

US SENATE

United States Senate



AGENDA

Deliberating U.S. Strategy in the Iran Conflict: Congressional War Powers, Ongoing Military Engagement, and the Reshaping of Regional Security in the Middle East.



Table of Contents

1. Important definitions
2. Introduction to the United States Senate
3. Introduction to the Agenda
4. Analysing the Larger Themes of the Agenda
5. Past Congressional Action
6. Stakeholder Analysis
7. Present day advocacy, solutions, best practices
8. Case studies
9. Guiding questions for the committee
10. Recommended resources
11. Bibliography

Section 1

Important Definitions, Concepts and Abbreviations

1.1 JCPOA: Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action

What it is: A 2015 Iran nuclear deal between Iran, the US, Russia, France, Germany, China, and the UK. These are all the P5 (the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council) nations, plus Germany, which provided the backing of the European Union to the action plan. Germany, with France and the U.K, sought to avoid a nuclear arms race in the Middle East and maintain global non-proliferation.

Idea: Under this deal, Iran agreed to limit its nuclear programme in exchange for the United States relieving the sanctions placed upon Iran. Relevant limits applied by the JCPOA on the Iranian nuclear programme were the following:

- Iran agreed to extensive monitoring and inspections by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).
- Uranium enrichment limits were set to 3.67% concentration of U-235, which was far below the 90% needed to produce weapons-grade material
- Iran was only allowed to operate 5060 first-generation IR-1 centrifuges at the Nantaz Nuclear Facility for a period of 10 years. These were Iran's least efficient and oldest machines.
- More than 1,000 advanced IR-2m centrifuges were dismantled and placed in IAEA-monitored storage, which were the most efficient and newest models.
- The Fordow Fuel Enrichment Plant was banned from conducting any uranium enrichment for 15 years and was turned into a nuclear, physics, and technology center. The 1,044 centrifuges left at the site were allowed to produce only stable radioisotopes for medicinal and industrial use.
- Iran's enriched uranium inventory was restricted to 300 kg (about 202 kilograms by uranium weight) for a period of 15 years under the JCPOA.
- Heavy water stockpile was limited to being only 130 metric tonnes.
- Introduced various sunset clauses, like: restrictions on Iran's development and testing of advanced centrifuges would expire between 8.5-10 years, Enrichment level caps would be lifted after 15 years, etc...

Importance to the Agenda: The collapse of the JCPOA is very important to the agenda. After Trump withdrew from the JCPOA in 2018, immense military escalation took place, further

increasing regional tensions, and marking the start of the “Maximum Pressure Campaign”, which was much more restrictive and intense.

1.2 AUMF: Authorisation for Use of Military Force

What it is- An AUMF is a joint resolution passed by the United States Congress that grants the President the authority to utilize the U.S. Armed Forces in specific military programmes/initiatives. It is the alternative used when conventional war is not needed.

Important initiations:

2001 AUMF(Public Law 107-40), after 9/11

2002 AUMF9(Public Law 107-243), The Iraq War

Importance to the Agenda: The agenda specifically emphasizes the “Authorisation for the Use of Military Force.” Debates over the Soleimani strike and executive military powers revolve directly around AUMFs and whether they were used for more than their original purpose.

1.3 Article II: Part of the US Constitution defining presidential powers.

What it describes- Article II of the U.S constitution outlines the qualifications, election process, and core powers of the presidency, as well as the rules for the removal of executive officials. It clearly states the term limits, Presidential qualifications, and many more executive powers of the president, alongside the oath to office.

Reference phrase: “President is the Commander-in-Chief of the military”

Importance to the agenda: Presidents use Article II to justify military action without Congress. Example: Trump used Article II as reasoning for the Soleimani strike, as The administration argued the President has the unilateral authority to order military action to protect American lives and interests against “imminent” attacks.

1.4 War Powers Resolution (1973):

What it is- A law passed after the Vietnam War to limit presidential war powers.

Idea: The president must:

- A. Notify Congress as soon as possible (latest 48 hours) after any military action (i.e., the use or deployment of armed forces, weapons, or military capabilities by a state to achieve strategic, political, or security objectives)
- B. Cannot continue long-term (more than 60 days) (i.e. sustained or continuing military involvement beyond immediate self-defence or short-term operations) military action without the approval of Congress.

Importance: Congress used this against Trump after the Soleimani strike.

1.5 Deterrence:

What it is- Preventing an enemy from acting through fear of consequences.

Types of deterrence:

1. military deterrence- “the strategy of discouraging an adversary from taking unwanted actions, such as an armed attack, by threatening them with unacceptable consequences”, where the adversary is any opponent state.
2. economic deterrence- “the use of economic means to manipulate the cost-benefit calculations of a potential aggressor, effectively discouraging unwanted behavior by making the anticipated costs exceed any potential gains”
3. nuclear deterrence- “a military doctrine proposing that a state possessing a credible nuclear arsenal can prevent an adversary from launching a nuclear attack out of fear of severe retaliation”

Example: The killing of Qasem Soleimani to signal that further attacks would incite massive retaliation.

1.6 Proxy Warfare:

What it is- Indirect warfare using allied militias/groups instead of direct war.

Iran's proxies:

- Hezbollah
- Houthis
- Iraqi militias

Importance to the Agenda: Iran's military influence in the Middle East largely operates through proxies like Hezbollah and Iraqi militias. Understanding proxy warfare is important to understanding the "Iranian Strategic Threat."

1.7 Coercive Diplomacy:

What it is- Using pressure and threats to force another state to change its behaviour.

Agenda Importance: Maximum Pressure was a form of coercive diplomacy. Trump attempted to force Iran into renegotiation through sanctions and strategic pressure rather than traditional diplomacy.

1.8 Maximum Pressure:

What it did- economically, politically, and strategically pressure Iran into changing its behaviour or accepting a new nuclear deal on American terms.

1. Economic Sanctions- The US imposed severe sanctions on:

- Iranian oil exports
- banking systems
- shipping
- metals
- businesses linked to the IRGC

2. Secondary Sanctions: The US threatened penalties against any country and/or company doing business with Iran.

3. Diplomatic Isolation: The US tried to:

- reduce Iran's international influence,
- weaken its legitimacy,
- And also diplomatically isolate the country.

4. Military Deterrence: The policy also included:

- troop deployments,
- naval deployments,
- deterrent signalling,
- and eventually the Soleimani strike.

5. IRGC Terrorist Designation (2019): The US declared the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps a terrorist organisation. This was unprecedented as the IRGC was a part of another sovereign state's military.

IX. Strategic Patience:

What it is- To avoid immediate massive retaliation while gradually increasing pressure.

Iran responded to US pressure through calibrated escalation instead of immediate full-scale retaliation. This shaped the entire escalation cycle from 2019 to 2020

X. Escalation Dominance

What it is- The ability to control and outmatch an opponent at every level of conflict escalation.

Both the US and Iran attempted to show escalation dominance during tanker attacks, missile strikes, and the Soleimani crisis. It is key to understanding strategic signalling in the region.

XI. Grey-Zone Warfare

What it is- Conflict below the level of open conventional war.

Much of the US-Iran conflict occurred through cyber attacks, sabotage, drones, and proxy operations rather than declared war. This defined the modern Middle Eastern theatre during Trump's term.

XII. Sanctions Architecture

What it is- The full economic system designed to pressure another country.

Trump's Maximum Pressure campaign depended on a powerful sanctions architecture targeting Iran's economy, oil exports, and banking system. It became America's primary non-military weapon.

XIII. Breakout Time

What it is- The time needed for Iran to produce enough fissile material for a nuclear weapon.

One of the main goals of the JCPOA was increasing breakout time. After the US withdrawal, Iran's reduced breakout time became a major strategic concern.

XIV. Regional Architecture

What it is- The political and security structure of the Middle East.

The agenda explicitly asks about the “future of regional architecture.” The Abraham Accords and anti-Iran alliances were attempts to reshape the Middle East strategically.

XV. Normalization

What it is- The establishment of official diplomatic relations between states.

Normalisation between Israel and Arab states under the Abraham Accords was designed partly to contain Iran regionally. It represented a major shift in Middle Eastern geopolitics.

XVI. Containment

What it is- Preventing a rival state from expanding its influence.

A major question is whether the US should contain Iran rather than directly confront it.

XVII. Strategic Deterrence

What it is- Using the threat of force to influence an adversary's behaviour.

The Soleimani strike was often justified as restoring deterrence.

XVIII. Power Projection

What it is- A state's ability to deploy influence or military force beyond its borders.

US bases and carrier groups in the Gulf are examples of power projection.

XIX. Balance of Power

What it is- A situation where no single state dominates a region.

Many argue US policy sought to prevent Iran from becoming the dominant regional power.

XX. Asymmetric Warfare

What it is- When a weaker actor uses unconventional methods against a stronger one.

Iran relies heavily on asymmetric capabilities.

XXI. Forward Deployment

Section 2

Introduction to the United States Senate

The United States Congress, the nation's bicameral legislature, is divided into the two chambers of the Upper House (United States Senate) and the Lower House (the U.S House of Representatives). Together, the 2 houses wield the authority, under Article I of the Constitution, to make, pass or defeat federal legislation.

The Upper House, hereinafter referred to as the US Senate, holds the exclusive power to confirm American Presidential appointments, to ratify or reject treaties as well as to try impeachment cases brought by the House of Representatives. The composition and powers of the Senate are also established in the US Constitution under Article I (in effect since March 4, 1789)

2.1 Brief History of the United States Senate:

The USSenate, as an institution, can claim several milestone inception dates. In 1787, the US Senate's role was conceived by the Founding Fathers as a form of checks and balances on the

elected House of Representatives (Lower House). On July 16, 1787, the framers of the Constitution reached upon the “Great Compromise”, which stated that all states would be equally represented in the US Senate. Following this historic event, September 17, 1787, 39 of the Convention’s 55 delegates signed the Constitution at Independence Hall. Of these 39 signatories, 16 eventually also became senators. September 30, 1788, the Pennsylvania legislature elected America’s first two senators, Robert Morris and William Maclay. Finally, on April 6, 1789, the Senate achieved its first quorum. April 6 is also considered to be one of the most prominent inception dates. The Senate’s first task was to meet jointly with the House in order to count the electoral votes that confirmed George Washington’s victory as President. Until the 17th Amendment of the Constitution in 1913, the Senators were indirectly elected by state legislatures. Post the amendment, Senate members are directly elected by voters from their respective states.

2.2 Purpose:

George Frisbee Hoar, a Massachusetts Senator in the 1890s, wrote an article titled, “Has the Senate Degenerated?”. In this article, Hoar mentions that the Senate was created as the ‘sober second thought of the people’, that would help them find expression. It was additionally intended that it should resist the ‘hasty, intemperate and passionate desire of the people’. Hoar greatly believed that while the President represents the majority of the people, the House of Representatives and the immediate desire of constituencies, the Senate stands for the American people’s will alongside deliberate, permanent and settled desire. Working upon this principle, The United States Senate integrates the principle of a ‘sober second thought’ in legislation along with crafting policies that hold effects beyond domestic affairs and reach towards global governance and systems. Its purpose is further enunciated in Article I, Section 3 of the constitution that highlights the Senate’s role in advice and consent (to review and approve international treaties and presidential nominations such as cabinet members and ambassadors), to hold the sole authority to try all impeachment trials to try all federal officials (including the President) along with the power to convict them, and finally, the power to take legislative action (creating and passing laws and proposing or concurring with amendments). The institutional design of the Senate is also a reflection of the framers’ belief that legislatures must act as a balancing force with democratic responsiveness and long term national interests.

2.3 Functioning and Structure:

Since the fundamentals of American democracy aspire to represent all American states equally, regardless of size or population, each of America's 50 states elect two senators, who each serve six-year terms. In the Senate, only one-third of the Senate's seats are allocated with each general election (House of Representatives election). The Senate emphasizes on longer, overlapping terms to provide the congress with stability, and to reduce the immediate pressure of public opinion on members. Until 1913 (the Constitution's 17th Amendment), senators were elected by legislatures of their states. Since each of the 50 American states have 2 representatives, the Senate consists of 100 members. The Vice President of the United States of America also serves as the president of the Senate and oversees the proceedings, ensuring the Senate's following of established rules and decorum. A Vice President holds no vote in the Senate unless the votes are equally divided. In the hypothetical absence of the Vice President, the responsibility is then lifted by a "*President Pro Tempore*" (Latin: President for the Time Being)(usually the longest serving member from the majority party). The Senate majorly functions for the purpose of maintaining checks and balances while limiting overreaches by the Executive and the Lower House. The Senate often also functions to provide advice and consent. The functioning and structure of the Upper House is also mentioned under Article I of the Constitution. Traditionally speaking, the passing of bills requires passing from both houses which leads to the bill being reviewed by the President (who additionally holds a VETO power in the case, which can only be overruled by a two-thirds majority vote by the entire chamber). The US Senate also consists of sixteen standing committees grouped around major policy fields such as budgets, finance, government operations, foreign relations, the judiciary, staffs and other subcommittees. On multiple occasions, bills are referred to the committees during the sessions. The committees are headed by a majority party leader and hold hearings, where they may also call upon witnesses to testify to the legislation. Often special committees are also created to make studies and conduct investigations.

2.4 Powers:

To ensure the smooth functioning of the US Senate, it is bestowed certain powers, that are as follows:

A. Legislative Powers:

(i) Voting:

The Senate may take action via voting on subjects such as bills, resolutions, amendments, motions, nominations and treaties. Voting takes place through several mechanisms such as roll call votes, voice votes and unanimous consent.

(ii) Filibusters and Cloture:

A filibuster refers to a political action that allows delay for debate or blocks legislation. Until 1917, unlimited debate took place in the Senate, after which, Rule 22 was adopted, which allows the termination of a debate via $\frac{2}{3}$ majority (also referred to as 'Cloture'). In 1975, the Senate reduced the required votes for cloture from $\frac{2}{3}$ (67 members) to $\frac{3}{5}$ (60 members) of the total 100 members.

(iii) Senate Rules:

The Senate holds the power to establish a list of special rules of procedure for particular types of legislation. These rules also determine how bills and resolutions are moved, the Senate committee structures, how debate proceeds and how members cast votes alongside the required quorums for their respective functions.

B. Oversight and Managerial Powers:

(i) Censure:

Censure is a form of discipline used by the Senate, often as condemnation or denouncement, in the form of a formal statement of disapproval without directly removing a senator from office. This also comes under Article I, Section 5 of the Constitution that states that "Each house may determine the rules of its proceeding, punish its members for disorderly behaviour and with the concurrence of two-thirds, expel a member".

(ii) Investigations:

The Congress may conduct investigations of malfeasance (misconduct such as campaign fraud, sexual misconduct etc.) in the executive branch and in American society. This is critical for restraining governments and highlighting public education.

(iii) Expulsion:

Under Article I, Section 5, each house of the Congress may have the power to punish members for disorderly behaviour and with the concurrence of $\frac{2}{3}$ majority, expel members. Historically, since 1789, the Senate has expelled 15 senators.

C. Constitutional Powers:

(i) Contested Senate Elections:

The US Senate holds the power to judge election returns and member qualifications. The Senate has also established its own procedures for judging qualifications and elections.

(ii) Impeachment:

Impeachment refers to a constitutional procedure, by which the House of Representatives may formally charge a high ranking public official (such as the president) with misconduct or serious crimes. The Senate holds the sole power to conduct impeachment trials by serving as a judge and jury. Since 1789, the Senate has been responsible for trying numerous federal officials (inclusive of three presidents: Andrew Johnson (1868), Bill Clinton (1998) and Donald Trump (2020 & 2021))

(iii) Nominations:

The constitution also states that presidential nominations are to be conducted under advice and consent of the Senate. The senate has the power to give advice on the appointments of ambassadors, public ministers and consuls, Judges of the Supreme Court and all other United States Officers (under Article 2, Section 2).

(iv) Treaties:

The Senate is also bestowed with the power to approve, via two-thirds majority, treaties designed by the executive. Historically, the Senate has rejected considerably few of the many considered treaties (though many treaties have also been drowned out in committee or been withdrawn). The Senate also holds the power to amend or adopt changes to a treaty. Often the president can also enter executive agreements with foreign nations, under which case, the treaty is not within the field of the Senate's approval.

D. National Security Powers:

(i) Declarations of War:

The Congress holds the sole power to declare war. Historically speaking, such an event has occurred 11 times, including the war with Great Britain in 1812. Since the time, the Senate has had a role in consenting to resolutions authorizing military force, and is still working on US military policy.

Section 3

Introduction to the Agenda

3.1 Addressing the Constitutional elements:

The United States Constitution divides the war-making power: a) Article I, Section 8 vests Congress with the authority to declare war, raise armies, and fund military operations. b) Article II makes the president Commander-in-Chief.

The framers intended these clauses to operate together. In essence, war-making was meant to be a deliberate, collective decision that committed the nation through its *legislature* (Congress). War-conducting, once that decision was made, was meant to be *executive* (President). This division has, for a long time, existed on paper. But in more recent times, the distinction has been blurred in practice.

The last time Congress formally declared war was in June 1942, during the Second World War, against Romania, Bulgaria, and Hungary. Every armed conflict the United States has entered in the eighty-four years since has happened without a declaration. These include: Korea, Vietnam, Lebanon, Grenada, Panama, the Gulf War, Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Syria, Yemen, and now Iran. In some of these conflicts, Congress authorized the use of force through an Authorization for the Use of Military Force. This legal instrument has functioned as a partial substitute for a declaration. In others, presidents acted on claimed inherent authority under Article II.

Feature	Authorisation for the Use of Military Force	Declaration of War
Constitutional Basis	Article I, Section 8, Clause 11 ("Congress shall have power... to declare War")	Article I war powers, exercised through legislative authorisation rather than formal declaration
Legal effect	Activates full state of war under domestic and international law; triggers wartime statutes covering trade, enemy property, civil liberties, conscription	Authorizes specific use of force; does not activate the full domestic wartime legal regime
Scope	Names an enemy state; generally unrestricted in geography, duration, and means	Defined by the statute itself; can be limited to specific actors, regions, or objectives, or left broad
Termination	Ended by treaty, joint resolution, or unilateral congressional action	Ended when conditions of the statute are met, or when explicitly repealed by Congress
Previous uses	11 declarations across 5 conflicts: War of 1812, Mexican-American War, Spanish-American War, World War I, World War II	Dozens since 1945, most notably the 1991 Iraq AUMF, 2001 AUMF, 2002 Iraq AUMF
Last invoked	June 1942 (Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary)	2002 (Iraq); 2001 AUMF still in force and cited as authority for ongoing operations
International	Recognized as a formal state of war	Domestic legal instrument; does

Law	between sovereign nations	not constitute a declared international state of war
Political impact	Involves national commitment and is politically costly to enact	Lower political repercussions as it permits force without naming the action "war."

Table: Comparison between Declaration of War and Authorisation for the Use of Military Force

The War Powers Resolution of 1973 was Congress's attempt to reverse this trajectory. Passed over President Nixon's veto in the aftermath of the Vietnam war, it requires the president to notify Congress within forty-eight hours of introducing armed forces into hostilities and to withdraw those forces within sixty days unless Congress has authorized continued action, with an additional thirty-day window for safe withdrawal.

In reality, no president since Richard Nixon (37th POTUS) has accepted the resolution as binding. Some have argued the resolution is unconstitutional, while others have followed the rule but ignored the sixty-day deadline.

The Authorizations for the Use of Military Force passed in 2001 and 2002 illustrate the broader pattern of military action by the United States of America. The 2001 AUMF was written in the days after September 11 to authorize action against al-Qaeda and "associated forces." It has since been cited as the legal basis for operations against Iran-backed militias in Iraq and Syria, against targets in Somalia and Libya, and against actors in at least nineteen other countries. The 2002 AUMF was written for the invasion of Iraq under Saddam Hussein, who was overthrown in 2003 and executed in 2006. Yet the 2002 AUMF was cited by the Trump administration in 2020 as part of the legal basis for the killing of Iranian General Qasem Soleimani, an interpretation that members from all sides of the Senate then criticised.

