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The Iran–United States Conflict in the Middle East: Implications for Global Energy Security, Peace, and Stability

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Abstract

The ongoing U.S.-Israel-Iran war in the Middle East has critical implications for global energy security, peace, and stability. The study which relied on secondary data is anchored in complexity theory, the conflict is understood not as a linear event but as a dynamic, adaptive system where interacting actors, energy markets, shipping routes, and geopolitical interests produce emergent and often unpredictable outcomes viewing the premise upon which the war is situated. The region, particularly Israel and America has considered the activities of Iranian supreme leader and government as threat to global security. As a result the US considered the situation as disturbing and needed to redress. The region remains central to global energy architecture, with the Strait of Hormuz alone handling roughly 20% of global oil consumption and 30% of seaborne crude shipments. Iran's threats and partial restrictions on the strait have triggered immediate supply disruptions, with the International Energy Agency warning of a potential drop of up to 8 million barrels per day and prices surging above $100 per barrel if tensions persist. This study examines the root causes and effects of the U.S.-Iran rivalry on oil price volatility, energy supply chains, and economic stability in import-dependent states, while assessing the role of international organizations such as OPEC in crisis mitigation. Findings show that small perturbations in the Strait of Hormuz cascade through interconnected financial, trade, and security systems, amplifying risk. The study recommends diversifying energy sources, strengthening international cooperation and emergency response mechanisms, promoting energy efficiency, and accelerating investment in renewables to reduce systemic vulnerability to chokepoint shocks and enhance long-term global energy security.

Keywords: US-Iran conflict; Middle East; Global energy security; Peace and security; Energy supply chain; International cooperation; Energy diversification.

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1. Introduction

The Middle East is a region with a rich history dating back to ancient civilizations and empires. The region's unique geographical and strategic position makes it crucial, with almost every great authority in history seeking to develop interests in the Middle East. The Middle East is also credited as the origin of major religions such as Christianity, Judaism, and Islam. Due to these significances, the Middle East exerts significant influence globally, and any conflict in the region can affect global stability [1].

The region's location at the crossroads of continents has made it a battleground for empires, religions, and ideologies. Conflict has raged in the Middle East for centuries, shaping boundaries, politics, culture, and the lives of millions. The history of conflict in the Middle East traces back to ancient times, marked by the rise and fall of mighty empires like the Babylonians, Persians, Greeks, and Romans. These powerful civilizations vied for control over the region, leaving behind a legacy of conquest, assimilation, and cultural exchange. Religion has played a profound role in shaping the landscape of conflict in the Middle East. The rise of Islam in the 7th century brought about a new era of conquest and expansion, as Arab armies swept across the region, establishing vast caliphates and spreading Islamic civilization. The Sunni-Shia divide, dating back to the early days of Islam, led to further tension and conflict. The two sides have been at odds in various nations ever since. The 19th and 20th centuries witnessed the emergence of European colonial powers in the Middle East, as the Ottoman Empire weakened and collapsed. Britain and France carved up the region through the Sykes-Picot Agreement, drawing arbitrary borders that disregarded ethnic, religious, and tribal realities. This colonial legacy sowed the seeds of future conflict, creating artificial nations and fueling nationalist movements.

During the Cold War, the Middle East became a battleground for superpower rivalry, as the United States and the Soviet Union vied for influence and control. Proxy conflicts, such as the Iran-Iraq War and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, further destabilized the region, exacerbating ethnic, religious, and sectarian tensions. The intensity of these conflicts continues to shape the political landscape of the Middle East today, as noted by Cuñado, Gupta, Lau, and Sheng [2]. The establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 remains one of the most contentious issues in the Middle East. The Arab-Israeli conflict, born out of competing claims to the land, has resulted in decades of wars, displacement, and suffering for both Israelis and Palestinians. The failure to resolve this conflict has had far-reaching implications for regional stability, fueling anti-Israeli sentiment and radicalization.

