



Online ISSN: 3006-5879 Print ISSN: 3006-5860

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.63468/jpsa.4.3.3>

Vol. 4 No. 3 (2026)

<https://journalpsa.com.pk/index.php/JPSA/about>



Recognized by: Higher Education Commission (HEC), Government of Pakistan

Strait of Hormuz and Iran–US Strategic Rivalry: A Study of Maritime Security Dilemma

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ABSTRACT

The Strait of Hormuz is one of the largest marine choke-points in the world passing approximately a fifth of the world oil trade through it. In this paper, we are going to discuss how the strategic rivalry between the United States and Iran has developed over the years, using the theory of maritime security dilemma. In argument, it says that the Strait has since become a zone of endemic instability with counter measures by one side leading to counter-measures response by the other and culminates in the cycles of escalation. Through the qualitative analysis of secondary sources, policy reports, as well as new geopolitical developments, the study finds that military deployments, economic sanctions and asymmetric tactics in the sea, have escalated insecurity in the Gulf region. The article gives conclusions that the Strait of Hormuz is not only a physical chokepoint, but also a foreign policy arena, which offers great-power politics and economic coercion.

Keywords: Strait of Hormuz; Iran-US Relations; Maritime Security; Security Dilemma.

INTRODUCTION

The Strait of Hormuz is one of the sea pipe constrictions that are strategically of great importance. It is a Strait that lies between Iran and Oman and which links the oil rich Persian Gulf to the Gulf of Oman and the Arabian Sea that is the major export channel of major oil producing countries such as Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Iraq and Kuwait. Due to its geographical position the Strait is extremely susceptible to interference and consequently of the primary concern of international studies of maritime security (International Energy Agency [IEA], 2026).

The Strait of Hormuz acts as a world economic artery, in terms of energy security. The most recent estimates have revealed that the volume of oil that flows through this waterway has been estimated to be about 1820 million barrels of oil per day which is approximately a fifth of the global oil consumption (U.S. Energy Information Administration [EIA], 2026). And as well as crude oil, vast quantities of liquefied natural gas (LNG) produced in Qatar and other in the Gulf region, also flow through it, and are vital to both developed and developing economies. Any systematic or total disruption is systemically important to the world economy in oil prices, shipping insurance rates and energy supply chains that portray the systematic value of the Strait in the global economy.

Besides its economic dimension, the Strait of Hormuz today has turned out to be rather more of a target of tension in the context of geopolitical relations and not least between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the United States. The Strait has since developed into a stage of strategic competition ever since the withdrawal of the U.S. exit in the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) in 2018. The United States has a huge naval presence in the Persian Gulf under the Fifth Fleet, headquartered in Bahrain, with the specified goal of providing freedom of shipping and securing the global flows of energy (Cordesman, 2026). On the other hand, Iran considers such presence as an open threat to its sovereignty and influence in the region which explains U.S naval penetration strategic approach.

The two-way conception of the threat shows the traditional paradigm of security dilemma where defensive acts in place of one party are viewed to seek offensive acts against the other party. This crisis is particularly acute at the Strait of Hormuz because of the closeness of both the physical aspect and the shared maritime claims and the immeasurable strategic value of the waterway. The numerous attempts made by Iran to close or provide restrictions on Strait is generally depicted as a response to sanctions or military pressure. This is however considered by the United States and its allies as a coercive and destabilizing action that has resulted in a rise in the naval patrol-surveillance and coalition-building action by the partners in the gulf (Alfoneh, 2026).

In 2024 2026 are an even more dramatic demonstration of how this strategic rivalry between US Iran is escalating. The cases of hijack of commercial tankers, data collection by using drones, and the interception of merchant ships have become more frequent, contributing to the rise in the risk perception status of shipping companies and insurances. It has been found that, despite the low levels of disruption in the

Strait, even low levels of disruption can cause a rise of 3-8 of global oil prices in a few days, thus proving that the world energy system is delicate (BP Statistical Review, 2026).

The asymmetric deterrence is defined to refer to the seafarer strategy of the Iran in the Gulf. The Iranian projection of power is no longer the traditional naval superiority, but instead it is in the form of fast attack craft, naval mine, drone, and the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps Navy (IRGCN). This plan aims at creating a gray zone, and increasing the cost of a possible military conflict. Every time, Iranian authorities insist that their position is a defensive one, and they do it in an attempt to safeguard the territorial sovereignty against foreign interference (Takeyh, 2026). The vague nature of these actions though adds to the misperceptions and risks of escalation.

