint in the world, with an estimated 18.5 million barrels of oil being moved through it every day in 2016 alone (Reuters Graphics, [2019](#)). Additionally, the presence of Iranian military forces in the region has exacerbated tensions, particularly in the wake of incidents such as the alleged attack on a tanker in the Gulf of Oman, which Iran has flatly denied in response to US accusations. By creating a dangerous security environment, such actions increase regional unpredictability and

jeopardize maritime stability in the Strait of Hormuz.

Another major barrier to maritime security in the Strait of Hormuz is the competing strategic goals of the warring parties in the area. The most prominent of these is the US and Iran's long-standing and often hostile relationship. When the U.S. started to perceive Iran as a regional danger during the Iran-Iraq War in the 1980s, tensions between the two nations arose. The Clinton administration's implementation of sanctions and an embargo exacerbated this hostility. When the Trump administration unilaterally left the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) in 2018, a nuclear deal intended to restrict Iran's nuclear activity in return for the lifting of sanctions, the situation drastically worsened. In 2019, tensions increased as the United States accused Iran of being responsible for multiple attacks on merchant vessels and oil tankers close to the Strait of Hormuz. Freedom of navigation and global energy security are seriously threatened by these changes, which have greatly increased regional volatility (Damayanti, [2022](#)).

Global powers' strategic interests, notably in gaining access to the region's enormous energy reserves, are a major factor in the fierce geopolitical tensions surrounding the Middle East's mineral resources. The United States, which has long had close political and economic relations with Saudi Arabia, one of the biggest oil producers in the world, is among the most notable instances. Saudi Arabia is a vital player in the world's energy markets because of its enormous reserves and position as a top energy exporter. The United States is notable among its important allies for its extensive and enduring energy cooperation. With total mineral fuel imports from the kingdom valued at almost USD 12 billion, the United States was one of the biggest importers of Saudi oil in 2019 (CNN Indonesia, [2022](#)). This large trade volume shows how resource rivalry strengthens geopolitical alignments in the region and demonstrates the strategic interdependence between the two nations in the energy sector.

The persistent animosity between Saudi Arabia and Iran, which has been made worse by their involvement in the Yemeni civil war, is another significant source of conflict endangering the stability of the Strait of Hormuz. Many people believe that this battle is a proxy war between the

two regional powers. Leading a group of Gulf governments with a majority of Sunnis, Saudi Arabia has actively intervened militarily to back the Yemeni government and put an end to the Houthi uprising. Iran has allegedly provided the Shi'a-affiliated Houthis with substantial military and political backing, escalating the conflict's sectarian and geopolitical aspects. The ongoing conflict has increased instability throughout the Persian Gulf and fueled regional competition. In addition to increasing animosity between Riyadh and Tehran, the ongoing confrontations indirectly jeopardize maritime security in the Strait of Hormuz, where any escalation might impede international oil exports (Al Jazeera, [2024](#)).

For a long time, the Houthi movement in Yemen has resisted the policies of the Yemeni government, especially its ties to Western nations like the United States and the United Kingdom. Internal frustrations, particularly Houthi leaders' charges of corruption against the central government, have further fuelled the conflict. Former President Ali Abdullah Saleh was chastised by movement leader Badruddin al-Houthi for rampant corruption and political marginalization, particularly among the Zaidi Shia group. With Saudi Arabia spearheading a coalition against the Houthis, who are thought to be supported by Iran, these domestic conflicts have turned into a larger regional confrontation. Yemen is geographically next to both Saudi Arabia and Oman, which makes it a crucial strategic location for regional powers and complicates the already-existing war.

Yemen and Saudi Arabia have long had close relations and are both active members of numerous international organizations. However the 2011 Arab Spring brought about a dramatic change in Yemen's political climate, which resulted in the fall of the country's government and the start of a bloody civil war. The Houthi rebel group's use of violence to achieve their political goals has been the main cause of this conflict, which has resulted in great suffering, especially for civilians. The Houthis aimed to obtain recognition from the Yemeni government and establish control over strategic areas, disregarding the terrible effects on the civilian populace. Yemen's foreign policy was drastically changed by the ensuing civil war, which made the nation vulnerable and allowed for outside involvement. In an attempt to reinstate the internationally recognized Yemeni

government, Saudi Arabia led a coalition of regional powers in 2015. With a high death toll among non-combatants and substantial collateral damage to civilian infrastructure, the intervention has failed to bring about peace despite massive military efforts, including bombings on Houthi-held territory (Riva & Atikah, [2024](#)).