On March 29, 2023, the Senate voted sixty-six to thirty to repeal the 1991 and 2002 AUMFs, with eighteen Republicans joining all Democrats in support. Senators Tim Kaine and Todd Young, who had pursued the repeal since 2019, framed it as a critical step to reclaim Congress's constitutional authority and end "forever wars." Young described the continued validity of the AUMFs as an "intentional abdication" of congressional responsibility. However, the 2001 AUMF, the most consequential of the three, was not part of the repeal. An amendment by Senator Rand Paul to include it was rejected nine to eighty-six.

This is the constitutional architecture the committee now inherits. The framework at present has not failed because of any single decision, but rather it has gradually eroded through presidential precedent, judicial deference, and congressional acceptance over decades.

3.2 Why Iran, Why Now: The events building up to the current situation:

The relationship between the United States and Iran has been the most persistent stress test of American war powers for nearly two decades. Since the 1979 revolution that ended the Pahlavi monarchy and brought the Islamic Republic to power, the two countries have cycled through hostility, contained tension, attempted engagement, unilateral withdrawal, and direct confrontation. The pattern accelerated sharply after 2018.

In May 2018, President Trump withdrew the United States from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, the multilateral agreement that had constrained Iran's nuclear program in exchange for sanctions relief. The deal had capped Iranian uranium enrichment at 3.67 percent and limited Iran's stockpile of low-enriched uranium to 300 kilograms, with 'intrusive' verification by the International Atomic Energy Agency. The administration's stated objective was to negotiate a stronger deal under the pressure of reimposed sanctions. Iran, which was complying with the JCPOA at the time of withdrawal, did not succumb to that pressure. Iran responded in 2019 with graduated non-compliance, ultimately resulting in breaching the stockpile limit in July of that year and the enrichment limit shortly after. By the eve of the 2026 strikes, Iran's program had advanced far beyond JCPOA parameters, with a substantial stockpile enriched to 60 percent.

The killing of General Soleimani by a USA drone strike in Baghdad on January 3, 2020, was the first direct kinetic confrontation between American forces and a senior Iranian state official in decades. The Trump administration justified the strike under the 2002 AUMF and as an exercise of inherent Article II authority. Senator Kaine introduced a War Powers Resolution to terminate hostile actions against Iran absent congressional authorization. The Senate passed it 55-45 on February 13, 2020, with the support of 8 Republicans. Despite the House of Representatives passing it, it was then vetoed by President Trump.

The Biden administration (2021-2025) attempted to revive the JCPOA through indirect talks in Vienna across 2021 and 2022. The talks, however, failed as Iran demanded a guarantee that the

United States would not unilaterally withdraw from a renewed deal. The administration could not provide such a guarantee as the Constitution does not permit one executive to bind a future one*. After Iran's June 2021 election brought Ebrahim Raisi to the presidency, Tehran's negotiating posture hardened further. By the end of 2022, the agreement was, in practical terms, dead.

**It is important to note that the JCPOA was an executive agreement. The Constitution states that executive agreements cannot bind future Presidents, while treaties ratified by Congress hold viable for all future administrations.*

The Hamas attacks of October 7, 2023 and the regional war that followed reshaped the strategic landscape. Houthi attacks on shipping in the Red Sea, Hezbollah operations on Israel's northern front, and persistent Iran-backed militia strikes on US bases in Iraq and Syria changed the threshold of acceptable response. On January 28, 2024, a drone launched by the Islamic Resistance in Iraq, an Iran-backed coalition of Shia militias, struck Tower 22, a US logistics outpost in northeastern Jordan, resulting in the death of 3 American soldiers and leaving 47 wounded. The political domino that the attack generated effectively reshaped the Biden administration's calculations for engaging in combat.

In April 2024, Iran launched approximately 300 drones and missiles directly at Israel from Iranian territory, retaliating for a *suspected* Israeli strike on Iran's consular building in Damascus that killed two senior Iranian generals. It was the first direct state-to-state attack from Iranian soil against Israel in the history of the Islamic Republic. With substantial American, British, and French defensive support, Israel was able to intercept approximately 99 percent of the incoming munitions. In October 2024, Iran launched a second direct attack, firing 180 ballistic missiles after claiming that Israel killed Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh and Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah.

The 2 attacks essentially ended the proxy era between Iran and Israel and marked the beginning of direct confrontation.

What followed under the second Trump administration is the war that the committee is now deliberating. Just two days before the strikes, US and Iranian negotiators had concluded a substantive round of nuclear talks in Geneva, with both parties agreeing to continue diplomatic engagement. Operation Epic Fury, launched on February 28, 2026, alongside Israel's parallel Operation Roaring Lion, consisted of approximately 900 strikes within twelve hours against Iranian nuclear facilities, command and control centers, and leadership. Supreme Leader Ali

Khamenei was killed in the operation at his Tehran compound, with approximately forty senior figures across the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps and the civilian government killed alongside him. A separate strike on a girls' school in the city of Minab killed 170 people, an incident that has become a focal point of international criticism. Iran retaliated with missile and drone strikes against US bases in the Gulf and against Israel, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, and Qatar. The operation formally concluded on May 5, 2026, after approximately ten weeks of major combat operations. Cleric Alireza Arafai was named interim Acting Supreme Leader.

This is the agenda the committee inherits. It is up to the Senate to decide the future of this war, to consider what is in the best interest of America, to act on behalf of the people of the United States, and to deliberate on the future of American involvement in West Asia.

3.3 Current Situation:

As of the committee's opening session, US forces remain in active operations across the Persian Gulf and the broader Middle Eastern theater. Operation Project Freedom, launched on May 4, 2026, deployed 15,000 American troops and over 100 land and sea-based aircraft to escort neutral merchant shipping through Omani waters and into the Strait of Hormuz. The operation resulted in the sinking of seven Iranian fast attack craft. Iran claimed two missiles had struck a US Navy destroyer; the administration denied the claim. A French-owned container ship, the CMA CGM San Antonio, was struck by an Iranian projectile on 5 May while transiting the strait, injuring eight crew members. While the operation was paused within 48 hours to allow peace talks, the rules of engagement governing the operation and, consequently, other military operations in the theatre have not been disclosed to Congress in any detailed form.

The naval blockade of Iranian ports, ordered by the president on April 13, remained in force until 29 May 2026. Over 850 ships were trapped in the Gulf. Iran was losing approximately 500 million dollars in daily oil revenue. The International Energy Agency has warned of the worst global energy crisis in decades. The dollar has risen as a safe-haven asset while developing economies have absorbed disproportionate damage. Pakistan's weekly oil bill has more than doubled, from 300 million dollars to 800 million. Thailand has approved emergency borrowing. India, Bangladesh, the Philippines, and other energy-dependent economies face acute pressure. The asymmetric distribution of burden has produced varying diplomatic stances. The states most able to absorb the costs are the states most willing to sustain the conflict; similarly, the states least able to absorb them have the least voice in resolving it.

Iran's nuclear program is in an unknown state. The decapitation strikes targeted facilities including known enrichment sites, but the extent of damage to hardened underground installations such as the Fordow facility, buried under approximately 80 meters of rock, has not been independently verified. The International Atomic Energy Agency has been denied access since the strikes began. Estimates of Iran's residual breakout capacity range from weeks to years, depending on assumptions about surviving infrastructure, scientific capabilities, and the political will of the surviving Iranian state to reconstitute the program.

The ceasefire currently in place was declared on April 8, 2026, initially as a two-week framework mediated by Pakistan, and extended indefinitely by President Trump on April 21. It has been described by both sides as fragile and has been violated multiple times. The ceasefire framework exists alongside an ongoing negotiation process. Iran submitted a fourteen-point peace proposal in early May in response to a US-backed proposal delivered through Pakistani intermediaries. The major points of Iran's proposal have been reported in Iranian state media and international press, and include a thirty-day timeline for resolution, guarantees against future military aggression, withdrawal of US forces from Iran's periphery, an end to the naval blockade, release of frozen Iranian assets, payment of reparations, lifting of sanctions, an end to fighting in Lebanon, and a new mechanism governing the Strait of Hormuz. The full text has not been officially released by either government.

President Trump has publicly threatened to "blow Iran off the face of the Earth" should US vessels come under attack.

Congress has not voted. The War Powers Resolution clock, triggered by the initiation of hostilities on February 28, expired without a vote either to authorize continued operations or to terminate them. The statutory text suggests that US forces should have been withdrawn from hostilities by that date, considering the lack of congressional action. The administration has argued that the ceasefire agreements paused the War powers clock, which has then been argued against. The administration still has not sought an Authorization for the Use of Military Force specific to Iran. No congressional resolution defining the scope, objectives, or end conditions of the conflict has been introduced and brought to a floor vote.

The 119th Congress, as of the committee's convening, has been a body that the executive has ignored.

3.4 Goals for this committee:

The agenda directs the committee toward three major questions, each corresponding to a category of decision that the Senate now must make, and has the authority to make.

The first concerns congressional war powers. Will the Senate assert its Article I authority by introducing a War Powers Resolution that requires the termination of hostilities absent congressional authorization? Will it pursue a new AUMF that authorizes operations against Iran specifically, replacing the stretched interpretations of the 2001 and 2002 authorizations under which the current war has been conducted? Will it consider repealing the 2001 AUMF outright, ending the legal foundation that has supported two decades of operations across the region? Or will it continue the pattern of ignorance, allowing the executive to define the war's scope through unilateral action?

As the forefront of decision-making in the United States, each action taken by the Senate carries consequences; A War Powers Resolution, even if vetoed, would allow Congress to set an influential, recorded precedent; An Iran-specific AUMF grants the conflict a legitimate legal basis, but allows Congress to define it. Ignorance, the path of least resistance, makes the next unauthorized war easier.

The second question concerns ongoing military engagement. The Senate has the power over the funds and the power to set conditions on appropriations. Should the war continue in its current form, expand, or be terminated? What is the response framework if Iran resumes attacks? Under what conditions should the blockade end? What is the appropriate US posture toward Iran's proposal, and what role should Congress play in shaping the negotiating position? These are the questions you must answer. The choices the committee makes here may perhaps determine the future of energy, combat, and security.

The third question concerns the architecture of West Asian regional security after the war. The conflict has destabilised and reshaped the strategic landscape. Iran's regional position has been largely degraded, while some may say that Israel's strategic dominance has expanded, but its diplomatic isolation has deepened. The Gulf states are choosing between continued alignment with Washington and the multipolar architecture that Beijing brokered through the 2023 Saudi-Iran rapprochement. Russia has deepened ties with Iran and used the crisis to demonstrate the costs of US unilateralism. China has positioned itself as a mediator and an alternative pole of regional stability. Pakistan, which brokered the failed Islamabad talks in April, has emerged as an unexpected diplomatic actor. The committee must consider what role the United States will play in the architecture that emerges, and what role it will permit other powers to play.

The Senate must now realise that American influence over West Asia faces threats that have the ability to disrupt the USA's position not only in the region, but the world.

These three questions are three sides of the same... dice?

Section 4

Detailed Analysis of the Larger Themes

The agenda before this committee carries 5 major dimensions, each of which asks the Senate to make decisions of measurable consequences.

The first concerns the constitutional architecture and the Senate's procedural options for asserting it. The second concerns the active military engagement and the strategic posture the United States adopts toward the Islamic Republic of Iran. The third concerns the collapse of nuclear frameworks with Iran and the ambiguous status of its program. The fourth concerns the global energy crisis and economic effects of the conflict. Lastly, the fifth concerns the future of the regional architecture that will emerge from the aftermaths of the war and the role American power will play in shaping it.

Section 3 provided a brief overview of these same topics; this section will further analyse the broader themes that the Senate must address.

4.1 Congressional War Powers

This theme moves the analysis in section 3.1 forward.

The question posed before the Senate asks what it can actually do, given its current composition, the executive's posture, and the limits of the procedural tools available.

While the 119th Senate has not been inactive during the course of this conflict, it has been ineffective. Senator Tim Kaine introduced a war powers resolution on January 29, 2026, before Operation Epic Fury was launched, in response to the administration's escalating threats against Iran. The Senate took its first vote on March 5, days after the strikes began. The resolution failed. So did a second and third in April. On April 15, the fourth Senate vote rejected the resolution forty-seven to fifty-two. On May 19, the Senate finally advanced a resolution out of committee for the first time, with Senators Paul, Susan Collins, Murkowski, and Cassidy

defecting from the Republican majority. The resolution has not yet passed the chamber. On June 4, the House passed a similar resolution two hundred fifteen to two hundred eight, with four Republicans defecting.

While multiple bipartisan majorities have called for congressional reassertion, the Senate has yet to vote on a binding outcome. Similar patterns have been observed in the past; The 2020 Soleimani-era resolution passed both chambers and was vetoed. The 2019 Yemen resolution followed suit. A war powers resolution that requires a two-thirds override to be effective is, in the current political environment, no more than a 'record'.

The procedural pathways available:

The Senate has more than one option, and the choice between them is the decision the committee will take. A war powers resolution under the 1973 framework is the most direct mechanism, but, as history has it, it is also the one most likely to be vetoed and most difficult to enforce. An Authorization for the Use of Military Force, by contrast, would legitimize the conflict but allow Congress to define its scope, its objectives, and the conditions under which it ends. Such an AUMF would allow Congress to maintain, to a certain extent, control over the escalation and boundaries of the war. However, the administration has not requested such an authorization. The executive's refusal to do so is a clear signal that the administration believes that Congress will continue to remain silent, which is exactly why the Senate must take action now.

A third option is the repeal of the 2001 AUMF. The Senate's December 2025 repeal of the 1991 and 2002 AUMFs has not been followed by action on the 2001 authorization. The 2001 AUMF is the legal instrument that has been stretched the furthest, applied to operations in at least nineteen countries against actors with no connection to the September 11 attacks. Its repeal would remove the legal cover for a substantial portion of ongoing US counterterrorism operations, which pose great consequences that must be considered. The amendment offered by Senator Paul during the 2023 repeal vote was rejected nine to eighty-six.

A fourth option lies in the 'power of the purse'. Congress controls military appropriations and can attach conditions to them. A funding bill that defunds operations against Iran without congressional authorization, or that conditions military spending on the disclosure of rules of engagement (which would include conditions for ending and boundaries of conflict), would constrain the extent to which the Commander in Chief can act.

Senate's split

The Senate's stance on these questions does not follow the conventional party. The bipartisan coalition aiming to restrain the actions in West Asia, which includes Senators Paul, Lee, and Hawley on the Republican side and Senators Murphy, Sanders, Warren, Markey, and Van Hollen on the Democratic side, has consistently supported war powers resolutions and AUMF reform. In contrast, a coalition including Senators Cotton, Graham, Hagerty, Wicker, and Risch on the Republican side and Senator Blumenthal on the Democratic side, has consistently opposed them. Between these poles sits a bloc of moderates, including Senators Collins, Murkowski, Cassidy, and Fetterman.

The precedent that endures

Each unauthorized military action makes the next one easier. The war in Iran is just another precedent that future President's can point to. A foreign head of state has been killed by US strike. A naval blockade has been imposed and lifted without congressional authorization. Tens of thousands of American troops have been engaged in active operations across two phases of a conflict that Congress has not authorized (nor terminated).

The precedent has already been set, by congressional inaction as much as by executive action. The question now is whether the Senate will take steps now to curb the reliability of the precedent, or whether it will allow the war to define the post-war order.

4.2 The Military Campaign and Continued Engagement

The active phase of Operation Epic Fury concluded on May 5, 2026, but the conflict has not. American forces remain deployed across the Persian Gulf and the broader Middle Eastern theater. Iran's regional partners, in Lebanon, Iraq, and Yemen, continue to engage Israeli and US assets. The naval blockade of Iranian ports, lifted on May 29, has been replaced by a contested negotiating framework that has not produced agreement. The committee's task is to evaluate not just what has happened but what is currently happening and what will happen.

Assessment of Epic Fury

Operation Epic Fury was not the first US strike on Iran. In June 2025, during the Twelve-Day War between Israel and Iran, the United States launched Operation Midnight Hammer, striking the nuclear facilities at Fordow, Natanz, and Isfahan using GBU-57 bunker-buster munitions delivered by B-2 bombers from Missouri. President Trump declared at the time that Iran's nuclear program had been "completely and totally destroyed." A leaked Defense Intelligence Agency report subsequently contradicted that assessment, indicating the program had been set back only by months, not "completely and totally destroyed". Trump publicly reversed his earlier framing in February 2026, claiming that Iran was rebuilding its nuclear program, which became part of the stated justification for Epic Fury.

Epic Fury was strategically distinct from Midnight Hammer in one crucial respect. The 2025 strikes targeted nuclear infrastructure with a defined and limited objective, but the 2026 strikes pursued decapitation. Approximately nine hundred strikes were conducted within a twelve-hour window on February 28, alongside Israel's parallel Operation Roaring Lion. The targets included nuclear facilities, command and control centers, missile production and storage sites, and the Iranian leadership. Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei was killed at his Tehran compound, alongside approximately forty senior figures across the IRGC and the civilian government. A separate strike on a girls' school in the city of Minab killed one hundred seventy people. The shift from degrading infrastructure to decapitating leadership was, as several analysts have noted, the move that erased the diplomatic efforts made after the 2025 conflict.

The Assembly of Experts, the body constitutionally responsible for selecting the Supreme Leader, was depleted by the strikes. Cleric Alireza Arafati was named interim Acting Supreme Leader. On March 8, 2026, the Assembly elected Mojtaba Khamenei, the son of the late Supreme Leader, as the third Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic. Mojtaba was injured in the strike that killed his father. He has remained largely absent from public view since his appointment, generating speculation about his health and operational capacity. President Trump has publicly stated that Mojtaba is "probably alive" but "damaged." Mohsen Rezaei, military adviser to the new Supreme Leader, has emerged as the principal public voice of the surviving Iranian leadership. Rezaei has stated that negotiations are "at a deadlock" and that the "ball is in Trump's court."

The legal status of the blockade

The naval blockade of Iranian ports, ordered on April 13 and lifted on May 29, has not been examined in detail by the committee but should be. A naval blockade is, under customary international law and the San Remo Manual on International Law Applicable to Armed Conflicts

at Sea, an act of war. The Manual's Paragraphs 102 through 104 establish that a blockade is unlawful if its sole purpose is to starve the civilian population, or if the civilian damage is excessive compared to the concrete military advantage anticipated. The terms have been used by critiques against the April naval blockade.

The administration's legal justification rested largely on two pillars. The first was the Corfu Channel precedent, established by the International Court of Justice in 1949, which holds that states have an obligation not to allow their maritime territory to be used for acts contrary to the rights of other states. The administration cited Iran's use of its coastline to launch maritime strikes, including the tolling operation in the Strait of Hormuz and the targeting of commercial shipping, as the reason for blockade. The second was the maintenance of what the US Navy described as a managed humanitarian corridor, through which verified food, medical supplies, and civilian goods could pass after electronic cargo screening; this was intended to defeat any subsequent claim that the blockade amounted to 'starve the civilian population'.

The legal argument has, as expected, not been universally accepted. Iran characterized the blockade as illegal aggression, citing the absence of UN Security Council authorization and arguing that the humanitarian corridor was inadequate to prevent civilian harm given Iran's import dependencies. Russia and China endorsed Iran's characterization at the Security Council, where US opposition prevented a binding resolution. Several international legal scholars have argued that the Corfu Channel precedent does not extend to blockade, that the humanitarian corridor was constructed primarily to defeat legal challenge rather than to ensure civilian welfare, and that a blockade conducted without congressional authorization on the US side cannot be lawful under either domestic or international law regardless of its operational design.*

**Please note that the committee is not a tribunal. The purpose of this section was not to guide the committee to make a judgment regarding the legality of the blockade, but to provide a background.*

The conflict featured two distinct maritime actions.

- 1) The administration framed the US blockade as geographically limited to Iranian sovereign ports, preserved neutral access to non-Iranian Gulf states, was formally declared with notification and grace periods, and was conducted with documented humanitarian carveouts.

- 2) Iran's closure of the Strait of Hormuz, by contrast, affected an international strait connecting open seas, blocked access for all neutral nations, was executed without formal declaration, and reportedly involved the use of unmapped sea mines that endangered third-party shipping. Under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, the right of transit passage through international straits cannot be suspended even during armed conflict.