To challenge what the U.S. Navy considers to be an extraordinary maritime sovereignty claim by the Iranians, the U.S. Navy occasionally launches Freedom of Navigation Operations (FONOPs). In addition, the multinational coalition being strengthened to offer quid pro quo in the safety of commercial shipping lanes also includes the combined Maritime Forces (CMF). As much as these measures are perceived to be meant to stabilize the region; they are considered as a strengthening of the defensive position by Iran since the measures are perceived to be a reinforcement to the defensive stand taken by Iran. The result of this process is a cycle of action and reaction the end result of which in accordance with the individual perspective of what security is rational in character, but the cumulative effect of which is a destabilizing nature. The working example of the dynamic in action is an example of how the maritime security dilemma works in a working example. Unlike the classical land-based conflicts, the dilemmas of maritime security have been escalated by the ambiguity in the international waters, the absence of clear tools of enforcement, as well as the twofold use of the naval resources. On economics, the negative impacts of such competition are much more than the region. Wave of perceived insecurity in the Strait of Hormuz has continued to be very sensitive in the world energy markets. The price of the Brent crude oil can rise heavily at any time even at rumors of its possible closure or even intensified military activities. Vessel insurance premiums through the Strait also plays a key role in the cost of shipping world over during the times of tension adding to the cost of shipping the world over. At this the Strait does not just play a role of a physical chokepoint, but also as a psychological lever in international markets. In a larger geopolitical context, the Strait of Hormuz exemplifies the way of a microcosm of great-power politics, regional security dilemmas and energy geopolitics. The other complicating factor is the interference of the external factors such as China; which highly depends on imports of the Gulf oil. The increasing multilaterality in regional security governance is well traced in the incumbent levels of diplomatization of the affairs of the Gulf in China including its role of mediating between Iran and Saudi Arabia, in 2023 (Fulton, 2026).

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Strait of Hormuz has been a major topic of marine insecurity besides a form of stable area of marine insecurity. The classical and contemporary analyses comment on incidence of recurring security challenges including tanker seizure, naval confrontations and threat of mine warfare, and asymmetric sea tactics which are contributing factors of insecurity in global energy supply chains. The Strait of Hormuz is a pressure valve of strategic pressure, according to Al-Mansoori (2026), a Gulf-based scholar of maritime security, that regional rivalries are directly translated into the form of global economic risk, especially at times of Iran–US escalation.

Lane-dependence of narrowness (and congestion) of the Strait (with 5595 kilometers in breadth) is further reinforced by geopolitical research. This geographical limitation significantly adds to being susceptible to disruption and overcapacity of sitting (Khan and Al-Sabahi, 2026). The physical constraint as per the Muslim writers of the Gulf region, has made the Strait, a physical constrained neck of force, which, when interfered to derail the system, disproportionately affects the world economy. This interpretation concurs with the more general views of Islamic political economy which views maritime routes to constitute a dual instrument of economic interdependence on one hand and strategic vulnerability on the other.

A developing literature has attributed Iranian geopolitical challenge against the United States to the strategic tactics taking place in the Strait of Hormuz. The maritime posture, as prescribed by the argument of the Iranian foreign policy analysts is not merely a defensive posture but a deep-rooted defense reaction to the strain of sanctions, nuclear negotiations and policies of regional containment. The Strait is perceived as a bargaining device and not a traditional battlefield, which is widely discussed in Muslim academic circles and, in particular, in the geopolitical literature on the territory of Iranian and Pakistani trying to naively interpret the actions of the USA and other advanced countries with their own interests in mind. Such opinion is much debated in the Muslim academic circles, not so much as a traditional battlefield, but as a bargaining point.

Even recent news highlights the increasing use of hybrid maritime approaches by Iran. Such tactics include unmanned aerial system (drone), fast-strike naval craft, electronic warfare-capable, and selective harassment of commercial shipping. Maritime security researchers working in South Asia estimate such hybrid capabilities of the Iranian will create uncertainty at such a margin that war is avoided at that point despite their actions to cause pressure. The so-called insurance-based disruption, where the perceived risks are greater, increasing the costs of shipping without a physical obstacle has been shown to be a key tool in the Iranian disruption strategy of the sea.