Meanwhile, Iran, led by an Islamist regime since 1979, emerged as a regional power, supporting Palestinian groups like Hamas. This support is part of Iran's broader strategy to challenge Israeli and U.S. influence in the region. For its part, Israel has over time engaged in military actions against Iranian interests in the region, including airstrikes against Iran-backed proxies.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

The Middle East conflict situation has been a major concern for global energy security, with far-reaching implications for oil prices, energy supply chains, and the economic stability of countries dependent on Iranian oil imports. The conflict between the United States and Iran has been ongoing for decades, with periods of heightened tensions and diplomatic efforts to resolve differences. The conflict escalated in 2018 when the US withdrew from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), also known as the Iran Nuclear Deal, and imposed severe economic sanctions on Iran. Iran responded by exceeding the limits on uranium enrichment set by the JCPOA, leading to increased tensions and military confrontations in the region.

The US-Iran conflict has implications for global energy security, as Iran is a major oil producer and a major actor in the Middle East. The conflict has led to increased oil price volatility, affecting energy supply chains and the economic stability of countries dependent on Iranian oil imports. The conflict also raises concerns about the potential disruption of oil supplies from the Middle East, a critical region for global energy production. In addition, the US-Iran conflict has created uncertainty and volatility in the global energy market, threatening the stability of oil prices and energy supply chains. The US-Iran conflict is a complex and multifaceted issue, with deep-rooted historical, political, and economic dimensions [3]. The conflict intensified after the US withdrew from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) and imposed severe economic sanctions on Iran. Iran has responded by exceeding the limits on uranium enrichment set by the JCPOA, leading to increased tensions and military confrontations in the region. The conflict impedes global energy security, as presently witnessed in the Middle East, which is a critical region for world oil production and export.

The uncertainty and volatility created by the conflict have led to increased oil price volatility, affecting energy supply chains and the economic stability of countries dependent on Iranian oil imports. Despite the implications of the US-Iran conflict for global energy security, there is a knowledge gap in the literature regarding the specific impact of the conflict on energy supply chains and the economic implications for countries dependent on Iranian oil imports. While authors such as Bahgat [4] and Jones [5] have examined the broader implications of the conflict for regional and global security, they have not specifically addressed the impact on energy supply chains and the economic implications for countries dependent on Iranian oil imports. This study aims to fill this knowledge gap by investigating the effect of the US-Iran conflict on global energy security and identifying strategies for mitigating its effects. The blockade of the Strait of Hormuz by Iran has triggered severe global economic and energy disruptions. After the United States and Israel launched strikes on Iranian nuclear sites, the Iranian Parliament voted to close the Strait, and Revolutionary Guards commanders stated that shutting the waterway would be executed “whenever necessary” to protect national sovereignty. Because roughly 20% of the world's oil supply and about one-fifth of global liquefied natural gas trade transit the Strait, the threat and subsequent restrictions caused immediate volatility. Crude oil flows dropped by at least 60% in the week to mid-March compared with February, and Brent futures rose to $82 per barrel, up about 12% from pre-conflict levels.

Akpam [6] observed that Asian economies were particularly exposed, as China sources about 40% of its crude from the Middle East and India received 55% of its crude imports from the region in January 2025, with both relying heavily on Gulf supplies transiting Hormuz. The disruption extended beyond energy prices to broader supply chains and food security. Commercial traffic through the narrow strait slowed to a trickle, nearly paralyzing about one-fifth of the world's oil and LNG shipments and sending shock waves through the global economy. The U.S. Energy Information Administration estimates that 83% of the LNG that moved through Hormuz in 2024 went to Asian markets, with China, India, and South Korea as the top destinations [7]. As Iranian control tightened, oil prices surged and Asian refiners faced output cuts due to inability to secure replacement cargoes, prompting Indonesia and Japan to source more oil from the United States and India to consider increased Russian purchases.

Ibrahim [8] warned that prolonged non-hydrocarbon trade disruption would cause domestic shortages in Iran and further strain an economy already impacted by sanctions. In response, the United States announced a naval blockade of Iranian ports in the Strait of Hormuz, with U.S. Central Command stating the blockade would be enforced “impartially against vessels of all nations entering or departing Iranian ports” while allowing transit to non-Iranian ports. Eze [9] reported that President Trump framed the action as ending “world extortion,” noting that Iran had sought to charge up to $2 million per oil tanker for passage. The operation involves more than a dozen U.S. warships, dozens of aircraft, and 10,000 personnel, and U.S. forces have used bunker-busting munitions against anti-ship missile sites along Iran's coast to secure the waterway. While the United States maintains the blockade is limited to Iranian ports, CENTCOM affirmed support for “freedom of navigation for vessels transiting the Strait of Hormuz to and from non-Iranian ports,” signaling an American-led takeover of security enforcement in the chokepoint.