The counter-argument provided by Tehran states that the strait closure was a response to a prior US act of aggression, that the right of transit passage is conditioned on peaceful use, and that no maritime sovereign is required to permit free passage to vessels supporting active military operations against its territory.

The decision to lift the blockade on May 29 has been described by the administration as a confidence-building measure in support of negotiations, while Iran describes it as the minimum step required before any meaningful talks could continue. The timing coincides almost exactly with the date on which the War Powers Resolution's ninety-day withdrawal window would have expired, which is unlikely to be a coincidence.

Lebanon

The 2026 Lebanon war, which began on March 2 when Hezbollah resumed rocket attacks on Israel in response to Khamenei's killing, has continued in parallel to the Iran negotiations. Israel launched what it described as its "most powerful attacks" on Lebanon on April 8, the same day the Iran ceasefire was announced, killing 357 people. A separate Israel-Lebanon ceasefire took effect on April 16 for ten days. Israeli ground operations in southern Lebanon continue as of the committee's convening. Iran, Pakistan, and Hezbollah have characterized the Israeli operations in Lebanon as violations of the Iran ceasefire agreement. Israel and the United States have maintained that the ceasefire does not apply to the Lebanese front.

Beyond Lebanon, US and Iranian forces have continued to exchange fire. Iranian forces shot down a US MQ-1 Predator drone in early June. The US struck Iranian coastal surveillance radar sites in response.

4.3 Nuclear

For years, the US's primary concern was the rising threat of nuclear proliferation in Iran. Thus, the conflict's most consequential dimension is not the immediate military campaign but rather

the collapse of the framework that had constrained Iran's nuclear program for a decade. The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, signed in July 2015, was the most ambitious nonproliferation agreement of the twenty-first century. Its collapse, and the two wars that have followed, has fundamentally altered both Iran's nuclear status and the broader global nonproliferation regime.

The JCPOA's long collapse

The 2015 agreement included the following terms.

1. Iran agreed to cap uranium enrichment at 3.67 percent, a level appropriate for civilian power generation but far below the 90 percent enrichment required for weapons-grade material.
2. Iran's stockpile of low-enriched uranium was capped at 300 kilograms, approximately a quarter of what would be needed for a single weapon.
3. Centrifuge deployment was constrained to 5,060 first-generation IR-1 machines.
4. The Fordow enrichment facility was repurposed for medical isotope research.
5. The International Atomic Energy Agency was granted verification access.

IAEA verification reports between 2016 and 2018 consistently confirmed Iranian compliance.

The US withdrawal from the agreement in May 2018 ended this constraint. Iran initially maintained compliance. By May 2019, Iran began graduated non-compliance. In July 2019, Iran exceeded the 300-kilogram stockpile limit. Later that year, it exceeded the 3.67 percent enrichment cap. By 2021, Iran was enriching to 20 percent, then to 60 percent. The Biden administration's attempts to revive the agreement through Vienna talks in 2021 and 2022 failed for the structural reason discussed in Section 3.2.

The 2025 strikes and the post-strike status

The 2025 Twelve-Day War produced the first direct US military action against Iran's nuclear program. Operation Midnight Hammer struck Fordow, Natanz, and Isfahan on June 22, 2025.

The 2026 strikes targeted the program again, alongside the broader decapitation campaign. Considering that the IAEA no longer has access to Iran's nuclear facilities, the true extent of the damage has not been verified.

The scientific cadre has produced yet another side of this issue. The Israeli campaign of targeted assassinations against Iranian nuclear scientists, conducted intermittently since 2010, has continued through both the 2025 and 2026 conflicts. The strikes themselves targeted facilities where additional scientific personnel are presumed to have been working.

Verification and inspection

The IAEA has had no access to Iranian facilities since the 2025 strikes, as the agreement under which inspectors operated has effectively ceased to function. Director General Grossi has stated publicly that any negotiated agreement that does not include provisions for inspections will be "an illusion of an agreement."

Regional proliferation pressures

The most consequential second-order effect of the war may be on the broader nonproliferation regime. Saudi Arabia has long signaled that it would pursue nuclear weapons capability if Iran developed weapons. Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman stated in 2018 that if Iran developed anuclear bomb, Saudi Arabia would follow as soon as possible.

4.4 Energy and Economy

The conflict has triggered the worst global energy crisis in decades, and the costs have not been distributed evenly. The states best positioned to absorb the shocks have been the states most willing to sustain the conflict, while the states least able to absorb them, although among the most impacted, have had the least voice in resolving it.

The Strait of Hormuz



The Strait of Hormuz, which connects the Persian Gulf with the Gulf of Oman, is situated between Iran, the UAE, and Oman. It is perhaps the single most important chokepoint in the global energy system, and the disruption it has experienced in 2026 provides evidence of that. Approximately 20% of global oil consumption and roughly one-fifth of global liquefied natural gas shipments transit the strait under normal conditions, i.e., between seventeen and twenty-one million barrels per day of crude oil and petroleum products pass through this narrow gap. The waterway is thirty-three kilometers wide at its narrowest navigable point, with shipping lanes constrained to a small fraction of that span. Roughly three thousand vessels transit the strait each month. The annual value of the oil and gas trade moving through Hormuz is estimated to be around 500 billion dollars.

Saudi Arabia, the world's largest single crude exporter, relies almost entirely on Hormuz for seaborne shipments. Iraq, the second-largest OPEC producer, has no viable alternative export

route for the majority of its output. Iran, Kuwait, and the UAE each depend on unobstructed strait access to monetise their reserves. Qatar, the dominant global LNG exporter, moves virtually all of its liquefied natural gas through the same corridor. The redundancy in the system is minimal. Saudi Arabia and the UAE possess limited pipeline capacity that can reroute some crude exports away from Hormuz; Saudi Arabia can maximise on the East-West crude oil pipeline to the Red Sea, and the UAE can route through the Abu Dhabi crude oil pipeline to the Gulf of Oman. Together, these bypasses can absorb only a fraction of normal volumes. The US Energy Information Administration has stated explicitly that the majority of exports through Hormuz have no practical alternative routes.

For Saudi Arabia, perhaps the only other viable path is the extremely volatile Red Sea. This alternative, however, comes with numerous issues. Firstly, the jagged Yemeni coastline poses a great threat from Houthi attacks. Secondly, the route adds costs and transit times to countries in the Eastern market.

The 2026 disruption began before Operation Epic Fury concluded. Brent crude rose eight percent in the two trading days surrounding the initiation of hostilities, moving from \$71.32 per barrel on February 27 to \$77.24 per barrel on March 2. As the conflict intensified and Iran imposed its tolls on the strait, tanker traffic plunged ninety percent; shippers suspended transit amid rising risks, withdrawal of marine insurance coverage, and direct Iranian threats to commercial vessels. Global oil supply crashed by 10.1 million barrels per day in March 2026. Global oil output is expected to fall by 6.9 million barrels per day, or 6.6 percent, year-on-year in the second quarter of 2026; this is the largest quarterly decline in oil output since the COVID-19 pandemic. By the end of March, the Brent benchmark had risen by approximately 65%, or 46\$ per barrel, the highest monthly rise ever recorded.

Risk premiums embedded in oil prices after major chokepoint disruptions historically remain elevated for three to six months following formal resolution, persist partially for twelve to eighteen months as market memory sustains precautionary positioning, and fully normalise only when inventories return to comfortable levels and diplomatic stability is demonstrated over multiple consecutive quarters. The World Bank, in its April 2026 Commodity Markets Outlook, described the Hormuz disruption as the largest oil market disruption in history. The lifting of the US blockade on May 29 has reduced the acute physical impediment to Iranian exports, but the underlying disruption persists; effective shipping volumes through the strait remain substantially below pre-war levels, and the insurance and freight rate environment continues to price in conflict risk.

The asymmetric distribution of costs

The United States, as a net energy exporter since 2019, has been the major economy least affected by the crisis. American shale producers have benefited from elevated prices; non-OPEC supply growth in 2026 is projected to come almost entirely from US production, with an expected increase of approximately half a million barrels per day partially offsetting the regional disruption. The dollar has strengthened as global capital flees to safe-haven assets. European industrial economies have been hit harder, with natural gas prices spiking and several major manufacturers in Germany, France, and Italy temporarily halting production.

The most severe impacts have fallen on energy-importing economies of the Global South and East Asia, which together purchased roughly 84% of the crude and 83% of the LNG transiting Hormuz in 2024. China, India, Japan, and South Korea alone accounted for approximately 69% of all crude flows through the strait.

Pakistan imports approximately 80% of its energy from the Gulf. Its weekly oil import bill rose from approximately 300 million dollars before the war to 800 million by April. Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb announced targeted measures to cope with elevated prices. In Bangladesh, petrol pumps in some districts ran dry despite the introduction of fuel rationing. The newly elected government closed universities and placed the military in charge of oil depots amid fears of street protests. Sri Lanka, where petroleum accounts for roughly a quarter of total imports, introduced fuel rationing, cut back public events, and shifted schools to a four-day week.

India, the world's third-largest oil importer, relies on imports for more than 88 percent of its oil needs, with nearly half of its crude coming from Gulf states whose exports pass through Hormuz. 60% of India's liquefied petroleum gas is imported, and roughly 90% of that LPG passes through the strait. A sudden shortage of cooking gas in March forced restaurants to show restraint, panic buying spread to several cities, and long lines formed outside gas distributors. The oil ministry ordered refineries to maximise LPG production for household consumption, raising domestic output by approximately 25 percent. The Philippines, Vietnam, Thailand, and Indonesia each experienced varying degrees of fuel shortage, panic buying, and government intervention. Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. stated publicly that his country was a victim of a war it had not chosen and did not want. Japan, which depends on the Middle East for 95% of its oil imports, tapped 800 billion yen, approximately 5 billion dollars, in reserve funds to finance subsidies aimed at keeping gasoline prices stable.

Russia, as a net energy exporter and a strategic partner of Iran, has emerged as the conflict's most consistent economic beneficiary. Reuters calculations indicate that Russia's revenue from its primary oil tax doubled to approximately 9 billion dollars in April 2026 alone. The price of Russian Urals crude, used for taxation, jumped to 77 dollars per barrel in March, its highest level since October 2023 and up 63 percent from February's \$44.59. The International Monetary Fund raised its 2026 growth projection for Russia from 0.8 percent to 1.1 percent on the basis of higher oil and commodity prices. The Trump administration, following a phone call between Presidents Trump and Putin on March 10, waived sanctions on Russian oil purchases by certain importing countries to ease the supply crisis.

China's position has been more complex but on balance favourable. China is the largest single buyer of Iranian oil, the largest oil importer globally, and faces immediate supply disruption from the Hormuz crisis. The Trump administration's waiver on Russian oil purchases enabled Chinese national oil companies to expand their intake of Russian crude; Chinese imports of Russian fossil fuels reached approximately 6.39 billion dollars in a single month, with crude oil representing 75% of the total. India, the second-largest beneficiary of the waiver, imported approximately 5.23 billion dollars of Russian fossil fuels in the same period, with crude oil representing 90%. Both China and India have, in effect, been compensated by Washington for the supply disruption caused by Washington's own military operations.

The Gulf producers, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Kuwait, and Qatar, have gained revenue from elevated prices but face direct security exposure from Iranian retaliation, as the Fujairah strikes on UAE oil infrastructure demonstrated.

Iran's economic collapse

The cumulative effect of the blockade, the strikes on energy infrastructure, the broader sanctions architecture, and the pre-war economic crisis has produced the most severe economic downfall in Iran's modern history.

The Iranian rial has lost effectively all of its remaining value as a unit of exchange. Before the 2025 Twelve-Day War, the rial traded at approximately six hundred thousand to the US dollar on the parallel market. By early January 2026, before Epic Fury, the open-market rate had reached 1.4 to 1.5 million rials to the dollar, the weakest level ever recorded. By April 2026, the rate had reached approximately 1.32 million rials to the dollar by the IMF's measure, with parallel-market rates substantially worse. Some currency-conversion platforms began displaying

the rial's value as zero. The Iranian central bank issued its largest-ever currency denomination, the ten-million-rial note, in March 2026, one month after introducing the five-million-rial note.

Inflation, the prime indicator of monetary collapse, has accelerated through the war. The IMF projected annual inflation of 68.9 percent for 2026 in its April World Economic Outlook. The UNDP projected inflation rising to 55 percent in 2026 before easing to 50 percent in 2027. By May 2026, Iranian inflation had surpassed 100%.

The IMF projects Iranian GDP contraction of 6.1 percent for 2026. The World Bank, in its October 2025 outlook, projected that Iran's economy would shrink in both 2025 and 2026. Iran's primary source of foreign exchange, oil exports, has been functionally eliminated for sustained periods. Oil export revenue, estimated at approximately thirty billion dollars in 2025, accounted for roughly a quarter of government revenue. The blockade and the broader disruption removed practically all of this revenue stream during its operative period. The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, which processes approximately half of the country's oil exports, has been particularly affected. The financial squeeze on the IRGC has secondary consequences for its capacity to maintain Iran's regional partner networks in Lebanon, Iraq, Syria, and Yemen.

The frozen assets question has emerged as one of the central sticking points in current negotiations. Iran has approximately twenty-four billion dollars in assets frozen in international accounts under US sanctions, with substantial holdings in South Korea, Japan, and Iraq. Mohsen Rezaei, the military adviser to Supreme Leader Mojtaba Khamenei, stated explicitly in an interview that any US-Iran deal hinges on the Trump administration agreeing to release the frozen assets.

The humanitarian impact of state collapse

Iran's population of approximately 89 million is experiencing the cumulative consequences of war, sanctions, and currency collapse simultaneously. The committee should consider it not only as a moral question but as a strategic one.

The food crisis is severe. Reports from the Statistical Center of Iran and the UN World Food Programme indicate that approximately seven million Iranians faced food insecurity as of late 2025; the figure has risen since the war began. Meat has reportedly become a luxury good. In December 2025, the Pezeshkian government eliminated the preferential exchange rate of 285,000 rials that had been used for imports of essential goods including oilseeds, livestock feed, and fertilisers. By May 2026, observers reported that working women were unable to

afford bread. The Iranian regime established a Ministry of Crisis Administration and Prevention in April 2026, which has served as an acknowledgement by Iran of its collapse.

The 2026 strikes targeted Iranian power infrastructure, including transmission stations, transformer stations, and several power generation facilities. Civilian human chains have formed around several power plants, an act of asymmetric civilian defence against potential additional strikes. Water infrastructure has been similarly affected. The medical sector faces acute shortages of imported medicines, including specialist medications for chronic conditions that domestic Iranian pharmaceuticals cannot provide.

The protests of late 2025 and early 2026, which preceded the war, were already substantial. Over two thousand protesters were killed in the December 2025 unrest. The government has resorted to repeated internet blackouts to suppress the organisation. Iran has carried out over one thousand executions in 2025 alone, a figure that exceeds any prior year in the post-revolutionary period. The war has paused some of this domestic unrest by distracting the public toward the external American threat.

A collapsed Iranian state will not be a more controllable one. In fact, it will be a less governable one. The conditions for state collapse in Iran are present. Pre-war commentators, including Amir Handjani of the Quincy Institute, have argued that Iran's institutional resilience, built over five decades of sanctions, can absorb substantial pressure without producing collapse. The consequences of Iranian state collapse, were it to occur, would radiate outward through Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Afghanistan, and the broader region.

4.5 Regional Architecture and the Post-War Order

The Middle East that emerges from this war will, for obvious reasons, not be the Middle East that entered it. The regional security architecture, partially defined by US alliance commitments and partially by the balance of power among regional states, is being constantly restructured. American influence over West Asia faces threats that have the ability to disrupt the USA's position not only in the region but in the world.

The Abraham Accords and Saudi normalization

The 2020 normalization agreements between Israel and the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Sudan, and Morocco established a partial framework for an anti-Iran coalition that included

formal Israeli relations with Arab states. The October 2023 Hamas attacks and the subsequent Gaza war paused the Saudi normalization track that the Biden administration had been pursuing. The current conflict could either produce acceleration, or termination.

Acceleration would occur for the reason that Iran's degradation has removed the strategic obstacle that originally drove the Accords framework. A weakened Iran reduces the costs of Saudi alignment with Israel and increases the strategic logic of formal coordination. The termination case is that the war's conduct, particularly the Minab strike and the civilian casualties of the Iranian retaliation in the Gulf, has made Saudi normalization politically toxic among Arab populations. The ongoing Israeli operations in Lebanon have further complicated the politics. The post-war architecture will likely be defined in part by what the Saudis decide. Thus, keeping in mind the importance of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Senate is encouraged to ponder upon America's international relations.

Gulf states

The 2023 Chinese-brokered restoration of Saudi-Iran diplomatic relations was the most significant single development in regional architecture in a decade. It signaled a Saudi judgment that exclusive US alignment was no longer sufficient. The United Arab Emirates is a commercial hub heavily exposed to Iranian retaliation, as the Fujairah strikes demonstrated. Qatar hosts US Central Command and has played a long-standing mediator role with both Iran and Iran-linked actors including Hamas. Bahrain has hosted the US Fifth Fleet for decades and is the most directly US-aligned of the Gulf states.

The crisis has demonstrated that the region is the front line of any US-Iran conflict, regardless of whether Gulf governments choose alignment or not. The conclusion many of them will draw is not that US alignment is unreliable, but that exclusive US alignment is insufficient. The architecture that emerges will likely include continued formal US partnerships alongside expanded engagement with China and, to a lesser extent, Russia. This thus poses a great threat to what has long been America's stronghold.

Non-Western powers

Russia has been the most consistent strategic partner of Iran throughout the crisis. Russian arms transfers to Iran, including air defense systems and missile technology, have continued. Russia has used its UN Security Council position to block US-favored resolutions. Russian state media has framed the conflict as evidence of US unilateralism and as a model for the multipolar order

Moscow seeks to construct. Iran's drone transfers to Russia, sustained since 2022, established a direct military supply relationship that gave Russia an incentive to support Iran during the current crisis. The war has been, in net terms, beneficial to Russian strategic interests; Russia has gained energy revenue, demonstrated US unilateralism to a global audience, and deepened its partnership with Iran without bearing high costs.

Chinese diplomatic engagement during the current crisis has emphasized mediation, restraint, and criticism of US unilateral action. Chinese economic exposure to the conflict is again substantial, with Chinese energy security being threatened. Whether China can convert its economic position into diplomatic influence over the eventual settlement is perhaps the most interesting question in the post-war architecture. China has, for the first time in modern history, an opportunity to broker a Middle Eastern settlement that the United States is unable to broker itself.

The European powers, particularly France, Germany, and the United Kingdom, have been, to a great extent, marginalized. The E3 was the institutional pillar of the JCPOA framework. Its failure to preserve the agreement after the 2018 US withdrawal demonstrated its limited capacity to act independently of Washington on Iran. The current crisis has further reduced European leverage. France has emerged as the most active European actor, with President Macron publicly questioning Operation Project Freedom and launching an alternative European-led defensive naval initiative. Any post-war framework will likely involve European participation as observers rather than participants, as has long been.

International Order

The conflict has set precedents that extend beyond the Middle East. A head of state has been killed by US strike. A naval blockade has been imposed without UN authorization. Major combat operations have been conducted against a sovereign state without congressional authorization.

The Senate cannot reverse the precedents that have been set. It can, however, shape whether they become embedded as ongoing US policy. The choices the committee makes about how the war ends, what the negotiated framework includes, and what conditions the United States accepts as binding will determine whether the international order that emerges from this conflict is the order the United States has historically tried to construct.



Section 5

Congressional War Powers, Ongoing Military Engagement, and the Reshaping of Regional Security in the Middle East

5.1 Constitutional Foundation: The War Powers Framework:

Article I vs Article II:

The US Constitution actively divides war-making authority. Article I, Section 8 of the constitution grants congress the executive power to declare war, raise armies, fund military operations, and regulate the military. Article II, Section 2 makes it so the President is the “Commander in Chief” for the same military. These two articles have led to nearly 250 years of institutional debate about who truly holds the power over the American armed forces.