On the contrary, the United States is yet to emphasize on the principle of freedom of navigation as an arena of international order at the sea. Western and Muslim aligned international law scholars not only concur that the U.S. naval activity in the Gulf is legal in the context of international maritime security regimes. However, there are also some critical views by some especially the Muslim political

economists such as Farooq (2026) who argue that U.S. naval supremacy in the area is also a type of strategic projection which consolidates more basic geopolitical influence in energy markets. This twin reading is reminiscent of an enormous excavation between the security based and power-based explanations of maritime presence in scholarly literature.

Even more so, regional gulf scholars demand the fact that Strait of Hormuz cannot be viewed only in relation to a military prism but through the prism of an economic interdependence. The Strait disruption would have an adverse impact on developing economies in Asia, including Pakistan, India and Bangladesh, which are highly reliant on the imports of the Gulf. A Muslim maritime economics expert named Hassan (2026) estimates the disruption of the Strait negatively affecting the developing economies of Asia including Pakistan, India and Bangladesh which are highly dependent on the Strait imports of Gulf and their energy importation. This strategy incorporates a second layer of the Global South on the literature, which concerns the reality that the spillover linked to the routine of Iran-US antagonism, has a cross-cutting dimension that cuts across the rubric of great-power politics.

To conclude, the literature bets on the perspective that Strait of Hormuz is a structurally weak but globally vital maritime passes and bottlenecks. But there is also a division in the way these relationships with Iran are interpreted; western sources tend to focus on Iran as a deterrent and enforcer of freedom of navigation, whereas those in the Muslim and other regional literature have emphasized on the alternative now that is asymmetry and resistance and the financial coercion of Iran (Al-Mansoori, 2026).

Theory: Maritime Security Dilemma

Security dilemma is the situation whereby the actions implemented by states to improve their security, unknowingly lead to insecurity of others. In theory in the alert traditions of international relations theory (at least realist traditions) defensive military action is often understood as defensive preparation in the face of other states by other (rival) states. This misinterpretation results in a vicious cycle where each party is responding to the action of the other in a bid to strengthen their security by acting in a certain manner that in turn pushes the other into a security dilemma instead of alleviating it (Herz, 1950; Jervis, 1978). This process is further intensified in a maritime context because of correlative mobility of naval forces, the close-ended ambiguity of intentions on the sea and the strategic importance of sea lines of communication.

Iran-United States in the context of the Strait of Hormuz is the situation where security dilemma is the most obvious and structurally entrenched in the relations between Iran and the United States. The first thing in this dilemma is the incessant build-up of naval power by the two players. The United States has a significant military force in the Persian Gulf with the Fifth Fleet regularly patrolling, carrying out surveillance missions and Freedom of Navigation Operations (FONOPs). The scheme of such deployments is officially wrapped as protective policies to protect the energy flows in the world and maritime security. But as far as the case of Iran is

concerned, such turn of sea is seen as a form of coercive pressure and a strategic encampment in the light of the U.S. sanctions and the broader containment strategies.

Iran, on the other hand, has not been neglected and now has its own asymmetrical naval force, in the Strait of Hormuz. These include fast-attack craft and coastal missile system, naval mines, and drone surveillance technologies that are operated by the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps Navy (IRGCN). Though the options of capabilities that Iran exhibits in the guise of deterrent measures should not be ignored by other countries, as these measures will be applied in relation to other countries when addressing the issue of aggression in the airspace of other countries. The United States and its allies tend to consider such capabilities as offensive capabilities with the ability to disrupt international transit. It is through this misperception of the other that the two sides begin to ratchet up against each other, as both incorrectly perceive each other and the reaction they take towards each other are viewed as a threat to national security.

The second dimension that adds to this dynamic in Strait of Hormuz is the extremely close proximity of the Iranian and U.S.-aligned naval forces. In contrast to land-based conflicts where there can be buffer zones, maritime chokepoints entail direct-operational congestion in narrow waterways. The Strait of Hormuz is also less than 21 nautical miles wide implying that military ships only move over a limited range with little time to respond. This space compression is translated to the enhancement of possibilities to go off course, get involved and blow up during normal naval encounters. Even minor incidents such as shadowing of ships or radar lock may end up being the diplomatic crisis.

