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Hormuz: Respect for Iran's Historical Sovereignty and Avoidance of Confrontation; Ensuring Regional and Global Interests

A neutral analysis indicates that military interventions and unilateral sanctions generally contribute to heightened tensions and increased human and economic costs. Within this framework, reducing foreign military presence, revising the structure and functioning of sanctions, respecting national sovereignty, and developing economic cooperation based on shared interests emerge as four fundamental pillars for crisis management and the prevention of regional erosion. No power should assume a unilateral imposition role; such an approach undermines legitimacy, erodes trust, and disrupts the path toward sustainable solutions. Although this framework is not complete or ideal, it serves as a low-cost analytical pathway rooted in empirical realities and historical experience.

In contemporary geopolitical landscapes, certain locations are not merely geographic points but strategic nodes shaping the fate of the international system. The Strait of Hormuz is among the most prominent of these nodes—a narrow yet strategic corridor directing the flow of global energy such that any disruption produces immediate repercussions for global economics and politics. According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration, roughly one-fifth of the world's oil consumption passes through this passage, and when maritime trade in liquefied natural gas and crude oil is considered, this share rises significantly (EIA, 2023).

However, the strategic importance of the strait is not confined to global indicators alone; it is also defined by the degree of dependency among states. Countries such as Qatar, Kuwait, and, to a large extent, Iraq channel a substantial portion—or

nearly all—of their energy exports through this route. In contrast, states like Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates have developed alternative routes, including pipelines, to reduce dependence, although these options are neither complete nor risk-free. This asymmetry in dependency transforms the Strait of Hormuz from a major transit route into a critical lifeline for certain countries.

Detailed Analysis

In this context, any analysis of the security of the Strait of Hormuz must necessarily consider Iran's role. As one of the two main littoral states, Iran holds a decisive position in the security equation. According to the perspective presented in this study, the Strait is not merely an international passage but part of Iran's sovereign domain, which should be respected and accompanied by security guarantees.

In this framework, maritime transit through the strait can be structured via a "transit toll" mechanism; a model in which users of this vital passage, in return for benefiting from security, contribute economically to the littoral state. This approach shifts security from a purely military matter to a mutually beneficial economic relationship, positioning Iran as a direct stakeholder in maintaining the safe flow of energy instead of being in opposition.

Conversely, policies based on coercion, a significant military presence, and what can be termed unilateral or domineering interventions—particularly by the United States and with the security involvement of Israel—have not resolved the issue but in many cases have exacerbated it. In the framework of security dilemma theory (Waltz, 1979), such actions prompt reciprocal reactions from Iran, creating a cycle of tension and mistrust.

The consequences of this cycle extend beyond the regional level. Given the global economy's dependence on energy transiting the Strait, any tension—even a threat—can trigger significant fluctuations in world markets. Rising oil prices, financial instability, and concerns over energy supply security are among the direct outcomes (BP, 2023). Moreover, prolonged instability creates opportunities for active engagement by powers such as China and Russia, transforming a regional issue into a global crisis.

The international system faces two distinct paths. The first path is the continuation of current conditions, relying on coercive policies and military deterrence—an approach that gradually increases tension, raises economic costs, and increases the probability of unpredictable crises. The second path, emphasized in this analysis, involves redefining the relationship with Iran based on mutual respect, shared interests, and threat reduction.

Principles & Conclusion

Along this path, three key principles can be outlined:

1. Recognition of Iran's sovereignty and position in the Strait of Hormuz.
2. Establishment of economic mechanisms—including transit tolls—to link security with benefit.
3. Reduction of military presence and bases perceived by Iran as threatening.

This approach, unlike costly coercive policies, represents a form of pragmatic realism: a recognition that sustainable stability occurs only when the interests of actors are so intertwined that instability becomes costly for all.

In conclusion, the Strait of Hormuz, as a vital artery of the global economy, requires an approach that moves away from confrontation toward cooperative engagement. Recognizing Iran's rights, implementing economic mechanisms for energy transit, and avoiding unilateral military interventions can transform this sensitive passage from a potential crisis hotspot into a platform for regional stability and cooperation—ultimately benefiting the entire international system.

At the same time, the reaction of Asian powers—particularly China—illustrates the global significance of this approach. On April 2, 2026, Mao Ning, spokesperson of the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, stated to the international media:

“The primary cause of disruption in the Strait of Hormuz is the unlawful military operations by the United States and Israel against Iran.”

This statement goes beyond political posturing; it attempts to redefine the origin of the crisis. Understanding this claim requires reviewing the sequence of events:

1. Stage One: Prior to escalating tensions, the Strait of Hormuz remained open as one of the most critical global energy passages, and oil exports flowed unimpeded.
2. Stage Two: In late February 2026, joint military operations by the United States and Israel against Iran commenced, rapidly drawing the region into a cycle of confrontation and instability.
3. Stage Three: Iran's response to these attacks increased tension in the Persian Gulf, imposing restrictions on maritime traffic—directly impacting global energy security.

4. Stage Four: With the crisis intensifying, shipping costs and transport risks rose sharply, and energy markets responded immediately.

5. Stage Five: Global crude oil prices surged significantly, prompting many countries to hold emergency meetings to manage economic repercussions.

6. Stage Six: Former U.S. President Donald Trump stated that countries benefiting from this energy route must contribute to its security—a statement interpreted by some analysts as shifting the cost of the crisis to the global community.

Within this context, China’s response acquires strategic and political significance: Beijing sought to challenge the dominant narrative and assign responsibility to the initiators of the conflict.

The essential question raised by these events is:

Is the Strait of Hormuz crisis the result of a sudden threat, or the direct consequence of a chain of military actions and reciprocal reactions?

The answer depends on the perspectives and interpretations of the actors regarding cause and effect. Yet, what is hard to ignore is the persistence of patterns repeatedly observed over the past years: expansionist tendencies, reliance on interventionist pretexts, continuation of aggressive actions, and attempts to consolidate dominance outside international law frameworks.

Additionally, unilateralism in strategic decision-making and disregard for international law, national sovereignty, and territorial integrity remain key factors in escalating tensions—factors evident not only historically but also in recent developments, including military action against Iran and targeting its leadership.

Ultimately, according to the analytical framework presented in this, a sustainable solution lies in acknowledging field realities and reassessing confrontational approaches: recognizing the Strait of Hormuz as part of Iran’s historical sovereignty, establishing economic mechanisms for vessel transit, and reducing or eliminating military presences perceived by Iran as threatening. Otherwise, continued tensions and crises—security, military, political, and economic—threaten not only the Middle East but the entire international system. Resolving this situation requires acceptance of these conditions by the party under threat or facing aggression.

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