In real life, the President has started and engaged in several foreign interventions without approval from congress. This spans from the Korean War(1950-1953) where President Harry Truman bypassed a war declaration by congress citing the “United Nations Mandate”. This trend was further shown when in the Vietnam War where there was no formal declaration by congress yet upwards of half a million American soldiers were sent to combat the communist forces. Some other examples include the Kosovo intervention (1999), The Military Intervention in Libya (2011) and in recent years, the assassination of general Qassem Soleimani (2020) under President Donald Trump.

The War Powers Resolution -

- a. Passed despite President Nixon’s veto at the height of the Vietnam conflict, the War Powers Resolution(WPR: 1973) is the core statute of the President’s executive power over the military. The core provisions state as follows.
- b. 1.The president has to notify Congress within 48 hours of introducing US armed forces into hostilities or imminent hostilities
- c. 2.Unless Congress declares war, authorises action, or cannot meet due to conflict, US forces must withdraw within 60 days (with a 30 day buffer period)
- d. 3.Congress may order an earlier withdrawal by concurrent resolution at any time.

Since the enactment of the WPR in 1973, there have been numerous situations where the WPR has been activated or triggered. Some of them include the operation in Libya in 2011, and airstrikes in Syria. In terms of the Iranian situation, the issue of whether or not punitive strikes, cyber warfare, and proxy wars would constitute WPR requirements is the heart of the debate on the Senate side. Significantly, no president has ever declared that the 60 days period is over without legal permission.

The National Defense Authorisation Act (NDAA):

The NDAA is a bill passed by congress every single year essentially without fail, its goal is to set the entire budget and direction for the U.S. Military. Every year, senators add Iran-related provisions to the bill to ensure that congress has a role in US military policy in Iran. For example,

the 2012 NDAA is how Congress forced sanctions on Iran's Central Bank, and the 2020 NDAA is what triggered the major congressional debates over the legal authority used to kill Iranian General Qasem Soleimani.

5.2 Authorizations for Use of Military Force (AUMFs):

The 2001 AUMF - The "Forever War"

Half a week passed after the devastating 9/11 attacks on the twin towers, Congress gave the POTUS the full authorisation (Under Public Law 107-40) to use 'all necessary & appropriate force' against those responsible for the 9/11 attacks and any nations, organisations or groups that harbour those responsible. This AUMF was used to justify military operations in around 19 countries. Including Iran-backed militia groups in Syria and Iraq. Iran was never a direct target of the 2001 AUMF yet groups funded by the "IRGC-Quds Force" have been targeted under its jurisdiction. Many senate members have sought to repeal the 2001 AUMF due to its open-ended nature.

The 2002 AUMF - Iraq War Authorization

Under Public Law 107-243, Congress authorized the use of force to 'defend the national security of the USA against the continuing threat posed by Iraq'. This AUMF is used to justify residual US military bases in Iraq.

Please Note: The Assassination of General Qasem Soleimani in 2020 was justified as a part under both the 2001 and 2002 AUMFs, this legal rationale was contested by many members in congress. Senators from both parties introduced legislation for the repealing of the 2002 AUMF, the Senate voted to repeal it in 2023, the final legislative action is pending.

Specific AUMFs for Iran

To date, there has never been an AUMF specifically targeting Iran passed by Congress. Nevertheless, various legislation that would mandate Congressional authorization before the President can resort to the use of force against Iran has been proposed within both Houses. The most notable piece of such legislation includes the Prevention of Unconstitutional War with Iran

Act, introduced across multiple sessions of Congress with the intent to prevent any offensive military operation against Iran without prior Congressional authorization.

5.3 The Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act (INARA), 2015:

Public Law 114-17 was an exercise of congress' authority regarding nuclear negotiations with Iran. The bill passed by an impressive margin (98-1 vote in the senate) because of its requirements that the president present during any signed nuclear agreement with Iran to Congress, allowing them to review it for sixty days before lifting sanctions against Iran. If during this period Congress adopted a joint resolution expressing their disapproval, they would have executive power to disagree to the deal.

The JCPOA was submitted under INARA in 2015. Congress debated the deal thoroughly but could not produce the votes to override a presidential veto of a disapproval resolution. This moment established an fundamentally important precedent which is the fact that Congress claimed the right to review major executive agreements on Iran, even those falling short of a formal treaty requiring Senate ratification under Article II. INARA remains on the books and would apply to any future nuclear agreement with Iran.

INARA's Key Provisions:

- 1) Mandatory submission of any nuclear agreement to Congress before implementation.
- 2) 60-day congressional review period; no sanctions may be lifted during review.
- 3) Expedited procedures for resolutions of approval or disapproval.
- 4) Ongoing reporting requirements: President must certify Iranian compliance to Congress every 90 days.
- 5) Decertification mechanism: If the President cannot certify compliance, Congress has 60 days to reimpose sanctions under expedited procedures.

5.4 Sanctions Legislation:

The Architecture of U.S. Iran Sanctions

Throughout the last 30 years, Congress has debated extensively upon sanctions with the most prominent acts being as follows:

- 1) **Iran Sanctions Act (ISA), 1996:**. Punishes foreign companies investing more than \$20 million in Iranian energy.
- 2) **Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability, and Divestment Act (CISADA), 2010:** Dramatically expanded sanctions on Iran's banking and financial sector. Banned foreign banks from doing business with U.S. financial institutions if they also did business with sanctioned Iranian bodies.
- 3) **Iran Threat Reduction and Syria Human Rights Act, 2012:** Increased oil sanctions and targeted Iran's energy and shipping. Also sanctioned bodies that helped Iran evade existing sanctions.
- 4) **Iran Freedom and Counter-Proliferation Act (IFCPA), 2013:** Expanded sanctions to Iran's energy, shipping, shipbuilding, and precious metals sectors; also targeted those who help Iran avoid sanctions.
- 5) **Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA), 2017:** Imposed new penalties on Iran, Russia, and North Korea; significantly limited the President's ability to waive or lift Iran sanctions without congressional approval.
- 6) **Enhanced Iran Sanctions Act, (EISA), 2025:** This bill imposes sanctions on certain foreign persons (individuals and entities) that are involved in Iran's petroleum sector as well as certain associated persons. The bill also requires or authorizes actions to facilitate the enforcement of sanctions on Iran.

5.5 International Bodies:

- a. **The United Nations Security Council** passed six rounds of sanctions resolutions against Iran between 2006 and 2010. Weakening Iran's financial status.
- b. **The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)** is the UN's nuclear body that conducts on-the-ground inspections at Iranian facilities and reports violations to the Security Council. Its presence was quintessential to the creation of the JCPOA.
- c. **The European Union** imposed its own oil blockade and financial sanctions on Iran in 2012. Further legitimising the neutering of Iran's presence in global markets.
- d. **The Financial Action Task Force (FATF)** is the global money organisation that has Iran on its blacklist of high-risk countries, pressuring banks worldwide to cut ties with Iranian financial institutions.



Section 6 Stakeholder Analysis

6.1 Abstract

The consequences of the United States-Iran conflict reach far beyond the domestic affairs of the two directly involved states. Given the Middle East's strategic importance to the world in the fields of energy, trade, military, technology, defense and security arrangements, it is prudent for the United States Congress to consider the long term consequences for regional and global actors. Therefore, the Senate must evaluate its decisions with regard to the interests, objectives and likely responses of key stakeholders through the lens of political, economic and security interests, which are inevitably tied to the final outcome. Understanding the key actors and their policies is essential for the long term outcome that the Senate aims for. In this background guide, the stakeholders are divided into three broad categories, that are; Primary Regional Stakeholders, Global Strategic Stakeholders and Economic Stakeholders.

6.2 Breakdown of Stakeholders

A. *Primary Regional Stakeholders:*

(i) Israel:

Historically speaking, Israel and the United States of America have always shared friendly relations. This diplomatic friendship however holds multiple strategic interests in mind as well. For the US, Israel offers a stable foothold in the Middle East. Paired alongside Iran's "axis of resistance", Israel is also a critical partner for forwarding the western

interests. Furthermore, Israel also maintains extremely sophisticated espionage and intelligence networks which are shared with the US for the purpose of hostile action prevention in advance. The US and Israel also have a history of Military and Missile Defense Cooperation where the two nations engage in a deep military training and technological development. These two nations also actively degrade the capabilities of Iranian Proxies (e.g. Hamas and Hezbollah), and counter Iran's nuclear ambitions. Israel also works towards reducing threats to U.S Assets and for regional stability. Israel derives several benefits from the war. The current U.S military involvement against Iran, alongside the use of American firepower to degrade Iran's nuclear program, missile arsenals and network commands aids Israel greatly and allows a neutralization of what is considered by Israel as an existential threat, without having to face the cost and impact of a full scale war fought with the country's individual resources. It also receives several key strategic benefits such as the destruction of Iranian nuclear sites (e.g. Fordow and Natanz), the reduction of Iran's potential to achieve weapons grade uranium, dismantling the key Iranian leadership, and a long-term containment of the surrounding Islamic countries without having to bear war costs alone. In the ongoing conflict, Israel has also played an active role in aiding the U.S, with actions such as a major 40-day joint military campaign (Operation Roaring Lion). It has also significantly targeted Iran's ballistic missile capabilities. Israel was also reported to have a role in neutralizing the Iranian leadership, such as the Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei. Since June 2026, there have also been retaliatory bombings from Israel's side on 12 major locations in Iran. These measures have reportedly disabled roughly 60% of Iran's ballistic missile infrastructure. The importance of the war for Israel and the US, also lies in the fact that an Iranian victory would alter Middle Eastern geopolitics, which results in security vulnerabilities, economic downturns and an erosion of Israel's long term deterrence. The most severe impacts of Iran's victory in the war on Israel would also mean that the latter's military infrastructure would face persistent and direct threats, it would suffer the closure of trade routes such as the Strait of Hormuz, would cause disruptions to the global energy markets alongside billions of immediate losses to Israel's GDP, and would force Israel to become an isolated and vulnerable state in the Middle East. Additionally, for the US and Israel, the two countries would face severe war costs which would also result in the weakening of America's polarity. Officially speaking, as of the current day, Israel views Iran as an existential threat and therefore supports America's campaign, with the hope to also reduce Iranian hostilities in Lebanon's border, though Israel has

also shown some discomfort at America's negotiations with Iran, fearing that it would be left in a vulnerable state.

(ii) Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC):

The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) is a political, economic and regional partnership of six middle eastern monarchies, i.e. Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain and Oman. The GCC was established in 1981 to foster security, culture and economic cooperation and to coordinate policies regarding regional challenges. The GCC broadly opposes the US-Iran war due to fear of an economic fallout and facing retaliatory strikes within their territories. Although initially, the GCC advocated against military forces and denied America access to its airspace, Iran's missile strikes on the Gulf's energy sources and on civilians has shifted their security focuses. The perspectives of its members include a call for de-escalation and neutrality, where members like Oman have aided in facilitating back channel negotiation to establish peace, a fear of a violation of Sovereignty after Iran targeted civilian infrastructure, and a push to end the war with haste where members such as Saudi Arabia have pushed to mitigate regional blockades and other members have closed ranks with the aggressors to establish a 'regional deterrence'. Overall, the GCC's main objectives and interests from the war only lie in prevention of regional escalation, shielding of civilian infrastructure and a maintained maritime security to safeguard against an uninterrupted flow of oil globally. Given the GCC's trepidation, some members have been found to prioritize diplomacy, maintaining neutrality and a policy of no interference in the war, some countries operationally functioning alongside the US and an emphasizing of the countries' peace interest. The Council's current actions in the war include the utilization of advanced air and missile defence systems (with interceptor support from the UK and France), convening in meetings that have condemned Tehran's aggression, demanding Iran's ceasefire on member nations, acting as a mediator, and closing of their airspace alongside with a commercial flight suspension to protect their citizens. The war does not provide many benefits to the member states of the Council, leading to ruin in its economy most majorly.

B. Global Strategic Stakeholders:

(i) China:

China has always been an essential stakeholder to the US for its economic independence and crucial role in global supply chains. China is also considered vital as a rising power in global governance. Officially with regard to the US Iran war, China advocates for immediate ceasefires and criticises the US and Israel for its military actions though maintaining a position of “neutrality”. Beijing focuses on diplomatic mediation and protecting its interests in the energy and economic interests while trying to maintain global leadership. China has also severely criticised the US for the assassination of Khamenei, labelling it as a violation of international law. China has also worked towards positioning itself as an ‘alternative peacemaker’ to engage in widespread diplomatic discussions and utilization of regional partners (such as Pakistan) to guide Iran to ceasefire negotiations. Given the Iran-China 25-Year Comprehensive Cooperation Agreement (a road map that includes a partnership between the two nations to work in the direction of the sectors of economics, energy, politics, security, finance, housing etc., with rumours of China investing 280 Billion Dollars in Iran’s energy industry and 120 Billion in the transportation section), and the “Axis of Autocracy” (an informal alliance of nations led by China and Russia alongside Iran and North Korea, that cooperate for the purpose of countering US influence to evade sanctions and reshape global power), China is also concerned about the potential disruptions in the Strait of Hormuz and the higher economic costs that Beijing considers detrimental to global economics. Furthermore, China has shown some amount of indirect support, despite its public denial of a transfer of arms to Iran, Chinese companies have been reported to be providing critical dual-use technology such as missile parts and geospatial intelligence. China has also been using the war as a ‘critical case study’. They have been actively analyzing American logistical and operational constraints in order to understand how the US may shape indo pacific conflicts in the future. China has also been deriving certain benefits from the war, strategically and economically. Beijing has taken advantage of America’s distractions to secure cheap oil and valuable intelligence for itself, alongside establishing itself as a responsible global mediator. Beijing has managed to insulate itself with a stable energy flow, by settling its 65-70 billion dollar worth Iranian oil exports in yuan. It has also gained critical data on US military capabilities, logistics and precision weaponry, which may also be applied in the future to a potential Taiwan contingency. China has also actively worked to project itself as a “solution provider” by helping energy-starved

nations to secure power and present itself as a reliable mediator, to weaken the U.S alliances in the Middle East. Unfortunately, alongside the benefits, Beijing to some extent has also suffered major losses to the war, such as a forced cut in consumption of energy and crude imports, manufacturing pressures, stalling of overseas growth and profitability of e-commerce giants based in China such as Shein and Temu, increased air freight costs, compromising of one of Beijing's most convenient geopolitical assets, disruption of the Axis of Strength and a wakening of China's counter-U.S regional influence. China has therefore, maintained a neutral stance on the war by functioning as a diplomatic observer and mediator. China's stakes hold a huge impact on American policy making, and on the senate based on America's interests in China which span across economic, technological and geopolitical objectives. Washington maintains security architecture and partnerships in order to counter China's increasing military influence, however, China is vital to America for its advancement in AI, quantum computing, advanced biotechnology etc. China is also a crucial destination for American goods where commitments have been reached for China purchasing large annual volumes (such as billions in American agricultural products and commercial aircraft). As China also becomes a rising power in the world, America is currently pursuing "strategic stability" to manage nuclear expansion limits, prevent conflict escalation and address global concerns such as political settlements of the Ukraine Crisis.

(ii) European Union:

The European Union (EU) is a political and economic union of 27 nations that aim to govern common economic, social and security policies across Europe. It covers 4.2 million square kilometers and houses up to nearly 450 million citizens, generating 1/6 of the global economic output. Currently, the EU has adopted a diplomatic stance of maintaining a cautious distance and de-escalation, by refusing to join the American military campaign, while also advocating for a strict respect for international law. The EU's response to the conflict situation consists of a plethora of smaller stances, that are, a campaign of 'No Combat Support', where the member nations have declared "this is not our war", while also refusing to send military aid to the U.S. Major EU powers such as Spain and Italy have also disallowed the US weapon carrying planes for Iran from using their military bases. France on the other hand, on a highly restricted case-to-case basis is handling airspace access for the U.S. While not actively joining the offensive strikes, some of the countries that hold historical ties with America such as the UK and

France have agreed to provide maritime security and defend the freedom of navigation. While the EU largely agrees on de-escalation, some member states also approach the conflict with other views. For France and the United Kingdom, both nations have increased material and logistical support to protect shipping and regional security. Germany has maintained a distanced approach from the war, by refraining to publicly lecture the U.S or challenge its legal justifications. Many analysts justify this as a tactical calculation for securing America's support for the Ukraine war. Finally, Spain has maintained by far the strictest opposition, by publicly denouncing the American strikes as an illegal war, that "completely lacks an effective geopolitical strategy". The EU has also taken multiple diplomatic initiatives, such as ceasefire mediations and freedom of navigation. The EU also has multiple strategic concerns with regard to the war. Firstly, the EU is committed to ensuring that Iran does not acquire a nuclear weapon, and therefore fervently urges Tehran to resume full cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Secondly, given the conflict's impacts on the major oil and energy market, the EU's focus has also been towards accelerating the European Green Deal, in order to reduce the dependence on foreign energy. Finally, Europe has been urged to make further investments in its own independent defense capabilities since the U.S.'s actions without advance consultation has damaged the trans-Atlantic trust. Overall, the EU's outlook on the war alongside its overarching strategy include the reluctance of direct military aid, a push for dialogue, condemnation of the attacks, a call for ceasefire, open fractures and legal concerns alongside a diplomatic friction with Washington. Structurally speaking, the European Union does not benefit from the war. However, in the field of defense, the EU has gained several specific advantages for some European industries. The conflict has aided in accelerating the rise of European defence spending, which has allowed an economic boost for domestic military contractors and countries that have a major defence manufacturing base (e.g. Germany). Additionally, there has also been a significant boost for specific energy firms, where alongside the surging oil and gas prices, some European chemical and energy companies (especially those such as which long term contracts for cheap American Ethane) stand to profit from raised prices for imports. Another indirect advantage for the EU lies in the accelerated green transition where due to the vulnerability of fossil fuel supplies, the EU has lowered electricity taxes, loosened state aid rules and accelerate low carbon tech deployment. In the long term, this aids in a faster transition to European made renewable and a reduced dependence on the volatile global markets. The EU has also begun investing in its own domestic sustainable solutions, post the insecurity faced by seeing the risks of relying on

the United States and global supply chains. Alongside the advantages, the EU has also found numerous losses, such as energy and gas shocks, industrial deindustrialization, monetary policy shifts and trade declines. The European Union is a vital ally for the US, as America's largest economic partner and a foundational security ally for the National Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). The EU significantly holds influence over American policymaking, through its massive market size, forcing American corporations to adopt EU regulatory standards through its preference for multilateral diplomacy and international norm setting. The EU's importance to Washington can be characterized by its massive economic ties, its security and geopolitical alliance, its role in energy security and shared global initiatives with America. The EU is said to influence American policy making through three major ways, the "Brussels Effect", Diplomatic Strategy and Sanctions alongside global norms and standards. In the "Brussels Effect", since the EU represents a significantly massive customer base, it assumes the role of a global regulatory superpower. American companies also often find it more practical to adopt European standards such as data privacy laws or the EU Artificial Intelligence Act, for their global operations instead of creating separate batches of products for Europe. In diplomatic strategy and sanctions, the EU often utilizes "soft power" and multilateralism in global affairs. The US also relies heavily on the EU for coordination of international sanctions and diplomatic interventions, since joint actions between EU and US carry more weight globally. Under global norms and standards, the EU also frequently takes the lead for international policy scopes, like climate change, human rights and digital governance. US policymakers also must engage or react to the established norms while designing corresponding American policies. The American and European partnership remains extremely interdependent, despite differing political agendas, as they both attempt to follow the set international norms jointly to appear as a power on the global stage.