The third reason to support the maritime security dilemma is the economic interdependence of the world through continuous oil discharges through the Strait. As much of the world petroleum trade is passed through this choke point instant impacts are felt in the markets of the world. This economic sensitivity is additional strain to both, the United States and Iran. Iran can employ the capability to threaten disruption within its strategic leverage in negotiation and signaling of disarming. The open sea lanes appear to be an important component of global energy security and overall economic stability to the United States and its allies. This interdependence is such that the Strait has become not only a battleground or even an economic arena where signals and perceptions play the key role as the actual realization of force.

A fourth factor endorsing escalation is the uncertainties of the legal and strategic frameworks of the sea. In contrast to the national land borders, the maritime jurisdictions in the international waters are governed and regulated by complex interpretations of the international law, particularly, the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). Iran has neither fully ratified, nor associated its interpretations with the western navy doctrines and has, thus, led to dissimilar interpretations and perceptions of the rights of passage, examinations and operations in the Strait between them. This law ambiguity offers chances to challenge the acts in which both parties interpret the same act based on various interpretations of the maritime law (Al-Mansoori, 2026).

Due to this amalgamation of distrusts and tempest, the Strait of Hormuz has always had a fixed cycle of mistrust and tempest. The US naval operations have been seen as the containment measures by Iran and Iranian retaliatory actions asymmetric in nature have been seen as disruptive threats to the trade in the global market. The course of one will be to attempt to increase the security of its side and thereby reduce that of other side in a vicious cycle of strategic rivalry. This dynamism over time institutionalized the Strait as not just a physical constituent of the global energy flows the Strait but also as a structural constituent of the long-term geopolitical tensions.

Strategy of the Strait of Hormuz

It is also considered to be a unique position in the geopolitics of the energy channeling concept as it is also seen as an energy channel, a military chokepoint and an economic pressure tool. These interrelated stances are what has contributed to it even up to these days continue to play a central role in the Iran/United States strategic rivalry and why even a slight instability in the region has had disproportionate consequences in the world.

Energy Corridor

Strait of Hormuz is among the most important energy transmission routes, in the world. It trades almost a fifth of world oil and a large part of liquefied natural gas (LNG), especially that produced in Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, and Saudi Arabia to these countries. This makes the global energy market unbelievable in regards to any dislocation in any form in the Strait. Recent energy-based analyses of world energy demand have indicated that even non-persistent changes in oil prices or the perceived risk of closure can cause an instant spike in oil-price, increase in shipping insurance premia, disruption of energy importing economies in Asia and Europe (International Energy Agency [IEA], 2026). Although Iran has been isolated economically and by conventional restraint in its military capability, nevertheless, it has an indirect veto on the security of energy globally solely due to its geographic impact one side of the waterway. Rather, the United States and its allies consider the uninterrupted availability of energy to be a key element in the attainment of economic stability in the world and consequently the protection of such a route is a central feature in U.S. naval policy in the Gulf.

Military Chokepoint

The second crucial role of the Strait of Hormuz is that the Strait forms a very vulnerable military chokepoint. Its limited geography, which stretches across some 55 to 95 kilometers wide, with only a few, and narrow, lanes of navigable shipping, furnish ideal conditions in which to promote an asymmetric sea warfare. Iran has also ingeniously scaled off of the conventional superiority of the United States Navy by devising a plethora of non-conventional at-sea capabilities.

They include the high-speed attack crafts with capability of swarm tactics, deployment of naval mines, deployment of coastal missile systems, and the ever-increasing incorporation of drones to perform surveillance and targeting. The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps Navy (IRGCN) is at the center of implementing these strategies. (Al-Mansoori, 2026) explains that the naval doctrine of the Strait made Iran

think that it would deny the area instead of dominate the sea. On the other hand, America possessed an active on-site naval presence in the Fifth Fleet in order to stem any Iranian interference with the international shipping, and to preclude any Iranian interference with the international shipping. This can result in the possibility of close-call confrontation between Iranian and U.S.-aligned forces that could lead to misunderstanding, unintentional development of the conflict, or strategic confrontation. But it is the military geography of the Strait that in turn enhances the security dilemma as both sides regard a defensive positioning as a potential offensive preparation.