1.2. Objectives of the Study

The focus of this study is to:

i. examine the root cause and effect of the US-Iran conflict on global oil prices.

ii. analyze the effect of the United States-Iran Rivalry in the Middle East and Implication for Global Security conflict on energy supply chains.

iii. identify the role of international organizations, such as OPEC, in mitigating the impact of the conflict on global energy security.

iv. interrogate strategies for reducing the risks associated with the US-Iran conflict and promoting global energy security.

Conflicts in the Middle East have far-reaching implications for global energy security. Studies have shown that tensions in the region can disrupt oil supplies, leading to price volatility and economic instability in countries reliant on Iranian oil imports. According to Smith [10], the region's oil reserves and critical shipping lanes make it a crucial area for global energy security. Jones [5] notes that conflicts in the Middle East have significant impacts on global oil prices, affecting energy supply chains and economic stability.

Khatib [11] highlights the US-Iran conflict as a prime example, with oil prices surging due to disruptions in the Strait of Hormuz, a critical waterway for global oil trade. Bahgat [4] emphasizes the importance of international organizations like OPEC in mitigating these effects and promoting energy diversification.

Recent events underscore the importance of energy diversification and regional cooperation. The Southern African Development Community is working to enhance regional cooperation to mitigate external economic shocks.

The relationship between these literatures and the problem under study is clear: conflicts in the Middle East have, to a large extent, had far-reaching consequences for global energy security, economic stability, and food security. Understanding these dynamics is therefore crucial for developing effective strategies to mitigate the impacts of such conflicts going forward. Scholars such as Khatib [11] and Bahgat [4] have shown that conflicts in the Middle East have largely impacted global energy security [10], [5]. The US-Iran conflict has led to increased oil price volatility, affecting energy supply chains and the economic stability of countries dependent on Iranian oil imports. International organizations, such as OPEC, play a crucial role in mitigating the impact of conflicts on global energy security [12].

Global energy security is facing unprecedented challenges, driven by geopolitical tensions, supply chain disruptions, and escalating demand for energy. The Strait of Hormuz, a critical maritime passage, has emerged as a focal point of global energy security concerns, with around 20% of the world's daily oil supply and a similar proportion of liquefied natural gas normally passing through it. This shift towards cleaner energy is driven by the need to reduce dependence on fossil fuels and mitigate climate change, as emphasized by authors like Morgenthau [13] in the context of realism theory. The global energy landscape is becoming increasingly influenced by geopolitical tensions, with supply chains, trade routes, and energy markets facing growing uncertainties. Countries are adopting various strategies to ensure energy security, including diversifying their energy sources, investing in renewable energy, and strengthening energy infrastructure.

Energy security challenges include the following:

- Conflicts in the Middle East and disruptions to global oil supplies
- Recurring disruptions to major maritime trade corridors
- Shift towards cleaner energy and reducing dependence on fossil fuels
- Securing access to critical materials like lithium, cobalt, and rare earths

Energy security is a universal concern that affects every aspect of life, from economic growth to societal well-being. It's a complex issue that's been discussed from various perspectives, including science, international relationships, and national security. It is also important to note that the concept of energy security is not new, but scientific analysis following current research principles and standards is a relatively recent development, dating back to around 1975. Energy security is crucial for policymakers, as it shapes national behaviour, programme and policies. Ensuring energy security means covering the needs of energy consumers, making it a key goal for societies. The question of the needed level of energy security arises, and various assessment tools and approaches have been offered. Azzuni and

Breyer [14] identified dimensions for energy security analysis that provide a comprehensive framework, covering aspects like availability, diversity, cost, technology, and environment. However, there's still a need for a proper tool to quantify energy security, allowing for better policymaking and global comparisons. Quantification is essential in social science, enabling comparisons and informed decision-making. An energy security index can help evaluate energy security, covering sustainable development of the energy system.