(iii) North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO):

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is an intergovernmental military alliance of 32 member states across North America and Europe. Its primary purpose lies in safeguarding the freedom and security of its members via political and military means. NATO also remains a primary transatlantic security instrument. The U.S. war with Iran, has strongly countered NATO's core ideals of collective consultation, multilateral decision making and defensive solidarity. By launching unprovoked strikes and expecting

unconditional European support, the US caused numerous fractures in the transatlantic alliance. NATO was also labelled by the Trump Administration (post Europe's lack of support), where they were called a "paper tiger", were threatened by US withdrawing its membership, threats to pull US troops out of uncooperative nation countries and place them in more cooperative ones, and calling NATO a "one way street", where America protects Europe, however Europe fails to protect America. As an alliance, NATO is currently maintaining an official stance of non-intervention in the conflict, since the organization is bound by Article 5, for defense on member territories. Since the Iran war is discretionary and beyond NATO territory, the members do not hold any obligation to assist. The US-Iran war has not benefited NATO, since it has instead triggered one of the largest internal crises in the alliance's history. Since the conflict was not the result of a collective decision, it has also generated several transatlantic divisions over strategic autonomy, exposed the massive capability gaps and has resulted in political tension. Individually however, individual members like Turkey have uniquely been benefited. Ankara managed to expand trade routes, regional influences and economic footprints by balancing the situation without engaging. That being said, NATO's losses are also numerous, spanning across military and hardware losses, political strains and economic fallouts. Iranian strikes targeted valuable US anti-ballistic missile batteries, including Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) which are roughly worth 1 billion dollars each. The conflict also drained US stockpiles, which raised concerns about the US's ability to supply NATO and Ukraine in a manner that is timely. Replacing the exhausted munitions like the Tomahawk cruise missile will take nearly a decade with the current production rates. Political strains include the Transatlantic split and US posture shifts. Economic fallouts also caused energy shocks, where the threats of conflict and the blockage of the Strait of Hormuz caused global energy prices to surge, while worsening the economic situation for NATO aligned nations that were dependent on imported fuel. As of now, NATO has not taken any action or part in the war beyond alliance level defence such as missile interceptions, where NATO forces intercepted Iranian drones and missiles that threatened allied territory, convening in emergency sessions (chaired by Secretary General Mark Rutte), maintaining a joint posture with solidarity and raising replenishment concerns.

C. Economic Stakeholders:

(i) Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC+):

The Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC+) is an alliance formed in late 2016 between the original OPEC and a group of non-major OPEC oil producing nations such as Russia. This coalition was formed to coordinate petroleum policies, adjust the crude oil production levels and stabilise oil prices. The OPEC+ has responded to the war by repeatedly raising oil output quotas as an effort to stabilize the rising prices, though these raises are considered fairly symbolic by many. Since the conflict resulted in the choking off of the Strait of Hormuz, many members are unable to ship or pump their intended volumes to reach the global markets. OPEC+ has recently agreed to its fourth consecutive monthly output hike, by raising targets by 188000 barrels per day. Analysts however note that this does not have much effect on lowering global prices since many states are unable to reach their export capacity. The war also resulted in the United Arab Emirates unexpectedly quitting the OPEC entirely. Abu Dhabi also left to bypass quotas and maximize its own revenues and production. Producers like Saudi Arabia are attempting to redirect the crude flows through alternative pipelines in order to avoid the Strait of Hormuz, however, a significant portion still remains bottlenecked. The OPEC+ has also faced severe losses and impacts, causing a production plunge that is more than 30% (over 9.7 million BPD). and removing nearly 1 billion barrels from the global supply chains. The OPEC+'s major losses consist of production and output losses, financial and revenue impacts and structural shifts. The production among OPEC members is far lesser in comparison to pre war levels, and 1 billion barrels that are stranded or entirely lost. The OPEC+ also implemented symbolic increases to regulate prices, however vast volumes of oil are still trapped behind the blockade. Countries that lack viable bypass pipelines as alternatives for the strait of Hormuz are also suffering massive revenue losses (e.g. Iraq, Kuwait, Qatar). Within the OPEC+, the UAE exit also led to a revenue fall for OPEC. Additionally, the "Hormuz Toll", which was an effective blockade in the strait, has allowed Iran's Revolutionary Guard to also charge unauthorized tolls (1\$ per barrel) on vessels that are moving through the region, which has effectively altered risk profiles for an entire cartel. OPEC+ holds a critical role in American policymaking, because the coalition holds control of a large majority of the world's oil supply, and can dictate global crude prices. These prices also inevitably influence U.S.'s domestic inflation, costs in transportation and consumer gas prices, which makes energy policy a vital factor for American economic stability and electoral politics. OPEC+ production targets directly affect the prices that American citizens pay at the pumps. U.S. policymakers frequently

attempt to negotiate with key cartel members to stabilize or increase oil output, given the sudden price spikes. The plus (+) in OPEC+ signifies the non member nations allied with the coalition such as Russia. These petrostates use oil as a primary instrument for foreign policy. Therefore, the OPEC+'s decision, like collective production cuts, also have the ability to counter the western interest, which would complicate U.S. sanctions. Finally, the U.S is a leading global oil producer, and therefore, the American domestic market remains intertwined with global oil dynamics. The U.S. policymakers are therefore urged to weigh how the U.S. shale industry reacts to OPEC+ pricing. When the global prices are kept high, it benefits U.S. drillers, but also raises a spike in costs for American consumers.

Section7

PresentDay Advocacy, Solutions, Best Practices and Reshaping of Regional Security in the MiddleEast

7.1 Congressional War Powers

Prevention of Unconstitutional War with Iran Act

Introduced first in 2018 by Sen.Tom Udell and Rep. Ro Khanna. This bill aims to propose provisions to neuter the powers of the POTUS. These provisions include the following

- a) The prohibition and check of funding by the congress to explicitly block the use of government funds in an unconstitutional manner. This includes the use of government funds to conduct unauthorised military operations.
- b) Reaffirming the principles of Article 1, Section 8 of the U.S constitution, granting congress the sole power to declare war and to prevent military operations engaged with the knowledge exclusive to the executive branch.
- c) Clarifying and reducing the power granted by the AUMFs of 2001 and 2002, making it so the executive branch can't use open-ended definitions to justify an unlawful military engagement against Iran or any associated parties.

This act, if passed, would ensure that the executive wouldn't be able to use Article II, Section 2 of the constitution to claim power over the US congress. This would significantly impact US politics and the role of the executive in the US armed forces.

Core Drawbacks of the Solution

Reduced Speed

- a. The act may limit the President's ability to respond quickly to security threats.
- b. Military and executive members argue that modern conflicts require rapid decision-making that congressional procedures may not allow.

The 'Fog Of War' Dilemma

- a. Modern warfare and conflicts evolve at extremely high speeds.
- b. Requiring prior congressional funding approval or explicit authorization could delay responses to:
 - 1. Terrorist attacks on U.S. personnel.
 - 2. Threats in the Strait of Hormuz.
 - 3. Urgent intelligence indicating a potential nuclear breakout threat.

The Problem of Defining "Imminence"

The bill depends on a strict interpretation of what qualifies as an "**imminent attack**." In warfare, determining imminence is difficult because threats often involve:

- 1) Cyberattacks.
- 2) Covert proxy operations.
- 3) Actions by non-state actors.

Waiting for congressional debate and approval could create dangerous operational delays.

Democrat v/s Republic Outlook:

Democrats

Congress should control war powers.

Congress has allowed presidents to fight "forever wars" using old AUMFs.

Cite **Article I, Section 8**: Only Congress can authorize war.

Fear action without congressional approval could drag the U.S. into a larger war with Iran without public support.

Support diplomacy and international law over military escalation.

Republicans

The President needs flexibility as Commander-in-Chief.

Believe Congress is often too slow and divided to respond to threats.

Cite **Article II, Section 2**: President directs the military and foreign policy.

Argue military power requires the President to be able to act quickly and decisively.

Support maintaining a credible threat of immediate and unforgiving force to counter Iran's regional activities.

Proposed in the US congress in 2019 by Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand, this act states that to truly curb the powers of the executive and the POTUS, the 2001 and 2002 AUMFs must be specified to ensure that the executive can't misuse the open-ended nature of these AUMFs and states if they are not specified then the original War Powers Resolution is rendered null and void. The following reforms have been suggested under this resolution

- a. Congress would explicitly state the goal of the AUMF
- b. Enemies that are targets of the AUMF would have to be directly named
- c. Congress would state the exact geographic limits of the operation
- d. Authorisations would expire after 2 years unless Congress votes to extend

7.2 Ongoing Military Engagements

a. Nation Defense Authorisation Act (NDAA) Provisions On Iran Military Act

Congress uses the annual NDAA to oversee the US military operations involving Iran and any associated parties. The 2020 NDAA led to argumentation over the nature of the strike that killed Iranian general Qasem Soleimani and increased requirements for reports on the situation in Iran. The 2022 NDAA required the Department of Defense to report on the powers of Iranian-backed groups. The 2024 NDAA was in response to Yemeni attacks in the middle east, it demanded reports on US-Drone operations and the authority to carry them out.

b. Countering Malign Iranian Activities Act

Passed by the House of Representatives in 2022, this bill forced the State and Defense Departments to come up with a plan of action to counter Iran's influence in the middle-east. The plan of action was meant to counter Iran's support of proxy terrorist groups, drone programs and smuggling networks. The bill also proposed additional funding towards US partners to defend against drone attacks.

Core Drawbacks of These Solutions

a. Delayed Oversight

- 1) Reporting requirements analyze events after they occur.

- 2) Congress reviews actions such as military strikes or regional escalations post-event rather than influencing events in real time.
- 3) This does little to prevent sudden military action.

b. The Proxy Terrorist Issue

- 1) Legislation targets specific proxy terrorist groups yet that may not address the constantly evolving nature of proxy terrorist networks..
- 2) Funding partner nations' counter-drone capabilities may improve defense but it still doesn't address the base sources of support, financing, manufacturing, and smuggling.

c. Increased Burden

- 1) Frequent reporting mandates require the Department of Defense and intelligence agencies to devote significant time and personnel to compliance.
- 2) Critics argue that resources are spent producing reports instead of addressing security threats directly.

7.3 Reshaping Of Regional Security In The Middle East

a. Mandating Regional Defense Integration

Congress is currently implementing the Abraham Accords Defense Cooperation Act to legally officialise a joint-country effort This initiative shifts the focus from independent country operations to a unified, interoperable military coalition.

a. Integrated Air and Missile Defense (IAMD): Pushing for joint military operations, shared information , and cross-border missile tracking to counter Iran's drone and ballistic missiles.

b. Asymmetric Defense Upgrades: Forcing the Pentagon to prioritize combined military exercises, specialized elite unit integration, and shared counter-unmanned aircraft systems & technology across partner nations

b. Cutting Off Iran's Regional Military Supply Lines

- a. The **Caesar Syria Civilian Protection Act (2019)**: Directly sanctioned anyone doing business with the Syrian government, this directly hit Iranian military operations in Syria, since Iran is Syria's biggest backer.
- b. The **Countering Iranian Drone Proliferation Act** proposed sanctioning any country or company that transfers technology that could be used to make drones to Iran, this act directly targets the pipeline Iran uses to arm terrorist proxy groups.

Core Drawbacks of Regional Defense Integration (IAMD)

a. Trust and Data-Sharing Issues

- 1) An inter-national air defense system requires real-time intelligence sharing.
- 2) Many Arab Gulf states and Israel are reluctant to share sensitive military information.
- 3) Concerns include espionage, sovereignty, and data leaks.

b. Vulnerabilities

- 1) A highly interconnected network creates one major target.
- 2) If one member's systems are compromised, the entire network could be exposed.
- 3) Cyberattacks by adversaries could undermine coalition security.

Core Drawbacks of Cutting Off Military Supply Lines

a. Reliance on Illegal Alternatives

- 1) Sanctions often increase costs rather than completely stop supply chains.
- 2) Iran has developed alternative methods such as:
 - a. Front companies
 - b. Black-market networks
 - c. Illicit shipping routes

b. Humanitarian Consequences

- 1) Broad sanctions can severely impact civilian populations.

- 2) Economic decline and poverty may worsen instability.
- 3) Hardship can increase recruitment into local militias and armed groups.

c. Enforcement Challenges

- 1) Effective enforcement requires sanctioning entities in third countries.
- 2) Foreign countries may resist U.S. sanctions policies.
- 3) This can create diplomatic tensions and conflict far beyond the Middle East.



Section 8

Case Studies

1. Case Study : Operation Midnight Hammer

Background: Operation Midnight Hammer, conducted on 22 June, 2025, was a U.S military operation against important and central Iranian nuclear facilities at Fordow, Natanz and Isfahan during a period of extremely intense regional escalation. When the operation took place, there were rising concerns in Washington, Jerusalem and various other Middle eastern and U.S

capitals. The operation was conducted in order to severely degrade Iran's nuclear weapons infrastructure and heavily reduce its uranium enrichment capabilities, which had already surpassed 60%.

The Incident:

On 22 June of 2025, the United States launched Operation Midnight Hammer. The operation was launched when the 12-day war, from June 13 to June 24, between Iran and Israel had almost reached its end. It involved more than 125 U.S. aircraft and seven B-2 Spirit stealth bombers. These were supported by refuelling aircraft, fighter escorts, intelligence materials and naval forces. The United States fired more than two dozen tomahawk cruise missiles from a submarine operating in that area. A central feature of the operation was the use of GBU-57 Massive Ordnance Penetrators (MOPs), commonly known as "bunker-buster" bombs. They were used to strike down and attack nuclear facilities that were buried deep in the ground, particularly the Fordow enrichment plant, which had been considered one of the safest nuclear plants in Iran. In total, fourteen MOPs were reportedly used during the operation. Iran labelled the strikes as violations of its sovereignty and international law, and internationally, there were debates on the extent of the damage that had been inflicted by the strike and its long-term impact on Iran's nuclear programme. Some analysts like David Albright (Founder, Institute for Science and International Security), David Petraeus (Retired U.S. General, former CIA Director) and Wesley Clark (Retired General, former Supreme Allied Commander Europe) argued that the operation caused significant damage to the sites, whereas some assessments like the Defence Intelligence Agency (DIA) Preliminary Assessment argued that the strikes, despite having caused damage, would delay its nuclear growth by only some months. This showcases that while the operation caused significant damage, questions about if military action alone can eradicate Iran's nuclear capabilities are still pondered upon by analysts and critics.

Responsibility: It was a covert military operation carried out by the United States. Overall, it was directed by the President and executed by US Central Command under General Corella.

Legitimacy and impacts: Operation Midnight Hammer was not approved by the US Senate, and it was a unilateral military strike ordered by President Donald Trump. Because the operation fell under the President's powers as Commander-in-Chief and was not a formal declaration of war, it was executed without authorisation from Congress beforehand. Instead of this, the administration only provided a brief advance notification to a bipartisan (members from both parties) group of congressional leaders known as the "Gang of 8". Key Democratic leaders on

relevant committees stated they were not given advance notice before the military action began.

Countries like China and Russia heavily condemned the unilateral nature of the operation. At the United Nations Security Council, they drafted resolutions claiming the U.S. action against Iran as a serious violation of international law. Due to the strikes being unilateral and preemptive, the debates about executive war powers have restarted. The UN Secretary General called the U.S. use of force against Iran a “dangerous escalation”, and the IAEA chief warned that the conflict risked collapsing the regime of non-proliferation.

Furthermore, whether operation Midnight Hammer was justified under the OLC’s two-part test is a highly debated and contested matter. For the first part of the test, the administration argued that the strikes on Iran served an important part of the American national interest, like preventing Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons, preventing nuclear development and defending close allies like Israel. While the wisdom of the policies under this justification is open to debate, they are not beyond what the OLC considered to be within the national interest.

However, for the second part of the test, there is a much more intense debate, where the primary constitutional dispute lies. The administration argued that as the operation included very targeted and short-term air strikes, using B-2 bombers to destroy specific and threatening nuclear sites without using U.S. ground forces, it cannot be considered a “war in the constitutional sense” and hence avoided the War Powers Resolution.

On the other hand, critics and various articles (e.g., Just Security) argue that since the Second World War, the executive branch has greatly expanded the view of the president’s authority to direct the use of force under Article II of the Constitution as commander in chief in the absence of congressional authorisation. Senior Democrats (such as Rep. Hakeem Jeffries) have criticised the operation for bypassing Congress, arguing that it had a dangerously high likelihood of causing a much more substantial conflict which could have escalated into a ‘war’ in the constitutional sense.

Congressional Response and Consequences:

In response to the military strikes, lawmakers invoked the War Powers resolution. However, efforts to force the president into seeking authority from the Congress for further military action against Iran eventually failed when the resolution was not passed in the Senate. The vote on the resolution was sponsored by Senator Tim Kaine and held on 27 June of 2025. It failed in a

53-to-47 vote, which is a 6-vote margin. The block was heavily split down, with the majority of Senate Republicans voting against bringing up the resolution and Democrats voting almost unanimously in its favour.

As observed in the voting on the War Powers Resolution enforcement, due to the lack of an opportunity to deliberate on the operation beforehand in Congress, there were severe consequences and disagreements.

- Republican lawmakers, such as senators Eric Schmitt and Mike Crapo, along with Rep. Mark Alford in the House, proposed measures that directly praised the Trump administration's sophisticated attack and honoured the bravery of the U.S. servicemembers involved.
- The House Armed Services Committee Chairman Mike Rogers (R-AL) openly praised the operation for "delivering a destructive blow to Iran's nuclear programme", reinforcing the idea that Iran cannot possess nuclear weapons.
- Almost all of the democratic lawmakers and some republicans, including Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer and Sen. Tim Kaine, expressed deep frustration and concerns about Congress not being notified and reducing their powers as constitutional lawmakers.
- Critics, like Thomas Massie (a Republican who criticised the executive overpower), argued that the constitutional power bestowed upon Congress under Article I of the constitution was being undermined and that the executive branch was heavily expanding their power.
- Even if the joint resolutions and war power initiations did not pass, they showcased resistance from Congress on the unilateral nature of the operation.

Relevance to the Agenda: Operation Midnight Hammer is very relevant to the agenda because it lies deeply rooted within congressional war powers, ongoing U.S. military engagement, and the regional security structure of the Middle East. Due to the operation, several debates related to the extent of presidential powers to conduct military operations abroad without prior authorisation from Congress and the effectiveness of the War Powers Resolution as a check on the powers of the executive branch. Moreover, the operation showed how the U.S. was directly involved in the twelve-day war and the sharp partisan divide it caused nationally. It also explores the U.S. nuclear non-proliferation efforts and its relations with close allies such as Israel.

Some questions to ponder upon:

- To what extent should a head of government be permitted to authorise military action without prior legislative approval when national security threats are perceived to be imminent?
- Did the operation remain below the threshold of a “war in the constitutional sense”, or should prior approval have been mandatory for it to take place?
- Can unilateral military strikes such as this operation be considered an act of non-proliferation, or do they undermine congressional powers and international stability?
- Even though rapid military decision making can be required, how can states balance this with the principles of legislative oversight and accountability?
- What should be some mechanisms to prevent the overuse of power by the executive branch while still enabling governments to cope with urgent security threats, which are imminent in nature?

2. Case Study: Iraq WMD intelligence and the 2003 Iraq War.

Background: After the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the United States restructured and changed its national security strategy into a more aggressive and stricter one. It was known as the “Bush Doctrine” and focused primarily on combating terrorism and emphasised attacking potential threats (like rogue states and terrorists possessing weapons of mass destruction) before they could strike and fully materialise. This new doctrine also treated terrorism the same way as slavery and genocide, making the eradication of large terror networks its top priority. It held sovereign nations accountable for the terrorists they harbour or support, leading to military engagements in Iraq and Afghanistan. Finally, under the new security strategy, there was the creation of the Department of Homeland Security and the reforming of the intelligence sector under the Office of the Director of National Intelligence. The administration of President George W. Bush believed that Iraq, under the leadership of Saddam Hussein, already had advanced WMDs which included chemical and biological weapons and was trying to restart some parts of its nuclear programme. US officials at the time, such as Secretary of State Colin Powell, argued that the possibility of Iraq possessing WMDs, combined with its history of violating UN resolutions, posed a grave threat to the US and global security.

The Incident: After the administration deemed that Iraq was a national and international threat and that it was trying to maintain its chemical and biological weapons

programmes, actively seeking to develop its nuclear capability, the claims were supported by intelligence assessments and statements from defectors presented to Congress and the public. Later, the certainty and interpretation of the supportive sources would become a highly controversial and grave issue. However, in response to these concerns, Congress deliberated upon the "Authorisation for Use of Military Force Against Iraq Resolution" of 2002 (AUMF). This resolution authorised the president to use the US military forces as he deemed necessary in order to protect US national security and to enforce relevant UNSC resolutions regarding Iraq. On 10 October of 2002, the House of Representatives passed the resolution with a vote of 296-133, and the following day, it was passed by the Senate with a vote of 77-23. On 16 October 2002, it was signed by George W. Bush and put into law.