Economic Pressure Tool

The third and probably the most significant role of the Strait of Hormuz is that it is one of the means of a certain economic pressure impacting the world. Any disturbance in the Strait (partial or temporary) leads to a direct volatile situation in the oil markets around the globe. Based on the historical tendencies, the announcements of the higher levels of tensions in the region may result in increasing the prices of the crude oil within the context of several hours, which proves the psychological sensitivity of the global energy markets (U.S. Energy Information Administration [EIA], 2026).

This is like some form of strategic leverage to Iran. Despite the fact that it lacks parity with the United States in conventional military items, Iran still can exercise an influence on the conditions of the world economic operations by threatening to disrupt, or a perceived threat of disrupt, escalating in the process of transit through the sea. This can be without necessarily shutting the Strait entirely, even a partial interference, even harassing, or threatening to mine, ships, will radically raise the prices of energy in the world.

Maritime security has also become a strategic priority to the United States as well as other leading economies in the world due to economic effects of instability in the Strait. In its turn, the military related justification of the naval deployment in the region transcends the military justification of the military presence in the region. Such deployments, however, serve not only to reinforce the mistrust cycle in the eyes of Iran but they also can be perceived as such deployments strengthen the mistrust cycle.

In this manner the Strait of Hormuz is this multidimensional strategic space wherein the flow of energy, this military base, and economic pressure converge. It impacts far more in geopolitical terms on the world energy markets, and on the great-power politics. This blend of the three elements ensures that the Strait has become a relentlessly center of strange warfare between Iran and the US (Ahmed, 2026).

Iran Strategy Rivalry with the US in the Strait

The Strait of Hormuz is at the junction point between the local of power politics, on the one hand, and globalized energy security and great-power politics, on the other. The clash between the Iran and the United States in this space is not singleton, but rather entrenched deep in the broader security texture in the Gulf, which is comprised of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states, presence of

external naval forces and changing alliances. In this background, the United States and Iran are involved in separate yet interacting policies, which determine the overall stability of the region (Takeyh, 2026).

United States Strategy

This is exhibited on the fact that the United States commitment to secure the global trade routes that involve marine trading and to also maintain the always available flowing energy. Implementation of this strategy was based on three major objectives; to ensure freedom of navigation, to protect the Gulf states that are allied to the US as well as any possible threat to the Strait of Hormuz by Iran.

To begin with, the principle of the freedom of navigation continues to be quite effective in the U.S. maritime doctrine. To challenge what appears to the U.S. Navy as illegal limits of international waters, the U.S Navy is undertaking regular patrols and Freedom of Navigation Operations (FONOPs). These are to be a message that the Strait of Hormuz should always be open to international commercial shipping irrespective of the tensions within the region. In practice this will involve vigilance at all times, guard of commercial tankers at times when tensions are on the rise, and the use of allied naval forces.

Second, the United States positions itself as a security guarantor to key Gulf partners, such as Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain. The formation of this alliance also enhances the U.S. strategic presence in the region and concurrently will curb the Iranian escalation. The U.S. Fifth Fleet stationed in Bahrain is a permanent deterrence force which is supposed to respond swiftly in response to the threats of the sea. However, in the recent events, the flaws which this strategy has can be said to be serious. Although the conventional naval superiority is overwhelming, the United States has been having a hard time on whether it is possible to maintain sustained comprehensive control in such a complex environment of conventional naval power. The Strait of Hormuz is no ordinary battlefield, but instead a loaded, narrow and highly rolled and, to counter the technological and military advantages, asymmetric warfare can be counted upon to rise to the challenge. According to recent strategic analyses, the operations in securing the Strait will have to involve multi-domain coordination of the activities of the naval, air, and cyber capabilities, not to mention the intelligence capabilities, all at the same time, which will raise the cost and complexity of the operations (Cordesman, 2026). Further, the presence of U.S. naval forces in the Gulf has stretched the U.S. naval resources, particularly with competing world security commitments on the Indo-Pacific and Europe all demanding similar resources. This implies that despite the fact that the United States is still in strategic dominance, it is still limited to how far as it can be to eliminating the peril of disruption within the Strait but not further.

Iranian Strategy

The simple asymmetry of the strategy chosen by Iran in the Strait of Hormuz is to balance the conventional military power of the U.S. with indirect, flexible and cost imposing approaches. Alternatively, to other countries directly involving themselves in naval conflict, Iran builds on a doctrine of deterrence through

uncertainty and disruption and is therefore able to exert strategic influence despite its lack of resources (Takeyh, 2026).