1.3. Theoretical Framework of Analysis

Realism is a dominant theory in international relations that emphasizes the role of power and national interest in shaping state behavior. The theory suggests that states prioritize their national interests and security concerns, often leading to conflicts over resources and territory [13]. Realism posits that the international system is anarchic, and states must rely on their own capabilities to ensure their survival and security. Realism is based on several key assumptions: the primary actors in international relations are states; states are rational actors that pursue their national interests; power is the primary means of achieving security and survival; the international system is anarchic, with no central authority to enforce rules amongst others.

Keohane [15] and Doyle [16] examined other related theories such as Liberalism, which emphasizes the role of cooperation, institutions, and norms in shaping state behaviour. Liberals argue that states can achieve mutual gains through cooperation and that international institutions can help to promote peace and stability [15], [16] and Constructivism theory, which emphasizes the role of ideas, norms, and identities in shaping state behaviour. For constructivism, states' interests and identities are socially constructed and can change over time [17], [18].

Realism is preferred for this study because it provides a compelling explanation for the US-Iran conflict and the current Middle East crisis. The conflict is driven by competing national interests and security concerns, with both sides seeking to assert their power and influence in the region. Realism helps to explain why states prioritize their national interests over other considerations, such as international law or norms. The US-Iran conflict is a classic example of Realist dynamics, with both sides seeking to maximize their power and security in a competitive and anarchic international system. The US has sought to maintain its dominance in the region, while Iran has sought to assert its influence and challenge US power. The Realism theory is relevant to this study because it helps to explain the underlying dynamics driving the US-Iran conflict. The theory provides a framework for understanding the motivations and actions of states in the conflict, and highlights the challenges of achieving cooperation and peace in a competitive and anarchic international system.

2. Methods

2.1. Research Design

This study adopted a qualitative research design based on documentary and descriptive analysis. The design was considered appropriate because the study examines an ongoing international conflict whose dimensions — energy markets, shipping routes, state behaviour, and institutional responses — can best be captured through the systematic review and interpretation of existing documents, statistics, and expert commentary rather than through primary field data.

2.2. Sources of Data

The study relied exclusively on secondary data. These were drawn from official reports and statistics of the International Energy Agency [19], [20], the U.S. Energy Information Administration [21], [7], and the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries [12], [22]; market intelligence and shipping data from Kpler [23] and Reuters [24]; policy documents of the U.S. Department of State [25] and the Congressional Research Service [26]; as well as books, peer-reviewed journal articles, newspaper reports, and expert commentaries relevant to the US-Iran conflict and global energy security.

2.3. Method of Data Analysis

The data were analysed qualitatively through content and thematic analysis, organized around the four objectives of the study. The analysis is anchored in complexity theory [27], through which the conflict is understood not as a linear event but as a dynamic, adaptive system in which interacting actors, energy markets, shipping routes, and geopolitical interests produce emergent and often unpredictable outcomes. This analytical lens is complemented by the realist framework [13] adopted in the theoretical framework, which explains the power-driven behaviour of the principal state actors.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. The Root Causes of Conflict in the Middle East

According to Yuengin [28], the emergence of the new entities or rulers created huge boundaries that could not be fixed. After spending time under the Ottoman Empire, different ethnic and religious groups enjoyed freedom in the region without exceptions. However, once the Western powers invaded the area, many restrictions, such as trade restrictions through the Suez Canal, were placed, barring the free movement of people throughout the region. Initially, people moved and traded freely. However, Britain realized controlling the Suez Canal would strengthen its presence in the Middle East and began issuing restrictions that caused conflicts in the region. Therefore, the leading cause of the conflicts in the Middle East was the fall of Ottomanism. After that, other reasons emerged, causing more conflicts in the region.