The Yemeni civil war has been greatly intensified by the involvement of several foreign countries, such as the United States, Saudi Arabia, and Iran, turning it into a proxy war. Peace attempts have been made more difficult by the significant roles each of these countries has played in the current military operations. A significant escalation occurred in 2015 when the Saudi-led coalition intervened to defend the Yemeni government following the Houthi rebels' takeover of a large portion of the country's western region. The conflict has continued with little indication of de-escalation in spite of multiple military operations. As regional and global interests continue to influence the course of the bloodshed, the presence of external parties has not only prolonged the war but also exacerbated the humanitarian situation (Riva & Atikah, [2024](#)).

### **Issues for Regional and Global Security**

There are serious threats to regional and international security from the growing geopolitical tensions in the Strait of Hormuz, especially the protracted war between the United States and Iran. Given how heavily many nations rely on energy supplies, which are vital to their economy, this is particularly worrisome. The Strait of Hormuz is an essential conduit for the transportation of energy, which emphasizes its strategic significance. About 80 million metric tons of liquefied natural gas (LNG), or 20% of the world's total LNG flow, pass through the strait annually, underscoring its crucial position in the world's energy supply chain (Reuters., [2023](#))

International energy security is seriously threatened by the protracted confrontation in the Strait of Hormuz. There is a genuine chance that oil shipments over the strait may be halted if tensions are not adequately controlled, which would cause oil prices to skyrocket globally. Located between Iran and Oman, the Strait of Hormuz is a small but strategically significant waterway that is a major transit route for Middle Eastern crude oil shipments to international markets. In 2022, oil flows via the

strait averaged 21 million barrels per day, accounting for about 21% of the world's crude oil commerce, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA). There could be serious repercussions from even brief obstruction or limitation at this chokepoint, such as higher energy prices, higher shipping costs, and significant delays in international supply chains (Meredith. & Sam, [2024](#)).

The Indonesian Institute of Sciences (LIPI) claims that the main source of energy for China and a number of Southeast Asian nations is oil imports from Gulf nations in the Middle East. The rising energy demands brought on by the region's economic expansion are the main cause of this reliance. Even while Southeast Asian countries are seeing significant economic growth, they still lack China's level of industrial capacity. However, by looking into alternate local and regional energy sources, ASEAN nations are actively working to lessen this reliance. These include the Java Sea, the Ambalat Block, the regions surrounding the disputed Spratly Islands, and offshore reserves in Vietnam, Thailand, and the Philippines.

Furthermore, the Gulf countries continue to be a major source of energy for the Asian region. China's strong economic growth and rising industrial demands have made it the country that imports the most energy from the Gulf. In terms of diversifying its energy sources, China has emerged as one of the most ambitious countries in Asia and one of the world's largest energy consumers. China has been largely dependent on oil imports since 1993; this trend has increased in parallel with China's economic development. The International Energy Agency (IEA) predicted that by 2020, China's energy reliance would rise from roughly 57.55% to 68.36% and that by 2030, the country's oil consumption will have increased by 50%. Saudi Arabia continues to be the biggest supplier of energy to developed nations (Sagena & Moorthy, [2012](#)). Japan's 2023 import of over 32,004 barrels of oil from Saudi Arabia serves as proof of this, underscoring the big countries' ongoing reliance on Gulf energy supplies.

### **Possible Confrontation in Hormuz: Implications for Energy and Trade Flows**

Since the Strait of Hormuz is an essential route for the delivery of energy resources, the high likelihood of conflict there poses a major threat to

international trade. Energy is essential for maintaining international cooperation and driving national economies. Global trade was already hampered by the COVID-19 epidemic, and any unrest in the Strait may make matters worse by blocking a vital supply line for energy. Numerous nations have already experienced the adverse consequences. Due to continuous regional tensions, oil prices fluctuated a lot in 2024, jumping by more than 6% between January and September and by 3.8% in September alone. Uncertainty in the Middle East, a vital location for the production of oil worldwide, was a big contributor to this volatility. Growing concerns about possible disruptions in important supply channels, such as the Strait of Hormuz, have further increased market apprehension (Ramadhani, Riva, & Marzaman, [2024](#)).