A significant driver to this plan is that the Strait is and continues to be threatened by a partial or total shut down. Iranian political and military leaders periodically announce the potential to limit maritime traffic as a response to sanctions, military pressure or perceived aggression. Although complete closure is never implemented in real life, and the threat in itself is mostly credible to play a significant psychological and economical role in global energy markets.

In addition to strategic signaling, Iran practices harms to commercial vessels, such as shadowing, inspections, and occasional seizure of tankers which have hotly disputed legal claims. These measures are usually designed in a manner such that it does not go significantly above the threshold of full-scale war yet sufficiently to make a perceptual shift in the minds of shipping companies and insurance providers. The implication of that on the global trade is more Insurance costs are charged even in the absence of a long-term conflict.

Use of insurance, shipping risk as an economic leverage is another important aspect of the Iranian strategy. The Iranian element of perceived insecurity in the Strait further adds the cost of the trade by market forces rather than resorting to military action to antagonize the international community. This kind of economic warfare enables Iran to affect prices of oil in the world and shipping patterns without necessarily having to take full control over the waterway. Moreover, Iran has been predominantly using the tactic of strategic ambiguity, as opposed to direct engagement. This implies that its intention is carefully maintained ambiguous so that the intent or purpose of any action becomes obscure and it becomes hard to tell whether it is a defensive deterrence or a preparatory action. Recent studies also suggest that this ambiguity makes the acts of global states and the world markets more uncertain about when the only action that may be implemented in order to prevent the reoccurrence of the problem under analysis is the deployment of force (Takeyh, 2026).

Interestingly, more current literature suggests that Iran does not necessarily need to shut the Strait completely, in order to produce any sort of strategic impact. Even selective intervention, such as drone surveillance, disruptive actions of a temporary nature, etc., can easily lead to increased uncertainty in the world and economic losses. This enhances the economical aspect of power projection by the Iranians whereby disruption, both psychological as well as economic is the priority in projection rather than territory.

Dilemma of man-at-sea security in practice

The latest turn of events between the United States and Iran in the Strait of Hormuz provides us with a clear picture of the nature of the security dilemma when one actor tries to defend him by assuming the form of offensive action to the other and thus putting in place rather than stability a continuous escalation set up. One example is the presence of the United States in the Persian Gulf which is enhanced by forward deploying, surveilling and coalition-building maritime patrols. Taking

into consideration what Washington thought, the measures focus on safeguarding the freedom of navigation, protection of the member states in the Gulf region and is also oriented towards the continuity of the global supply of energy. Iran however views this prolonged naval build as being a feeling of strategic encirclement and pressure, particularly in the light of sanctions as well as the issue of regime security.

In response to this, Iran is strategizing to adopt tactic of asymmetric sea power that is meant to counter any conventional superiority of the U.S. These include the use of the fast-attack boats, naval mines, drone surveillance, selective tanker harassment and selective strategic signaling through threats of disruption or partial closure of the Strait. Unlike the United States and their allies who tend to interpret it as an act of aggression and destabilizing acts which are influenced by their sovereignty and national interests, it is perceived by the Iranian worldview as an act of defensive deterrence to protect their sovereignty and national interests. This bilateral misperception makes the circle of insecurity in the center of the theory of the security dilemma.

The outcome of that kind of interaction is a gradual militarization of the Strait of Hormuz. Increased levels of surveillance, naval readiness and presence all in turn increase the possibility of making a miscalculation or an unintended escalation. The associated dynamic of escalation has also proven to have certain economic and logistical effects over the last few years. This means that despite the Strait never being officially closed the tensions that arose on a regular basis led to some disruption of the shipping routes, rerouting of commercial vessels, and increased maritime insurance premiums. Increased geopolitical risk, however, commonly causes shipping companies to avoid or minimize transit through the Strait and in effect slow maritime transit and increase global transport costs. This shows how the phenomenon of the security dilemma in the Strait of Hormuz goes beyond the military arenas, directly into the world global energy markets and commercial supply-lines, and underlines the importance of Strait as a key and highly critical chokepoint in world politics.

Global Security implications

The effects of this turmoil in the Strait of Hormuz are far-reaching and extend way beyond the immediate rivalry that exists between Iran and the United States on the world at large, the security structures within the region and the overall great-power rivalry. As one of the most important maritime chokepoints in the world, even slight disruption in the Strait has a ripple effect on the entire international system in its different sectors of international security (Al-Mansoori, 2026).