The Arab Spring, a series of pro-democracy uprisings that swept across the Middle East in 2010-2011, initially raised hopes for political reform and social change. However, the aftermath of these revolutions has been marred by violence, instability, and civil war in countries like Syria, Libya, and Yemen [29]. The failure of nascent democracies to take root has left a power vacuum, exploited by extremist groups and regional powers. Today, the Middle East remains a volatile and complex region, grappling with a myriad of challenges, including

terrorism, sectarianism, authoritarianism, and foreign intervention. The rise of non-state actors such as ISIS and Hezbollah have further complicated things and created new threats to regional security and stability. The Middle East has been a region of strategic importance for global powers, particularly the United States, for decades. The region is home to vast oil reserves, critical shipping lanes, and a complex web of alliances and rivalries that have shaped the global security landscape [3].

The US-Iran conflict is a key aspect of this complex security environment, with roots dating back to the 1979 Iranian Revolution. The Iranian Revolution marked a major turning point in US-Iran relations, as the US-backed Shah of Iran was overthrown and replaced by an Islamic government led by Ayatollah Khomeini [30]. The new government was fiercely anti-American, and the US responded by imposing economic sanctions and supporting Iraq in its war with Iran (1980-1988) [31]. The conflict between Iran and Iraq ended with a ceasefire, but the US and Iran continued to engage in a series of proxy conflicts and covert operations in the region. The US invasion of Iraq in 2003 marked a significant escalation of tensions between the US and Iran [32]. Iran saw the US presence in Iraq as a threat to its national security, and responded by supporting Shia militias and insurgent groups [33]. The US, in turn, accused Iran of supporting terrorism and seeking to develop nuclear weapons.

The election of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad as President of Iran in 2005 marked a significant increase in tensions between the US and Iran [34]. The conflict escalated further in 2011, when the US and Israel allegedly launched a series of cyber-attacks against Iran's nuclear program [35]. The election of Hassan Rouhani as President of Iran in 2013 marked a slight thaw in US-Iran relations, as his government engaged in negotiations with the US and its allies over Iran's nuclear program [3]. The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) was signed in 2015, but the agreement was short-lived, as the US withdrew in 2018 and imposed severe economic sanctions on Iran [36]. The conflict has continued to escalate, with the US and Iran engaging in a series of military confrontations and proxy conflicts in the region.

Iran's propensity for weaponry has largely heated up the crisis in the region and currently the world. Iran's development of ballistic missiles and its alleged support for terrorist groups have raised concerns among regional and global powers [3]. The US has accused Iran of seeking to develop nuclear weapons, and has imposed severe economic sanctions on Iran in an effort to curb its nuclear ambitions [36]. The conflict has significant implications for global energy security, as the Middle East is a critical region for oil production and export.

3.2. Global Peace and Security in the Context of the Iran–U.S. War

The US-Iran conflict has led to increased oil price volatility, affecting global energy security. Studies have shown that conflicts in the Middle East have significant impacts on oil prices [10]. The conflict has resulted in a significant increase in oil prices, with the price of Brent crude oil rising by over 20% in 2019 [19]. The US-Iran conflict has sent shockwaves through global oil markets, with prices surging over 40% in just 15 days, reaching $103 per barrel. The disruption of energy supplies through the Strait of Hormuz, a critical chokepoint, has raised concerns about global energy security [37]. The impact is felt globally, with Asian stocks sliding and inflation fears rising. Jose Torres, senior economist at Interactive Brokers, notes that rising oil prices are sparking market volatility, leaving participants with few safe havens.

The Islamic Revolution's victory drastically altered the region's power dynamics and upended U.S. security strategy in the Persian Gulf. However, Iran's regional power was diminished and its role in the Middle East was thereby constrained by the Iran-Iraq war, the enforced war, and the structural challenges of the global framework [38]. Following the dissolution of the Cold War, U.S. Middle East policy appeared to be based on the Dual Containment theory against both Iran and Iraq. According to this approach, both countries were seen as pursuing policies directly at odds with U.S. interests, giving rise to the concept of dual containment. Iran presents an illogical dual threat to U.S. regulations, posing both a lesser and greater threat. Despite these claims, Iran started combating the Taliban as soon as they appeared in the Middle East following the September 11, 2001, attacks, in addition to its domestic issues. Iran was even prepared to work with the U.S. to combat the Taliban at this point. Iran's regional power increased proportionately with the start of the twenty-first century. Shiite organizations were strengthened, and a regional coalition headed by Iran was formed because of regional developments like the Arab Spring in 2011 and the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003 [39].