After the passing of the 2002 AUMF, the Bush administration launched a US campaign on disarming Iraq through international pressure and chose the secretary of state, Colin Powell, to spearhead it. The concentrated campaign essentially shifted the vision of the public about the AUMF, presenting it as a way to force Saddam Hussein to disarm by showing a unified international front. This was "coercive diplomacy" and signalled to the public that the administration was trying every possible peaceful way and exploring all possible diplomatic avenues to force disarmament rather than resorting to direct conflict.

Inspectors such as Hans Blix from the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC) and Mohamed ElBaradei (IAEA) reported varying levels of cooperation from Iraq. While Iraq generally provided prompt and immediate access to all the sites and infrastructure requested by the inspection programmes, many inspectors frequently complained about the lack of transparency from officials. It was noted that Iraq could not provide the official or verifiable documentation for the destruction of older stockpiles from the 1990s. After the UN inspectors from the IAEA and UNMOVIC returned on November 27, 2002, they concluded in the end that Iraq possessed no active WMDs or had any active WMD programmes. This directly contradicted the US view on Iraq and the information from their intelligence assessments and defectors.

Due to this, disagreements still stood between the International community and the Bush administration on whether Iran posed an imminent threat to the US national security and international stability. The Bush administration put aside the lack of findings by the investigation programmes and argued that the absence of evidence on Iraqi WMDs proved that Saddam Hussein was hiding them. Administration also stated that Iraq had breached the UN resolution 1441 and hence military action was justified.

On 20 March 2003, the United States and a party/coalition of allied nations launched Operation Iraqi Freedom. **The operation was fully approved by the Congress** via the 2002 AUMF, which was passed by an overwhelmingly large margin. The operation included airstrikes and ground invasions, and eventually resulted in the capture of Saddam Hussein by US forces in December 2003. It started the Iraq War, and it itself came under the category of a "war in the constitutional sense".

Strategic Significance- The killing increased the existing importance of covert action as a means to counter perceived nuclear threats. Increasingly, the states avoided the political and military costs of direct war, relying on intelligence, sabotage and targeted killings to slow the Iranian nuclear program rather than conventional military strikes against Iranian nuclear facilities.

Relevance to the Agenda: The Fakhriadeh assassination serves as an important case study for examining the Iranian strategic threat and the future of American posture in the Middle Eastern theatre.

The incident raises several key questions that ought to be pondered upon:

- Can conventional military operations effectively counter nuclear proliferation without triggering heavy conflict?
- Do targeted assassinations strengthen deterrence by imposing costs on adversaries, or do they encourage retaliation and further escalation?
- To what extent should states rely on covert action instead of authorised military force when confronting strategic threats?
- How do such operations affect regional stability and the long-term security of the Middle East

3. Case Study: The Soleimani Strike, January 2020

Background- By late 2019, tensions between the United States and Iran had reached their highest level in years. After the American withdrawal from the JCPOA and the implementation of the Maximum Pressure campaign, Iran gradually reduced compliance with the nuclear agreement amidst escalating regional tensions. Regional security was being breached through tanker attacks, the downing of a U.S. RQ-4 Global Hawk drone, the Aramco-Abqaiq attacks, and repeated rocket attacks by Iran-backed militias on bases housing American personnel in Iraq.

The immediate turning point – on 27 December of 2019, an American contractor was killed near the K-1 military base near Kirkuk due to a rocket attack. Furthermore, it injured several U.S. and Iraqi personnel. The United States linked the attack to Kata'ib Hezbollah, an Iran-backed Iraqi militia. In response, the United States conducted airstrikes against Kata'ib Hezbollah stations in Iraq and Syria. These strikes were followed by intense protests and an attack on the U.S. Embassy compound in Baghdad on 31 December 2019, further escalating the crisis.

Who was Qasem Soleimani? - Qasem Soleimani was a major general in Iran and subsequently the commander of the elite Quds Force. The Quds Force was the elite overseas operations and espionage segment of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), which provided financial funding, sophisticated military training, weapons and strategy to the 'Axis of Resistance. Furthermore, the Quds Force also worked as a command structure, linking Iran with its foreign allies. Soleimani was widely known as the second most powerful man in Iran after their supreme leader at the time, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. He was also the chief architect and strategy organiser of the Iranian militant proxy networks which were spread across the Middle East. Under him, the Quds Force supported Hezbollah in Lebanon, Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad in the Gaza Strip and orchestrated essential military forces for Syrian president Bashar al-Assad during the Syrian civil war. Moreover, he was a famous and celebrated hero of war in Iran because he coordinated and armed many Iraqi and Syrian forces to defeat the Islamic State (ISIS/ISIL). However, he was despised and seen as a threat by Western and Israeli officials for leading insurgent campaigns and initiating proxy attacks, which resulted in the deaths of hundreds of American personnel and service members in the Iranian region, especially after the 2003 Iraq invasion.

What are the PMF? - PMF stands for Popular Mobilisation Forces. The PMF, even though it is officially an Iraqi state security force, majorly consists of Shia armed factions that are funded, supported and ideologically aligned with Iran. Units from the Iraqi PMF crossed into Iran mainly from the Basra border and the Shalamchah crossing into the Khuzestan province. During any escalation crises or regional conflicts, the PMF convoys are deployed to Iran, which it acknowledges as 'humanitarian aid'.

The Incident – On 3 January 2020, the United States carried out a drone strike near the Baghdad International Airport, which killed Major General Qasem Soleimani, commander of Iran's Quds Force, along with Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, the deputy commander of Iraq's

Popular Mobilisation Forces (PMF). Quasem Soleimani was known as one of the most influential figures in Iran's regional strategy. As commander of the Quds Force, he oversaw Iran's network of proxy groups and was an important figure under whom Iranian operations were conducted across Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, and elsewhere in the Middle East.

Responsibility – It was a covert military operation conducted by the United States and initiated under President Donald J. Trump.

How was the strike justified? - Under the Trump administration, the strike was justified by arguing that Soleimani was responsible for arranging attacks against American personnel and was actively planning various other operations. Officials also backed this up by claiming that the strike was necessary to protect American lives and restore deterrence. Furthermore, the administration also stated that the strike was conducted in response to a rapidly escalating series of attacks which were arranged by Soleimani in Iraq, such as the K-1 airbase attack, the December 31 siege on the U.S. embassy in Baghdad, and sophisticated rocket attacks which were targeting other coalition troops set in military bases across Iraq.

Legal and constitutional implications – This strike immediately triggered intense debate on whether the Trump administration's use of force was legitimate and on the legality of the strike as a whole.

1. The Trump administration mainly argued that the Article II powers of the U.S. Constitution justified the strike, stating that the president possessed the authority to act in self-defence and protect American personnel from imminent threats as the commander in chief of the military. Critics like Representative Elissa Slotkin (former House Foreign Affairs), Senator Chris Murphy and Committee Chairman Eliot Engel questioned whether the strike met the legal threshold for imminence and argued that such a significant military action should have required explicit congressional authorisation.
2. The administration also referenced the 2002 Authorisation for the Use of Military Force (AUMF), originally enacted in the context of Iraq. Many lawmakers and legal scholars argued that applying the 2002 AUMF to military action against Soleimani was justified, using a very broad interpretation of Congress's authorisation for military action.
 - As a result of these opposing views, the strike restarted old debates regarding executive war powers, congressional oversight, and the continued relevance of existing AUMFs.

- Iranian Response: On 8 January 2020, Iran launched ballistic missiles against the Al Asad Air Base and other facilities hosting American forces in Iraq.
- The attack caused numerous injuries to US personnel but resulted in no direct fatalities. Notably, Iran appeared to deliver its response carefully, showing that it will retaliate but at the same time avoid a conventional war with the United States.
- The Iranian response is an important example of brinkmanship and deterrence signalling.

Congressional response:

1. War Power Resolutions

- House Action: After the strike, the House of Representatives passed a bipartisan concurrent resolution (a resolution which has the support of both Republicans and Democrats and is approved by both houses of Congress), which was spearheaded by Representative Ro Khanna. It required the president not to use the U.S. military forces for hostilities or attacks against Iran without the consent and approval of Congress.
- Senate Action: A very similar joint resolution was proposed by Senator Tim Kaine and was passed as well.

2. Criticism

- Both the Republicans and the Democrats expressed frustration that the Trump administration did not inform or get their approval before conducting an assassination of such an important foreign official.
- Despite a classified briefing on the intelligence behind the strike, many members of Congress claimed that their questions about the “imminent” nature of the threat remained unanswered.

Some questions to ponder upon:

- What forms a legitimate response to a *perceived* strategic threat?
- How should the United States balance deterrence against the risk of escalation?
- When should military force be authorized, and what role should Congress play in that process?
- Are existing AUMFs sufficient for modern security challenges?
- Can targeted military action improve regional security and stability, or does it increase the chances of more intense conflict?

- What should the American posture in the Middle Eastern theatre look like when confronting Iranian influence and proxy networks?

Guiding Questions

1. Is it important for the US Senate to amend, replace or repeal the 2001 AUMF, given the criticism as to how authorization has been stretched beyond the Congress's initial intention of counter terrorism?
2. What measures ought to be introduced in order to ensure that the Senate maintains a meaningful oversight of future military operations that are initiated by the Executive branch?
3. Should the Congress introduce periodic reauthorizations of military campaigns in order to prevent future "forever wars"?
4. What lessons must American policymakers derive from the conflict (with regard to incidents such as the Sulemani Strikes and Iran's retaliation) regarding escalation dominance, and how will these be implemented in American policy to ensure stronger future decisions made by America?
5. Is a reconsideration of the criteria for continuation or termination of naval interdictions and maritime security operations required and what modifications must be made with reference to modern day global affairs?
6. How must the United States respond should there be a case of surviving nuclear infrastructure or hidden enrichment sites in Iran?

Is it necessary for the U.S. to pursue a renewed nuclear agreement with Iran, and what shortcomings of the JCPOA should it address?

Has the Maximum Pressure Strategy been successful in achieving its intended objectives, or has it merely accelerated Iran's resistance and regional instability?

Should America's primary tool of coercive diplomacy towards Iran remain as sanctions? If not, what tools must America prioritize using now?

What policies can aid the United States in mitigating any future economic or energy shocks from regional conflicts?

What role must the Congress hold in matters such as shaping America's regional strategy amidst the rising multipolarity in the world?

Which combination of military, diplomatic, economic and legislative measures will best serve America's long term interest?

How does America aim to prevent the strategic loopholes caused by the conflict being exploited by other rising powers such as China and Russia?

What recalibrations with regard to relations with Israel, the GCC and other emerging mediators will be required in the aftermath of the war?

Bibliography

United States Senate. "Origins and Functions".
www.senate.gov/about/origins-foundations.htm

Britannica. "United States Senate."
www.britannica.com/topic/Senate-United-States-government

United States Senate. "Senate Created."
www.senate.gov/artandhistory/history/minute/Senate_Created.htm

U.S Capitol Visitor Centre. "The U.S Senate."
www.visitthecapitol.gov/education-resource/us-senate

United States Senate. "Idea of the Senate | A Place of Sober Second Thought."
www.senate.gov/about/origins-foundations/idea-of-the-senate/1897Hoar.htm

GovInfo. "Attendance of Senators."
www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/GPO-RIDDICK-1992/pdf/GPO-RIDDICK-1992-11.pdf

Constitution Annotated. "Constitution of the United States: Article 1"
constitution.congress.gov/constitution/article-1/

Asmar, Amir. "Five ways the Iran war will forever alter the Middle East." *Atlantic Council*, May. 2026, www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/menasource/five-ways-the-iran-war-will-forever-alter-the-middle-east/

Centre for Strategic and International Studies. "How Does Saudi Arabia See the War with Iran". 2026, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/how-does-saudi-arabia-see-war-iran>

Centre for Strategic and International Studies. "Latest Analysis: War with Iran". 2026, www.csis.org/programs/latest-analysis-war-iran

Chatham House. "Why are Middle Eastern governments lobbying against a US attack on Iran?" 2026, www.chathamhouse.org/2026/02/why-are-middle-eastern-governments-lobbying-against-us-attack-iran

Middle East Institute. "Domino Effect: The Iran War's Impact on Global Trade." 2026, mei.edu/events/domino-effect-the-iran-wars-impact-on-global-trade/

Oxford Economics. "Iran Conflict 2026: Economic Impact of US, Israel & Iran Tensions." 2026, www.oxfordeconomics.com/iran-conflict-us-israel-iran-war-2026/

Tobias Adrian, Jihad Azour, Nigel Chalk, Pierre-Olivier Gourinchas, Alfred Kammer, Abebe Aemro Selassie, Krishna Srinivasan, Rodrigo Valdés. "How the War in the Middle East Is Affecting Energy, Trade, and Finance." *IMF Blog*, March. 2026, www.imf.org/en/blogs/articles/2026/03/30/how-the-war-in-the-middle-east-is-affecting-energy-trade-and-finance

Sanam Vakil. "Iran and the US both think they are winning the war. The truth is they are both losing." *The Guardian*, June. 2026, www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2026/jun/04/iran-us-winning-war-truth-losing-ceasefire

James Jeffrey. "The Middle East After the Iran War: Lessons and Outcomes." *The Washington Institute for Near East Policy*, March. 2026, www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/middle-east-after-iran-war-lessons-and-outcomes

Susan M. Akram, Charles W. Dunne, Amy Hawthorne, Patricia Karam, Khalil E. Jahshan, Annelle Sheline, Kristian Coates Ulrichsen. "The US-Israel War on Iran: Analyses and Perspectives." *Arab Centre Washington DC*, March. 2026, arabcenterdc.org/resource/the-us-israel-war-on-iran-analyses-and-perspectives/

IRAM. "The Latest Status of the 25-Year Comprehensive Cooperation Agreement Between Iran and China." 2026, iramcenter.org/en/the-latest-status-of-the-25-year-comprehensive-cooperation-agreement-between-iran-and-china-737

Graham Ayres, Rachael Burton, Joseph Federici, Nicole Morgret, Lyndi Tsering. "China-Iran Fact Sheet: A Short Primer on the Relationship." *U.S.-China Economic AND Security Review Commission*, March. 2026, www.uscc.gov/research/china-iran-fact-sheet-short-primer-relationship

Financial Action Task Force. "Gulf Co-operation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf (GCC)." 2024, www.fatf-gafi.org/en/countries/detail/Gulf-Co-operation-Council.html

Steven A. Cook. "Gulf Leaders Didn't Want the Iran War. They Need Trump to Win It Anyway." *Council on Foreign Relations*, March. 2026, www.cfr.org/articles/the-gulf-didnt-want-the-iran-war-they-need-trump-to-win-it-anyway

Dr. Majid Rafizadeh. "True strategic wisdom for Iran is restraint toward the Gulf states." *Alarabiya English*, June. 2026, english.alarabiya.net/views/2026/06/08/true-strategic-wisdom-for-iran-is-restraint-toward-the-gulf-states

Mehran Haghirián. "The GCC Will Not Unify on Iran." *Middle East Council on Global Affairs*, April. 2026, mecouncil.org/blog_posts/the-gcc-will-not-unify-on-iran/

Dr. Dania Thafer. "The GCC's Dilemma: Bound by Washington, Exposed by Iran." *Gulf International Forum*, March. 2026, gulfif.org/the-gccs-dilemma-bound-by-washington-exposed-by-iran/

Prasanta Kumar Pradhan. "GCC's Moment of Truth." *Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses*, March. 2026, idsa.in/publisher/comments/gccs-moment-of-truth

Kristian Coates Ulrichsen. "The GCC States and the War on Iran: Rethinking Responses to Unwanted Consequences." *Arab Centre Washington DC*, March. 2026, arabcenterdc.org/resource/the-gcc-states-and-the-war-on-iran-rethinking-responses-to-unwanted-consequences/

Dr. Zeidon Alkinani. "The War in the Gulf and the Reconfiguration of Regional Security." *Gulf International Forum*, May. 2026, gulfif.org/the-war-in-the-gulf-and-the-reconfiguration-of-regional-security/

Security Council Report. "UN-GCC Cooperation." 2026, www.securitycouncilreport.org/monthly-forecast/2026-04/un-gcc-cooperation.php

Galip Dalay. "As Iran war reshapes the Middle East, Turkey's regional role looks set to expand." *Chatham House*, June. 2026, www.chathamhouse.org/2026/06/iran-war-reshapes-middle-east-turkeys-regional-role-looks-set-to-expand

Andrew Leber, Sam Worby. "Three Scenarios for the Gulf States After the Iran War." *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, April. 2026, carnegieendowment.org/emissary/2026/04/gulf-states-gcc-iran-war-three-scenarios

General Secretariat - Riyadh, "Statement Issued by the 50th Extraordinary Meeting of the Ministerial Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Regarding the Iranian Aggression Against the GCC." *Gulf Cooperation Council*, March. 2026, www.gcc-sg.org/en/MediaCenter/News/Pages/news2026-3-1-2.aspx

Yanzhong Huang, Joshua Kurlantzick, Shannon K. O'Neil, Abigail Van Buren, James West, Patricia Dorff, Chloe Moffett. "China's Approach to Global Governance." *Council on Foreign Relations*, June. 2020, www.cfr.org/china-global-governance/

Colin Grabow. "Responsible Stakeholders: Why the United States Should Welcome China's Economic Leadership." *CATO Institute*, October. 2017,

www.cato.org/policy-analysis/responsible-stakeholders-why-united-states-should-welcome-chinas-economic

Robert B. Zoellick. "Can America and China Be Stakeholders?" *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, December. 2019,
<https://carnegieendowment.org/posts/2019/12/can-america-and-china-be-stakeholders>

Chenghao Sun, Jiayu Yao, Wen Yiran, Zhengyi Fan, Zhuoyu Wang, Xueyu Zhang. "#9 Ask China: Trump-Xi summit and China-US relations." *ChinaAffairs+*, June. 2026,
www.chinaaffairsplus.com/p/9-ask-china-trump-xi-summit-and-china

Elisa Ewers, Michael Schiffer. "What the Iran War Taught China About Fighting the United States." *Council on Foreign Relations*, May. 2026,
www.cfr.org/articles/what-the-iran-war-taught-china-about-fighting-the-united-states

Ryan Hass, Patricia M. Kim, Yun Sun, Dennis Wilder, Thomas Wright. "Beijing's approach to the conflict in Iran and its implications for China." *Brookings*, May. 2026,
www.brookings.edu/articles/beijings-approach-to-the-conflict-in-iran-and-its-implications-for-china/

Antara Ghosal Singh. "Is China's Silence on US-Israel's War in Iran Strategic?" *Observer Research Foundation*, March. 2026,
www.orfonline.org/research/is-china-s-silence-on-us-israel-s-war-in-iran-strategic

Frank Gardner. "Why China keeps cropping up in Iran war stories." *BBC*, April. 2026,
www.bbc.com/news/videos/cz67760pq0xo

Grant Rumley, Shivane Anand. "Tracking Chinese and Russian Statements on the Iran War." *The Washington Institute for Near East Policy*, April. 2026,
www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/tracking-chinese-and-russian-statements-iran-war

Joseph Pisani. "How Much Oil Does China Buy from Iran?" *The Wall Street Journal*, May. 2026,
www.wsj.com/livecoverage/iran-us-china-news-2026/card/how-much-oil-does-china-buy-from-iran--3IX8XmxdTOpr1QdGQ5GC

Gedaliah Afterman. "The Iran War Isn't About China, But Beijing May Still Benefit." *The Cairo Review of Global Affairs*, March. 2026, www.thecaireview.com/essays/the-iran-war-isnt-about-china-but-beijing-may-still-benefit/

Alicia García-Herrero. "What the war in Iran means for China." *Bruegel*, March. 2026, www.bruegel.org/analysis/what-war-iran-means-china