The U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA) and the International Energy Agency (IEA) claim that the worldwide market is under additional pressure due to supply constraints and growing demand, especially in non-OECD nations. According to Reuters, oil prices increased by a further 2% in early October 2024 (Duijvenbode, 2024). Oil prices have continued to rise due in part to growing worries about the conflict's possible escalation, especially if Israel strikes Iran's oil infrastructure. Iran might respond by retaliating, endangering the stability of the region. Even little price increases can cause inflation in areas like Europe that rely significantly on Middle Eastern oil, raising costs for individuals and businesses while reducing demand for imported goods and affecting global trade. The possible interruption of oil exports via the Strait of Hormuz intensifies concerns about its total closure, which would have a substantial impact on world oil flows (Martin, Hittle, Odoardo, & Flowers, [2024](#)).

Up to 12 million barrels of oil per day might be disrupted, endangering the stability of the Strait of Hormuz and resulting in significant price hikes. Market anxiety would increase as a result of increased costs and supply chain disruptions for Asian oil-importing countries like China, India, Japan, and South Korea. There are serious repercussions for the world oil market as tensions between Iran and Israel approach a tipping point. A military escalation may cause Iran to stop producing about a million barrels per day and possibly close the

Strait of Hormuz, a crucial trading route, which would have a greater effect on the world's crude markets. Attacks against oil infrastructure, such as upstream facilities, pipelines, and storage units, could result from an ongoing conflict between the two. Since there are currently few other ways, closing the strait would significantly cut Middle Eastern oil exports by an estimated 10–12 million barrels per day. Global oil prices would rise as a result, forcing Asian importers to look for other supplies, further taxing energy supply systems, and raising expenses overall (Ramadhani, Riva, & Marzaman, [2024](#)).

### **Role of Multilateral Diplomacy in Easing Tensions and Promoting Stability in the Strait of Hormuz**

Global multilateral collaboration is crucial to ensuring energy security in view of the challenges facing the Strait of Hormuz, especially as continuous Middle Eastern conflicts interrupt crucial oil supply routes. Oil continues to be a vital component of industrial economies and the engine of national growth. In light of this, Asian nations have stepped up their cooperation with programs such as the Asia Pacific Energy Research Centre (APEREC), which was founded in Japan and promotes policy alignment and collaborative research on energy security among APEC member states. Such collaboration is becoming more and more crucial as the world's energy consumption keeps rising, making energy a vital commodity (Keamanam Energi Dalam Politik Luar Negeri Indonesia, [2023](#)). In order to lessen future international rivalry and advance regional stability, ASEAN Energy Cooperation also aims to improve energy security in Southeast Asia by

investigating alternate and renewable energy sources.

Furthermore, the advancement of national energy programs depends on cooperative-competitive tactics like energy sector diplomacy. A nation's foreign policy agenda can benefit from the strategic use of energy diplomacy, especially when tackling issues related to domestic and international energy security. To ensure dependable energy supplies, nations must step up their foreign policy initiatives. For example, in order to lessen their dependency on the Gulf region, big Asian countries like China, which are heavily dependent on oil imports, actively seek varied energy supplies. Such reliance frequently results in unstable energy dynamics, particularly among highly industrialized countries (Universitas Gadjah Mada, [2010](#)).

International cooperation might be hampered and regional conflicts can result from competition for energy supplies. Countries must put energy diplomacy first in order to prevent such results, and use soft power techniques rather than military action to reduce tensions and preserve stability. A more durable route to energy security that upholds regional peace and national sovereignty is provided by diplomatic cooperation. Gulf nations in particular must implement long-term plans to protect energy production and reduce the dangers associated with Peak Oil, a scenario in which oil production peaks before finally falling. To support this strategy, clear policies and concerted international initiatives are necessary. In order to minimize global rivalry for scarce resources and ensure long-term energy sustainability, countries should also aggressively seek alternate energy sources and diversify their energy sources.

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