The Middle East faced a security threat during this time due to the rise of ISIS. However, Iran used its military forces in Syria and Iraq as well as proxy organizations to combat this wave of terrorist attacks as a regional leader. Iran's regional efficiency demonstrates that one of the primary tenets of its foreign policy over the past fifty years has been “counterterrorism”. Iran's government supports a variety of regional armed forces, including some Foreign Terrorist Organizations that the United States has classified as terrorist organizations, to weaken American influence in the Middle East and portray influence over the neighboring nations. Since the start of the war in Gaza, groups supported by Iran in the Middle East have attacked American forces in Syria and Iraq as well as maritime vessels in the Red Sea, prompting American military action in retaliation [26]. The risk of conflict may rise even though neither the U.S. nor Iran seems to be seeking a direct military confrontation.

Congress has been instrumental in determining U.S. policy toward Iran through the enactment of legislation granting Congress the authority to review agreements pertaining to Iran's nuclear programme, a major area of concern for U.S. policymakers, the authorization of broad sanctions, attempts to influence diplomatic relations with Iran, and financing and approving assistance to U.S. partners that faced Iranian threats. Iran has established a variety of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) and keeps what the U.S. government describes as “the most significant inventory of ballistic missiles in the continent” to back its associated groups throughout the Middle East. Iran has significant regional power because of these activities, which the Iranian government has attempted to bolster by forging closer military and economic ties with Russia and China [40]. The U.S. government has employed a variety of policy tools, including broad sanctions, restricted military action, and diplomatic engagement with leaders in Iran and other nations, to counter Iranian threats to U.S. interests. The Iranian government is facing some domestic issues as of 2024, but it still has a lot of influence in the Middle East, is forging new relationships with China and Russia, and can oppose U.S. interests there and abroad.

Sanctions imposed by the U.S. against Iran are some of the oldest in the world. The recent wave of U.S. sanctions towards Iran can be examined to determine that they have not been effective because the desired outcomes have not been met. The two main objectives of all the sanctions imposed on Iran over the past 40 years have been to alter Iran's behaviour and the Iranian regime. Although Iran and the region have faced numerous difficulties because of the sanctions, the country has not been able to satisfy the primary demands of the sanctions' creators. More specifically, from the perspective of assessing effectiveness, given that the creative actor and designer's initial intentions have not been realized, it can be noticed that, although the sanctions have caused issues for Iran's socioeconomic situation, they lacked usefulness for the U.S. because their ultimate objectives have not been met till date [41]. On a macro level, neither dietary nor behavioural changes have occurred. Experts claim that Iran is becoming more influential in the Middle East. In theory, the logic of four decades of sanctions for example ought to have prevented Iran from becoming more powerful and influential in the Middle East, but this has not happened, instead it has continued to constitute tension in the region and by extension, the world. The sanctions appear to have had little effect on Iran for a variety of reasons, including political concerns, destiny, paradoxical sanctions in the global political economy, Iran's internal circumstances, specifically the actions of the Islamic Republic of Iran and its citizens, and lastly the sanctions' limited capacity to function as an impartial and deciding parameter.

It is important to note that despite the hostilities, both sides seem committed to finding a diplomatic solution. Vance has stated that the US is willing to extend an “open hand” if Iran negotiates in good faith, while Iranian officials have expressed skepticism about US intentions, citing past failures and alleged breaches. The potential outcomes of these talks carry direct implications for peace: a verifiable agreement could de-escalate proxy conflicts and reduce risks to maritime security, whereas failure could intensify regional competition and raise the likelihood of miscalculation across multiple fronts.