Mercy A. Kuo. "China's Interests in the Israel-US War With Iran." *The Diplomat*, March. 2026, thediplomat.com/2026/03/chinas-interests-in-the-israel-us-war-with-iran/

The Washington Post. "China Gains major edge on U.S. amid Iran war, intelligence report finds" 2026, www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2026/05/13/china-gains-major-edge-us-amid-iran-war-us-intelligence-finds/

Andrew P. Miller, Michael Clark. "The Iran War Is a Win for China." *Foreign Affairs*, April. 2026, www.foreignaffairs.com/united-states/iran-war-win-china

Ahmed Aboudouh. "China will benefit from the Iran war, regardless of any deal between Trump and Tehran." *Chatham House*, May. 2026, www.chathamhouse.org/2026/05/china-will-benefit-iran-war-regardless-any-deal-between-trump-and-tehran

Bonny Lin, Brian Hart, Leon Li, Truly Tinsley, Linda Yang. "How Is the Iran War Impacting China's Economy?" *China Power*, April. 2026, chinapower.csis.org/china-economic-impacts-iran-war/

Hugh Leask. "China is helping to cushion global oil prices below \$100 — but analysts warn it won't last." *CNBC*, June. 2026, www.cnbc.com/2026/06/08/china-oil-iran-war-us-israel-energy-prices-strait-hormuz.html

Erin Hale. "How China is gaining from Iran war by showing it is different from US." *Aljazeera*, April. 2026, www.aljazeera.com/news/2026/4/22/how-china-is-gaining-from-iran-war-by-showing-it-is-different-from-us

Ahmed Aboudouh. "China is playing the long game over Iran." *Chatham House*, February. 2026, www.chathamhouse.org/2026/02/china-playing-long-game-over-iran

Kalpit A Mankikar, Amit Ranjan Alok. "Beyond the Gulf: China's Strategic Calculus in the US-Israel Conflict with Iran." *Observer Research Foundation*, March. 2026, www.orfonline.org/expert-speak/beyond-the-gulf-china-s-strategic-calculus-in-the-us-israel-conflict-with-iran

Aljazeera Centre for Studies. "America, China and the Middle East: Will the Failure in Iran Lead to a Decline in American Power?" 2026, studies.aljazeera.net/en/policy-briefs/america-china-and-middle-east-will-failure-iran-lead-decline-american-power

Tim Rühlig, John Seaman, Daniel Voelsen. "5G and the US-China Tech Rivalry – a Test for Europe's Future in the Digital Age." *Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik Berlin*, June. 2019, www.swp-berlin.org/publications/products/comments/2019C29_job_EtAl.pdf

Iqra Hasnat. "US and China Competition under Trump 2.0." *Centre for Strategic and Contemporary Research*, December. 2024, cscr.pk/explore/themes/politics-governance/us-and-china-competition-under-trump-2-0/

The World Forum on Peace and Security. "U.S. Tests on Pacific: Weapons for the Future?" 2024, www.psforum.org/u-s-tests-on-pacific-weapons-for-the-future/

Stewart Patrick. "Irresponsible Stakeholders?" *Columbia University*, December. 2010, ciaotest.cc.columbia.edu/journals/fa/v89i6/05.html

Christopher S. Chivvis, Mariano-Florentino (Tino) Cuéllar, Evan S. Medeiros, Stephen M. Walt, John Culver, Rosemary Foot, C. Fred Bergsten, Edoardo Campanella, Meg Rithmire, M. Taylor Fravel, Eric Heginbotham, George Perkovich, Audrye Wong, Stephen Wertheim. "U.S.-China Relations for the 2030s: Toward a Realistic Scenario for Coexistence." *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, October. 2024, assets.carnegieendowment.org/static/files/Chivvis-US%20China%202030-final%201.pdf

Zongyuan Zoe Liu. "China and the U.S. Agreed to 'Strategic Stability' in Beijing. They Don't Define It the Same Way." *Council on Foreign Relations*, May. 2026, www.cfr.org/articles/china-and-the-u-s-agreed-to-strategic-stability-in-beijing-they-dont-define-it-the-same-way

Marcos CARIAS, Junyu Tan. "The US-China trade war has entered uncharted waters." *Coface*, April. 2025, www.coface.com/news-economy-and-insights/the-us-china-trade-war-has-entered-uncharted-waters

Chinese Consulate General in Auckland. "Chinese Consul General in Auckland Chen Shijie Publishes a Signed Article Across Local Media: A New Blueprint for China-U.S. Relations as Seen Through the Summit." *Ministry of Foreign Affairs, People's Republic of China*, May. 2026, www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/xw/zwb/202606/t20260604_11937366.html

Center for Preventive Action. "Iran's War With Israel and the United States." *Council on Foreign Relations*, May. 2026, www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/confrontation-between-united-states-and-iran

Michael Young. "A Military Balance Sheet in the U.S. and Israeli War With Iran." *Malcolm H. Kerr Carnegie Middle East Centre*, April. 2026, carnegieendowment.org/middle-east/diwan/2026/04/a-military-balance-sheet-in-war-with-iran

Frank Gardner. "Who wants what from the Iran war?" *BBC*, March. 2026, www.bbc.com/news/articles/cgk2lm5znyro

Julien Barnes-Dacey, Ellie Geranmayeh, Cinzia Bianco, Hugh Lovatt, Andrew Small, Asli Aydıntaşbaş, Jana Kobzová, Majda Ruge. "A war with no winners: The costs of US-Israeli aggression on Iran." *European Council on Foreign Relations*, March. 2026, ecfr.eu/article/a-war-with-no-winners-the-costs-of-us-israeli-aggression-on-iran/

Robert D. Blackwill, Walter B. Slocombe. "Israel: A True Ally in the Middle East." *The Washington Institute for Near East Policy & the Los Angeles Times*, October. 2011, www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/israel-true-ally-middle-east

Will Christou. “Who's with who?: why alliances in the Iran-US war are not simple.” *The Guardian News*, March. 2026, www.youtube.com/watch?v=CPVWd6nY3O0

Natan Sachs. “US-Israel Relations.” *Middle East Institute*, February. 2026, mei.edu/commentary/us-israel-relations/

Al Jazeera Staff. “Iran and Israel halt attacks but sabre-rattling continues.” *Aljazeera*, June. 2026, www.aljazeera.com/news/2026/6/8/israel-and-iran-exchange-attacks-as-ceasefire-falters

Caolán Magee. “Iran and Israel bomb each other: Is the ceasefire over?” *Aljazeera*, June. 2026, www.aljazeera.com/news/2026/6/8/iran-and-israel-bomb-each-other-is-the-ceasefire-over

Daniel Byman. “The Wars After the War: Why Israel and Iran May Keep Fighting.” *Centre for Strategic and International Studies*, March. 2026, www.csis.org/analysis/wars-after-war-why-israel-and-iran-may-keep-fighting

Ray Takeyh, Elliott Abrams, Steven A. Cook, Linda Robinson, Max Boot, Elisa Ewers. “Gauging the Impact of Massive U.S.-Israeli Strikes on Iran” *Council on Foreign Relations*, February. 2026, www.cfr.org/articles/gauging-the-impact-of-massive-u-s-israeli-strikes-on-iran

Amir Azimi. “Iran's strike on Israel suggests the regime's sense of resilience is growing.” *BBC*, June. 2026, www.bbc.com/news/articles/clv72ryrd1jo

Ian Bond, Thomas Maddock. “War in Iran: Who wins and who loses?” *Centre for European Reform*, March. 2026, www.cer.eu/insights/war-iran-who-wins-and-who-loses

Shamsoddin Shariati. “Why Europe’s support for war on Iran is backfiring.” *The Loop*, April. 2026, theloop.ecpr.eu/why-europes-support-for-war-on-iran-will-backfire/

Press Release. “Statement by the High Representative on behalf of the EU on the ceasefire agreed by the United States and Iran.” *European Council, Council of the European Union*, April. 2026, www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2026/04/09/statement-by-the-high-representative-on-behalf-of-the-eu-on-the-ceasefire-agreed-by-the-united-states-and-iran/

EEAS Press Team. "Informal meeting of Defence Ministers: Press conference by High Representative Kaja Kallas." *European Union External Action*, June. 2026, www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/informal-meeting-defence-ministers-press-conference-high-representative-kaja-kallas%C2%A0_en

European Council, Council of the European Union. "European Council conclusions on the Middle East." 2026. www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2026/03/19/european-council-conclusions-on-middle-east/

Sophia Besch. "Europe Cannot Sit Out the Iran War." *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, April. 2026, carnegieendowment.org/emissary/2026/04/europe-iran-war-diplomacy-united-states

Matthias Matthijs. "Europe's Disjointed Response to the U.S.-Israeli War With Iran." *Council on Foreign Relations*, March. 2026, www.cfr.org/articles/europes-disjointed-response-to-the-u-s-israeli-war-with-iran

Grant Rumley, Henry Tugendhat, Anna Borshchevskaya, Soner Cagaptay, Souhrie Medini. "Great Power Spillover from the Iran War: Implications for China, Russia, Turkey, and Europe." *The Washington Institute for Near East Policy*, March. 2026, www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/great-power-spillover-iran-war-implications-china-russia-turkey-and-europe

Nathalie Tocci. "Europe's reaction to Trump's war on Iran is a disaster – for Europe itself." *The Guardian*, March. 2026, www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2026/mar/16/europe-reaction-donald-trump-war-iran-legal-iraq

European Council, Council of the European Union. "EU position on the situation in the Middle East." 2026. www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/eu-position-situation-middle-east/

European Commission. "The Middle East Crisis." 2026. commission.europa.eu/topics/humanitarian-aid/middle-east-crisis_en

Eliza Gkritsi. "How every EU country responded to the strikes on Iran." *Político*, March. 2026, www.politico.eu/article/eu-react-iran-us-israel-crisis/

Max Bergmann, Federico Steinberg. "Europe Needs Bold Economic Action in the Face of the Iran Shock." *Centre for Strategic and International Studies*, March. 2026, www.csis.org/analysis/europe-needs-bold-economic-action-face-iran-shock

Jakub Krupa. "Consequences of Iran war 'may echo for months or years to come,' EU chief warns – as it happened." *The Guardian*, April. 2026, www.theguardian.com/world/live/2026/apr/29/europe-iran-hungary-russia-ukraine-eu-latest-news-updates

Tom Crowfoot. "EU plans to offset Iran war's energy impact, and other climate and nature news." *World Economic Forum*, May. 2026, www.weforum.org/stories/2026/04/eu-plans-iran-war-energy-climate-nature-news-april-2026/

Lisa O'Carroll. "EU farmers and hauliers to get up to €50,000 to cover extra costs of Iran war." *The Guardian*, April. 2026, www.theguardian.com/world/2026/apr/29/eu-farmers-hauliers-fishing-subsidies-up-to-50000-fuel-fertiliser-iran-war

Ana Maria Jaller-Makarewicz. "One hundred days of disruption: How the Iran war exposes Europe's energy vulnerabilities." *Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis*, June. 2026, ieefa.org/resources/one-hundred-days-disruption-how-iran-war-exposes-europes-energy-vulnerabilities

Julien Barnes-Dacey, Ellie Geranmayeh. "Strategic lunacy: Why Europeans must stand up to Trump's illegal war in Iran." *EU Debates, News & Opinions*, March. 2026, www.pubaffairsbruxelles.eu/opinion-analysis/strategic-lunacy-why-europeans-must-stand-up-to-trumps-illegal-war-in-iran/

Fitch Ratings. "Fitch Changes Global Sovereigns Sector Outlook to 'Deteriorating' on Iran War Impact." 2026.

www.fitchratings.com/research/sovereigns/fitch-changes-global-sovereigns-sector-outlook-to-deteriorating-on-iran-war-impact-08-06-2026

Samantha Gross. "The Iran conflict's energy shocks are not yet fully realized." *Brookings*, April. 2026, www.brookings.edu/articles/the-iran-conflicts-energy-shocks-are-not-yet-fully-realized/

Reuters. "Explainer: Europe braces for economic hit from Iran conflict." *Reuters*, March. 2026, www.reuters.com/business/energy/europe-braces-economic-hit-iran-conflict-2026-03-02/

Goldman Sachs. "IRAN CONFLICT: HOW LONG, AND HOW BAD?" 2026. www.goldmansachs.com/pdfs/insights/goldman-sachs-research/iran-conflict-how-long-and-how-bad/report.pdf

Jules Maaten, Dr. Nele Fabian. "An opportunity for the EU!" *Friedrich Naumann Foundation*, January. 2025, www.freiheit.org/europe/opportunity-eu

Leonardo De Agostini, Lizza Bomassi, Clotilde Bômout, Ondrej Ditrych, Caspar Hobhouse, Rossella Marangio, Tim Rühlig, Luigi Scazzieri, Katarzyna Sidło, Bojana Zorić. "Low trust: navigating transatlantic relations under Trump 2.0." *European Union Institute for Security Studies*, October. 2025, www.iss.europa.eu/publications/chaillot-papers/low-trust

Jana Puglierin, Arturo Varvelli, Pawel Zerka. "Transatlantic twilight: European public opinion and the long shadow of Trump." *European Council on Foreign Relations*, February. 2025, ecfr.eu/publication/transatlantic-twilight-european-public-opinion-and-the-long-shadow-of-trump/

European Parliament. "EU-US tariffs: tensions, trade deal and what could change." 2026. www.europarl.europa.eu/topics/en/article/20250210STO26801/eu-us-tariffs-tensions-trade-deal-and-what-could-change

European Council, Council of the European Council. "EU relations with the United States." 2026. www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/united-states/

European Commission. "EU-US trade deal explained - energy aspects*." 2026. ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/qanda_25_1935

Tim Bjarin. "The EU's Regulatory Overreach Is Becoming A Real Threat To U.S. Tech." *Forbes*, June. 2026,
www.forbes.com/sites/timbjarin/2026/06/09/the-eus-regulatory-overreach-is-becoming-a-real-threat-to-us-tech/

U.S. MISSION TO THE NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION. "About NATO." 2024.
nato.usmission.gov/about-nato/

NATO. "Nato's Purpose." 2025.
www.nato.int/en/what-we-do/introduction-to-nato/natos-purpose

Jonathan Este. "Will row over Iran conflict spell the end of Nato?" *The Conversation*, April. 2026,
theconversation.com/will-row-over-iran-conflict-spell-the-end-of-nato-279898

Michael A. Allen, Carla Martinez Machain, Michael E. Flynn. "NATO's internal cohesion is being threatened (again) – but in pushing for support on Iran, Trump may risk eroding US influence on the alliance." *The Conversation*, April. 2026,
theconversation.com/natos-internal-cohesion-is-being-threatened-again-but-in-pushing-for-support-on-iran-trump-may-risk-eroding-us-influence-on-the-alliance-279623

Al Jazeera Staff, AFP and Reuters. "'Cowards': Trump slams NATO over lack of support in US–Israel war on Iran." *Aljazeera*, March. 2026,
www.aljazeera.com/news/2026/3/20/cowards-trump-slams-nato-over-lack-of-support-in-us-israel-war-on

Virginia Pietromarchi. "How are NATO allies pushing back against Trump's Iran war demands?" *Aljazeera*, April. 2026,
www.aljazeera.com/news/2026/4/1/how-are-nato-allies-pushing-back-against-trumps-iran-war-demands

BBC News. "Trump criticises Nato allies saying US 'no longer needs' help with Iran War | BBC News." 2026, youtu.be/TKfCTpB8vNQ?si=Oure2jsFKpiFoPiN

Iran Studies Unit. "The Israeli-American War on Iran: Objectives and Potential Scenarios." *Emirates Policy Centre*, 2026.

epc.ae/en/details/scenario/the-israeli-american-war-on-iran-objectives-and-potential-scenarios

Mona Yacoubian. "Iran's War Strategy: Don't Calibrate—Escalate." *Centre for Strategic and International Studies*, March. 2026,

www.csis.org/analysis/irans-war-strategy-dont-calibrate-escalate

Nicolò Murgia. "The European Pillar of NATO in the Era of US Disengagement." *Istituto Affari Internazionali*, May. 2026,

www.iai.it/en/publications/c41/european-pillar-nato-era-us-disengagement

Annie Linskey, Robbie Gramer. "Trump Team Explores Punishment for NATO Countries That Didn't Support Iran War." *The Wall Street Journal*, April. 2026,

www.wsj.com/world/europe/trump-weighs-punishing-certain-nato-countries-over-lack-of-iran-war-support-a2361995

Nikita Shah, Emily Harding, Daniel Byman, Eliot A. Cohen, Kateryna Bondar, Jonathan Burchell, Mark F. Cancian. "What Are the Unintended Consequences of the U.S.-Iran Conflict for Defense and Security?" *Centre for Strategic and International Studies*, April. 2026,

www.csis.org/analysis/what-are-unintended-consequences-us-iran-conflict-defense-and-security

Merlyn Thomas, Alex Murrayand, Matt Murphy. "Iran attacks damage 20 US military sites since start of war, satellite images show." *BBC*, June. 2026, www.bbc.com/news/articles/c2l2yl7r8r2o

Marcin Zaborowski. "Transatlantic Split Over Iran: The Alliance Under Strain." *Globsec*, March. 2026, www.globsec.org/commentaries/transatlantic-split-over-iran-nato-under-strain

Rym Momtaz. "Taking the Pulse: Can NATO Survive the Iran War?" *Carnegie Europe*, April. 2026, carnegieendowment.org/europe/strategic-europe/2026/04/taking-the-pulse-can-nato-survive-the-iran-war

Britannica Editors. "2026 Iran war." *Britannica*, June. 2026, www.britannica.com/event/2026-Iran-war

Sannan Pervaiz, Spencer Feingold. "Uncertainty around US-Iran talks, and other geopolitical stories to know this month." *World Economic Forum*, June. 2026, www.weforum.org/stories/2026/06/uncertainty-around-us-iran-ceasefire-and-other-geopolitical-stories-to-know-this-month/

NATO. "NATO is well postured to defend Allied populations against ballistic threats." 2026. www.nato.int/en/news-and-events/articles/news/2026/03/05/nato-is-well-postured-to-defend-allied-populations-against-ballistic-threats

U.S. Energy Information Administration. "What is OPEC+ and how is it different from OPEC?" 2023. www.eia.gov/todayinenergy/detail.php?id=56420

Middle East Institute. "OPEC and OPEC+." 2025. mei.edu/backgrounder/opec-and-opec/

Ahmad Ghaddar, Olesya Astakhova. "OPEC+ approves fourth oil output quota hike since Hormuz closure." *Reuters*, June. 2026, www.reuters.com/business/energy/opec-set-fourth-oil-quota-hike-since-hormuz-closure-sources-say-2026-06-07/

Giulia Petroni, Farhan Rafid. "OPEC, Allies Pledge Oil-Output Hike Even as Middle East War Chokes Exports." *The Wall Street Journal*, June. 2026, www.wsj.com/business/energy-oil/opec-allies-pledge-oil-output-hike-even-as-middle-east-war-chokes-exports-c6814a82

Edna Mohamed, Reuters. "OPEC+ agrees to hike oil output, warns of slow recovery after attacks." *Aljazeera*, April. 2026, www.aljazeera.com/news/2026/4/5/opec-agrees-to-hike-oil-output-warns-of-slow-recovery-after-attacks

MI News Network. "OPEC+ Navigates Hormuz Closure with 4th Oil Quota Hike Since US-Iran War Began." *Marine Insight*, June. 2026, www.marineinsight.com/opec-navigates-hormuz-closure-with-4th-oil-quota-hike-since-us-iran-war-began/?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=opec-navigates-hormuz-closure-with-4th-oil-quota-hike-since-us-iran-war-began

Masahide Takahashi. "The Petrodollar Order Under Strain as the Iran War Disrupts Gulf Energy Revenues." *Sasakawa Peace Foundation*, June. 2026, www.spf.org/iina/en/articles/takahashi_10.html

Samantha Gross and Ryan Beane. "From chokepoint to crisis: The Strait of Hormuz and global oil markets." *Brookings*, June. 2026, www.brookings.edu/articles/from-chokepoint-to-crisis-the-strait-of-hormuz-and-global-oil-markets/

Grant Smith. "OPEC Output Suffers Record Plunge as Iran War Throttles Exports." *Bloomberg*, April. 2026, www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2026-04-13/opec-output-suffers-record-plunge-as-iran-war-throttles-exports

Anshu Siripurapu, Andrew Chatzky. "OPEC in a Changing World." *Council on Foreign Relations*, March. 2026, www.cfr.org/backgrounders/opec-changing-world

Reuters. "What is OPEC+ and how does it affect oil prices?" *Reuters*, May. 2024, <https://www.reuters.com/markets/commodities/what-is-opec-how-does-it-affect-oil-prices-2024-05-24/>

David Kemp, Peter Van Doren. "Misperceptions of OPEC Capability and Behavior." *CATO Institute*, November. 2023, www.cato.org/policy-analysis/misperceptions-opec-capability-behavior

Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses. "OPEC+ and the Global Oil Market." 2023. idsa.in/publisher/backgrounder/opec-and-the-global-oil-market-2

Imad K. Harb. "With Friends Like These: OPEC's Oil Production and US-Gulf Relations." *Arab Centre Washington DC*, October. 2022, arabcenterdc.org/resource/with-friends-like-these-opecs-oil-production-and-us-gulf-relations/

Volker Roeben. "What drives OPEC production policy?" *Oxford Academic*, December. 2023, academic.oup.com/jwelb/article/17/1/19/7497082

Jason Ahdoot, Charity Morsey, David Vela. "Alleviating U.S. Dependence on OPEC." *Pepperdine University School of Public Policy*, 2001, publicpolicy.pepperdine.edu/master-public-policy/content/capstones/opec.pdf

Rextag. "Understanding OPEC's Production Cuts and Their Global Impact." 2024. rextag.com/blogs/articles/understanding-opecs-production-cuts-and-their-global-impact

Sunjna Namjoshi. "Navigating Political Barriers and Economic Opportunities in America's Green Transition." *Michigan Journal of Economics (Michigan Department of Economics)*, January. 2026, sites.lsa.umich.edu/mje/2025/01/06/navigating-political-barriers-and-economic-opportunities-in-americas-green-transition/

Congressional Research Service. *Iran Conflict and the Strait of Hormuz: Impacts on Oil, Gas, and Other Commodities*. Library of Congress, 2026, www.congress.gov/crs-product/R45281.