Energy Markets: Price volatility, and supply shocks

The most immediate, though by far the least long-term impact of the crisis in the Strait of Hormuz is that it has also touched the global energy markets. Because this region holds a significant share of the oil and the LNG exported to other countries in the world, any messages of danger either through the aggression of military force, hijacking of tankers or even threatening to shut them down will result in a quick correcting of world oil prices. The price shocks can be not only attributed to the actual supply shocks but even to the market speculations and risk perception. A

disproportionate share of the burden of such volatility as it has been argued by (Hassan 2026) falls on the economies of Global South countries who are more susceptible to the influence of such volatility.

International Trade: International shipping time and the cost of insurance

The Strait is also unstable thereby destabilizing major international networks of maritime trade. In reaction to this, commercial shipping companies are more likely to adopt either the rerouting or the slowing down of its transit speed or previously never seen increased security measures when passing through the area. These changes result in an increase in the costs of transportation and global supply chains can lag behind. As (Siddiqui, 2026) point out, it may not be physically blocked at all, but the increasing risk premiums in the global shipping markets are caused by asymmetric maritime signaling by Iran. Also, an increase in the premium of the maritime insurance during the times of tension increases considerably, which is an indication of increase in uncertainty in the region.

Regional Politics: Militarization of Gulf states.

Regional level, the further instability of the Strait of Hormuz contributes to the slowness of the process of the militarization of the Gulf politics. As the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states put it, are starting to invest in naval modernization and external-security cooperation. As (Al-Mansoori, 2026) argues, this trend is an indication of an underlying change in security architecture within the Gulf, where states are increasingly focusing on deterrence potentials, as opposed to diplomatic de-escalation. This militarization also helps the process of escalating further in the circle of insecurity as regional actors seem to be more in tune with the foreign actors, in particular the United States.

Great Power Rivalry: The External Sources and Energy Interdependence

Rather, the consequences of a shaky state of affairs in the Strait have an implication of great-power in a global context, as well. Even though the United States remains a dominant player in the region, it remains a player in the region even though, other players are also present in the region such as, China and Russia who are indirect players in the region since they are more likely to be impacted by the energy flows in the Middle East. (Farooq, 2026) discusses the U.S. naval and military strength in the Gulf, increasingly according to his view through the prism of global power projection, rather than pure maritime security. In the meantime, as per (Rezaei 2026), the strategy of controlled instability that Iran has created and that is maintained by the rest of the players the world actors is the indirect impact of multipolar competition.

CONCLUSION

The Strait of Hormuz is where the energy security, military policy, and even the geopolitical struggle merge. This aspect of Iran-United States of America relationship in this region has been analyzed to imply that the Strait is not only a geographic route but an intensely fought strategic space which is created through incompatible visions of security as well as disparity in security interests. The paper

has demonstrated that the security dilemma is an extremely potent driver to the relationship between one party namely Iran and the other party namely the United States as any defensive moves of the one party are interpreted as a threat by the other party. The naval presence of the United States in the Gulf does not lack at the eyes of the Iranians the outlines of a strategic encircling of Iran. In response to the latter, the asymmetric maritime policy of Iran is regarded by the United States as stabilize and aggressive. This kind of perception by each side contributes to a spiraling up of suspicion, counter measures and free milkops in the Strait. The Strait of Hormuz, is a significant component of oil supply chains in the global economy and any little disturbance will result in a significant shift in price of oil, the cost of shipping and insurance costs not to mention. It is such a sensitivity that the Strait is not merely an object of concern to the participants of the region, but also such that the balance of the world economy is concerned. The instability in this region thus has both direct and indirect impacts to both developed and developing economies. On a regional level, there have been permanent tensions that have led to the gradual processes of modernization of Gulf security structures, as the states increasingly seek moments to achieve their security through relying on external security unions, and through the institutionalization and the modernization of the defense structures. This has contributed to the sharpness in strategic clashes and the reduction of space to involve in the diplomatic de-escalation. The importance of the Strait at the world level has now grown beyond the geopolitics elements in the region, as well as the strategic calculations of the great powers, since they hinge on the unstoppable flow of energy on the Gulf.

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