International Atomic Energy Agency. *Verification and Monitoring in the Islamic Republic of Iran in Light of United Nations Security Council Resolution 2231 (2015)*. IAEA, 2018, www.iaea.org/sites/default/files/gov2018-24.pdf.

International Energy Agency. *Oil Market Report - April 2026*. IEA, 2026, www.iea.org/reports/oil-market-report-april-2026.

International Monetary Fund. *World Economic Outlook: April 2026*. IMF, 2026, www.imf.org/en/Publications/WEO/Issues/2026/04/world-economic-outlook-april-2026.

Kaine, Tim. "Kaine Statement on Senate Vote on His War Powers Resolution on Iran." *Office of Senator Tim Kaine*, 2026, www.kaine.senate.gov/press-releases/kaine-statement-on-senate-vote-on-his-war-powers-resolution-on-iran.

Schiff, Adam. "Sens. Kaine, Schumer, and Schiff Push for Vote on Iran War Powers Resolution." *Office of Senator Adam Schiff*, 26 Feb. 2026, www.schiff.senate.gov/.

United Kingdom Parliament, House of Commons Library. *Iran: Impacts of June 2025 Israel and US Strikes*. Commons Library Briefing CBP-10292, 2026, commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-10292/.

United Kingdom Parliament, House of Commons Library. *US-Iran Ceasefire and Nuclear Talks in 2026*. Commons Library Briefing CBP-10637, 2026, commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-10637/.

United Nations Development Programme. *Economic and Human Development Impacts in the Islamic Republic of Iran*. UNDP Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific, 31 Mar. 2026, www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/2026-03/undp-rbap-military-escalation-impact-iran-report-iran-updated-as-of-31_0.pdf.

US Congress. *War Powers Resolution*. Public Law 93-148, 7 Nov. 1973, uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?path=%2Fprelim%40title50%2Fchapter33.

US Department of State. *Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action*. Office of the Spokesperson, 14 July 2015, 2009-2017, [state.gov/documents/organization/245317.pdf](https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/245317.pdf).

World Bank. *Commodity Markets Outlook: April 2026*. World Bank Group, 2026, openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/commodity-markets-outlook-april-2026.

Hamilton, Alexander. *The Federalist No. 69*. The Independent Journal, 14 Mar. 1788.

Madison, James. "Helvidius No. 1." *Gazette of the United States*, 24 Aug. 1793.

San Remo Manual on International Law Applicable to Armed Conflicts at Sea. International Institute of Humanitarian Law, 12 June 1994, www.icrc.org/en/doc/resources/documents/article/other/57jmst.htm.

United Nations. *Charter of the United Nations*. 26 June 1945, www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter.

United Nations. *United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea*. 10 Dec. 1982, www.un.org/depts/los/convention_agreements/texts/unclos/unclos_e.pdf.

US Constitution. Art. I, sec. 8 (war powers, declaration clause); Art. II, sec. 2 (commander-in-chief, treaty clause).

US Congress. *Authorization for Use of Military Force*. Public Law 107-40, 18 Sept. 2001.

US Congress. *Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Iraq Resolution of 2002*. Public Law 107-243, 16 Oct. 2002.

US Congress. *Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act of 2015*. Public Law 114-17, 22 May 2015.

Al Jazeera. "12 Days: How 2025 Iran Blueprint Trapped US, Israel in Longer War." *Al Jazeera*, 11 Mar. 2026, www.aljazeera.com/features/2026/3/11/12-days-how-2025-iran-blueprint-trapped-us-israel-in-longer-war.

Al Jazeera. "Trump Claims Victory in Iran — But Is This Really a Win?" *Al Jazeera*, 8 Apr. 2026, aljazeera.com/video/newsfeed/2026/4/8/

Al Jazeera. "Will Russian Oil Be the Biggest Winner in the US-Israel War on Iran?" *Al Jazeera*, 20 Mar. 2026, www.aljazeera.com/features/2026/3/20/will-russian-oil-be-the-biggest-winner-in-the-us-israel-war-on-iran.

Al Jazeera. "From Pakistan to Egypt, Iran War Drives Up Prices in Global South." *Al Jazeera*, 25 Mar. 2026, www.aljazeera.com/economy/2026/3/25/from-pakistan-to-egypt-iran-war-drives-up-fuel-prices-in-the-global-south.

Associated Press. "Rising Energy Prices Strengthen Russia's Ability to Profit from Iran War." *AP News*, 2026, finance.yahoo.com/news/rising-energy-prices-iran-war-160534271.html.

CBS News. "How Russia Is Benefitting from America's War of Choice in Iran." *CBS News*, 18 Mar. 2026, www.cbsnews.com/news/iran-war-us-oil-sanctions-how-russia-is-benefitting/.

CBS News. "Senate Rejects Attempt to Rein in Trump's Power to Wage War on Iran." *CBS News*, 5 Mar. 2026, www.cbsnews.com/news/senate-vote-iran-war-powers-resolution-trump/.

CBS News. "Senate Advances Resolution to Limit Trump's Iran War Powers for First Time, After 4 Republicans Defect." *CBS News*, 19 May 2026, www.cbsnews.com/news/senate-iran-war-powers-eighth-vote-trump/.

CNBC. "Iran's Economy in Charts: Hyperinflation and Depreciating Rial." *CNBC*, 23 Apr. 2026, www.cnbc.com/2026/04/23/iran-economy-war-charts-rial-oil-strait-hormuz-blockade.html.

CNBC. "As the Iran War Upends Energy Flows, Russia Is Emerging as the Real Winner." *CNBC*, 10 Mar. 2026, www.cnbc.com/2026/03/10/russia-winner-iran-us-war-energy-oil-disruption.html.

CNN. "Ceasefire in Lebanon Frays, Iran Warns of Wider War." *CNN*, 5 June 2026, www.cnn.com/2026/06/05/world/live-news/iran-trump-lebanon-israel-war-news.

Council on Foreign Relations. "The Iran War Is Causing Energy Chaos in Asia." *CFR*, 2026, www.cfr.org/articles/the-iran-war-is-causing-energy-chaos-in-asia.

Fortune. "Iran's Crumbling Economy Is the Regime's Greatest Weakness with Prices Up 40% Since the War Began." *Fortune*, 12 Apr. 2026, fortune.com/2026/04/12/iran-economy-crisis-inflation-prices-payroll-unemployment-currency-collapse/

France 24. "Looking Back at Israel and Iran's '12-Day War': Direct Conflict Breaks Out Between Arch-Enemies." *France 24*, 26 Dec. 2025, www.france24.com/en/middle-east/20251226-looking-back-israel-iran-12-day-war.

Gulf News. "Asia Turns to Covid-Era Playbook as Iran War Fuels Energy Crisis." *Gulf News*, 2026, gulfnews.com/world/asia/asia-turns-to-covid-era-playbook-as-iran-war-fuels-energy-crisis-1.500485905.

Gulf News. "Strait of Hormuz Tensions: Impact on Global Oil Prices Amid Iran-US Standoff." *Gulf News*, 2026, gulfnews.com/business/energy/strait-of-hormuz-tensions-impact-on-global-oil-prices-amid-iran-us-standoff-1.500452703.

Reuters. "Iran War Doubles Russia's Main Oil Revenue to \$9 Billion in April, Reuters Calculations Show." *Reuters*, 9 Apr. 2026, www.aol.com/articles/exclusive-iran-war-doubles-russias-093924945.html.

The Moscow Times. "Russia Sees Rising Oil Revenue on Iran War Energy Shock." *The National*, 22 May 2026, www.thenationalnews.com/business/energy/2026/05/22/russia-sees-rising-oil-revenue-on-iran-war-energy-shock/.

The New Humanitarian. "How Economic Collapse Set the Stage for Iran's Deadly Protests." *The New Humanitarian*, 29 Jan. 2026, www.thenewhumanitarian.org/news-feature/2026/01/29/how-economic-collapse-set-stage-iran-deadly-protests.

The Washington Post. "Senate Advances Resolution to Block Further Strikes on Iran." *The Washington Post*, 19 May 2026,
www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2026/05/19/senate-votes-advance-resolution-block-further-strikes-iran/.

The Washington Times. "Khamenei Advisers Demand Lebanon in Ceasefire, Iran's Control of Strait of Hormuz." *The Washington Times*, 1 June 2026,
www.washingtontimes.com/news/2026/jun/1/khamenei-advisers-demand-lebanon-ceasefire-iran-control-strait/.

Time. "How the War with Iran Is Impacting Economies in Asia." *Time*, 16 Mar. 2026,
time.com/article/2026/03/16/us-israel-iran-war-trump-asia-economy-oil-energy-inflation-recession/.

Time. "House Votes to Restrain Trump's Iran War Powers in Symbolic Rebuke." *Time*, 4 June 2026, time.com/article/2026/06/04/trump-iran-war-powers-resolution-house-republicans/

Time. "Senate Blocks Iran War Powers Resolution for Fourth Time." *Time*, 15 Apr. 2026,
time.com/article/2026/04/15/senate-blocks-iran-war-powers-resolution-for-fourth-time/

Britannica. "12-Day War (June 2025)." *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 2025,
www.britannica.com/event/12-Day-War.

Brookings Institution. "The Soleimani Strike, the Iran Crisis, and the Legacies of the 2002 AUMF." *Brookings*, Jan. 2020,
www.brookings.edu/articles/the-soleimani-strike-the-iran-crisis-and-the-legacies-of-the-2002-aumf/.

Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. *The Day After: The U.S.-Iran Strategic Competition After the JCPOA*. Carnegie, 2022, carnegieendowment.org.

Center for Strategic and International Studies. *Iran's Networks of Influence in the Middle East*. CSIS, 2019, www.csis.org/analysis/iran-networks-of-influence.

Council on Foreign Relations. "Iran's War with Israel and the United States." *Global Conflict Tracker*, 2026,
www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/confrontation-between-united-states-and-iran.

Just Security. "The Soleimani Strike and War Powers." *Just Security*, 10 Jan. 2020, www.justsecurity.org/67921/the-soleimani-strike-and-war-powers/.

Lawfare. "Congressional War Powers and the Iran Conflict: A Year in Review." *Lawfare*, 2026, www.lawfaremedia.org.

National Constitution Center. "Does the War Powers Resolution Debate Take on a New Context in the Iran Conflict?" *National Constitution Center*, Mar. 2026, constitutioncenter.org.

Asian Development Bank. "Asian Development Outlook: April 2026 Supplement." ADB, 2026, www.adb.org/publications/asian-development-outlook-april-2026.

Discovery Alert. "Strait of Hormuz Oil Supply Disruption: 2026 Crisis Explained." *Discovery Alert*, 2026, discoveryalert.com.au/strait-hormuz-oil-supply-disruption-price-impact-2026/

Discovery Alert. "Strait of Hormuz Disruption: Oil Prices and Market Impact 2026." *Discovery Alert*, 2026, discoveryalert.com.au/strait-hormuz-disruption-oil-prices-brent-outlook-2026/.

Eurasia Group. "Top Risks 2026". Eurasia Group, 2026, www.eurasiagroup.net.

International Crisis Group. "The Middle East in 2026: Regional Realignment After the Iran War." Crisis Group Middle East Report, 2026, www.crisisgroup.org.

US Energy Information Administration. "The Strait of Hormuz Is the World's Most Important Oil Transit Chokepoint." *US EIA*, 2024, www.eia.gov/todayinenergy/detail.php?id=55571.

Center for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation. "Fact Sheet: The Iran Deal, Then and Now." 2025. armscontrolcenter.org/the-iran-deal-then-and-now/

Maryam Alemzadeh. "IRGC and Terrorism-Related Sanctions: Why They Fail, What They Achieve." *Brandeis University*, September. 2024, www.brandeis.edu/crown/publications/middle-east-briefs/meb160.html

Italian Institute for Political Studies. "The IRGC Designation as Foreign Terrorist Organizations: Trump's Risky Move." 2019. www.ispionline.it/en/publication/irgc-designation-foreign-terrorist-organizations-trumps-risky-move-22832

Omer Carmi. "The IRGC Designation Couldn't Come at a Worse Time for Iran." *The Washington Institute for Near East Policy*, April. 2019,
www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/irgc-designation-couldnt-come-worse-time-iran

Law 360. "How Terror Group Label For IRGC Could Impact Iran Deal." 2017.
www.law360.com/articles/908829/how-terror-group-label-for-irgc-could-impact-iran-deal

Esfandiyar Batmanghelidj. "Removing the IRGC from the FTO List Risks Nothing." *Bourse and Bazaar Foundation*, March. 2022,
www.bourseandbazaar.org/articles/2022/3/22/removing-the-irgc-from-the-fto-list-risks-nothing

Holland & Hart LLP. "The Imminent Foreign Terrorist Organization Designation of the IRGC." *Lexology*, February. 2017,
www.lexology.com/library/detail.aspx?g=ff557ab0-ce51-4ff9-abe2-ebbbd8243734

Natasha Turak. "World Politics: How Trump's terrorist designation of Iran's revolutionary guard impacts its economy." *CNBC*, April. 2019,
www.cnbc.com/2019/04/12/trump-terrorist-designation-of-irans-irgc-the-economic-impact.html

Hamidreza Azizi. "Iran's Shifting Discourse on Nuclear Weaponization: Bargaining Tactic or Doctrine Change?" *Middle East Council on Global Affairs*, November. 2024,
mecouncil.org/publication/irans-shifting-discourse-on-nuclear-weaponization-bargaining-tactic-or-doctrine-change/

International Crisis Group. "The Failure of U.S. "Maximum Pressure" against Iran." 2021.
www.crisisgroup.org/cmt/middle-east-north-africa/iran/failure-us-maximum-pressure-against-iran

Barak Ravid. "Maximum pressure campaign escalates with Fakhrizadeh killing." *Axios*, November. 2020, www.axios.com/2020/11/27/fakhrizadeh-assassination-iran-nuclear-weapons

Aljazeera. "Mohsen Fakhrizadeh assassination: How the world reacted." 2020.
www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/11/28/iranian-nuclear-physicist-killing-world-reaction

The Soufan Centre. "IntelBrief: Tanker Blasts in the Gulf of Oman Escalate Tensions Between U.S. and Iran." 2019,

thesoufancenter.org/intelbrief-tanker-blasts-in-the-gulf-of-oman-escalate-tensions-between-u-s-and-iran/

Aaron Stein, Afshon Ostovar, Ariane M. Tabatabai. "U.S. Accuses Iran of Committing Tanker Attacks." *Foreign Policy Research Institute*, June. 2019, www.fpri.org/article/2019/06/roundtable-u-s-accuses-iran-of-committing-tanker-attacks/

Center for Preventive Action. "Iran's War With Israel and the United States." *Council on Foreign Relations*, May. 2026, www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/confrontation-between-united-states-and-iran

Julian Borger. "Iran scientist's assassination appears intended to undermine nuclear deal." *The Guardian*, November. 2020, www.theguardian.com/world/2020/nov/27/iran-nuclear-scientist-assassinated-mohsen-fakhrizadeh

United States Institute of Peace. "Israeli Sabotage of Iran's Nuclear Program." 2021, iranprimer.usip.org/blog/2021/apr/12/israeli-sabotage-iran%E2%80%99s-nuclear-program

Jim Krane, Mark Finley. "The US Response to Attacks on Persian Gulf Oil Infrastructure and Strategic Implications for Petro-States." *Rice University's Baker Institute for Public Policy*, October. 2019, www.bakerinstitute.org/research/us-response-attacks-persian-gulf-oil-infrastructure

Ray Takeyh. "What Is the Iran Nuclear Deal?" *Council on Foreign Relations*, October. 2023, www.cfr.org/backgrounders/what-iran-nuclear-deal

Kelsey Davenport. "The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) at a Glance." *Arms Control Association*, February. 2025, www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/joint-comprehensive-plan-action-jcpoa-glance

Joseph Rodgers. "What Operation Midnight Hammer Means for the Future of Iran's Nuclear Ambitions." *Center for Strategic and International Studies*, June. 2025, www.csis.org/analysis/what-operation-midnight-hammer-means-future-irans-nuclear-ambitions

Matthew Olay. "Hegseth, Caine Laud Success of U.S. Strike on Iran Nuke Sites." *U.S Department of War*, June. 2025,

www.war.gov/News/News-Stories/Article/Article/4222533/hegseth-caine-laud-success-of-us-strike-on-iran-nuke-sites/

Constitution Annotated. "Constitution of the United States: Article II."
constitution.congress.gov/constitution/article-2/

Matthew Pheneger. "The Constitutionality of Operation Midnight Hammer: Exploring Trump's Iran Strikes Under US Law." *Jurist News*, August. 2025,
www.jurist.org/commentary/2025/08/the-constitutionality-of-operation-midnight-hammer-exploring-trumps-iran-strikes-under-us-law/#

Department of Justice. "AUTHORITY TO USE MILITARY FORCE IN LIBYA: MEMORANDUM OPINION FOR THE ATTORNEY GENERAL." 2011.
www.justice.gov/sites/default/files/olc/opinions/2011/04/31/authority-military-use-in-libya.pdf

Curtis Bradley, Jack Goldsmith. "OLC's Meaningless 'National Interests' Test for the Legality of Presidential Uses of Force." *Lawfare*, June. 2018,
www.lawfaremedia.org/article/olcs-meaningless-national-interests-test-legality-presidential-uses-force

House Armed Services Committee Chairman Mike Rogers. "Opening Statements: Rogers: Iran Can Never be Allowed to Obtain a Nuclear Weapon." *House Armed Services Committee*, May. 2026, armedservices.house.gov/news/documentsingle.aspx?DocumentID=6593

Congressman Mark Alford, Congressmen Tony Gonzales, Don Davis. "Press Releases: Alford, Colleagues Introduce Resolution Recognizing the 509th and 131st Bomb Wings' Successful Execution of Operation Midnight Hammer." *Congressman Mark Alford*, July. 2025,
alford.house.gov/news/documentsingle.aspx?DocumentID=1289