In Nigeria for example, the conflict has led to increased fuel prices, with petrol prices rising to between ₦1,200 and ₦1,400 per litre in some parts of the country. The country's reliance on imported refined petroleum products makes it vulnerable to global price volatility [42], [43]. Efforts taken by the Nigerian government to mitigate the impact, with Finance Minister Wale Edun convening the Economic Management Team to review the country's oil market exposure, have not yielded positive results. The International Energy Agency (IEA) warns of a historic oil supply disruption, expecting global supply to drop by 8 million barrels per day in March [20]. In response, the IEA has agreed to release a record 400 million barrels of oil from strategic stockpiles to combat the spike in prices. OPEC has also increased oil production, but analysts warn that this may not be enough to offset the supply disruption. The global economic implications are significant, with rising energy prices potentially hindering interest rate cuts and challenging affordability agendas. Cala [44], geopolitical energy analyst at Montel Analytics, notes that disruptions are bigger than any other, representing a significantly larger share of the overall market. Karakır [45] argued that conflict in the region has increased energy costs, affecting movement, households, economic and political activities in most parts of the world. In the US, gasoline prices have jumped to $3.63 a gallon, squeezing household budgets [46]. As the situation continues to unfold, it's clear that the US-Iran conflict will have far-reaching consequences for global energy security and economic stability. The

Nigerian government is monitoring the situation closely, with plans to strengthen local refining capacity and diversify the economy to reduce reliance on oil exports [47].

The conflict has disrupted energy supply chains, creating tension, especially on countries dependent on Iranian oil imports. This has significant economic implications for these countries, including reduced economic growth and increased inflation [11]. For example, the conflict has led to a reduction in Iranian oil exports, affecting countries such as China, India, and South Korea [21]. The US-Iran conflict has disrupted energy supply chains, affecting countries dependent on Iranian oil imports [42]. Nigeria, a major oil producer, is experiencing fuel shortages and rising prices, with petrol prices increasing to between ₦1,200 and ₦1,400 per litre in some parts of the country [48]. The conflict in the Middle East has also led to increased transportation costs, affecting businesses and households worldwide [49]. The International Energy Agency (IEA) warns that the disruption could lead to a global oil supply shortage, with far-reaching economic implications [20]. Countries such as India and China, which rely heavily on Iranian oil imports, are experiencing major economic impacts [44]. The conflict has also led to increased energy costs, affecting households and businesses worldwide [46]. The Nigerian government is taking steps to mitigate the impact, with Finance Minister Wale Edun convening the Economic Management Team to review the country's oil market exposure [42]. The government is also exploring ways to boost domestic refining capacity, including the Dangote Refinery. As the situation continues to unfold, it's clear that the US-Iran conflict will have far-reaching consequences for global energy supply chains and economic stability.

3.3. The Role of International Organizations, such as OPEC, in Mitigating the Impact of the Conflict on Global Energy Security

The Middle East continues, in the submission of Kpler [23], to serve as the epicenter of the global energy system. Despite ongoing diversification efforts, the region produced 32.1% of the world's crude oil and lease condensate in 2025 and accounted for approximately 36% of global seaborne oil exports prior to recent disruptions. Its strategic weight is magnified by the Strait of Hormuz, through which 20.8 million barrels per day of crude, condensate, and fuels flowed between early 2022 and mid-2024, representing roughly one-fifth of global oil consumption. The waterway also carries about one-fifth of global liquefied natural gas (LNG) trade, primarily from Qatar, making stability in the Gulf essential for energy-importing economies.

The region's role in natural gas is equally pivotal. In 2024, about 20% of global LNG trade transited the Strait of Hormuz, with Qatar exporting 9.3 billion cubic feet per day and the United Arab Emirates exporting 0.7 Bcf/d, together comprising nearly all Persian Gulf LNG flows. Qatar alone for example, accounted for nearly 20% of global LNG exports in 2025, and approximately 90% of its cargoes are delivered to Asian buyers. Given that China, India, and South Korea received 52% of all Hormuz LNG flows in 2024, any impediment to the strait has immediate implications for Asian energy security. Thus, despite expanding production elsewhere, the Middle East's infrastructure concentration means its geopolitical risk remains undiminished [24]. Prolonged disruption would disproportionately affect countries with lower reserves and higher Gulf dependency, underscoring why the Strait of Hormuz remains the world's most important oil root or channel.

Investigations revealed that the US-Iran conflict has sent shockwaves through oil markets globally, with prices surging over 40% in just 15 days, reaching $103 per barrel [50]. The disruption of energy supplies through the Strait of Hormuz, a critical chokepoint, has raised concerns about global energy security. The impact is felt globally, with Asian stocks sliding and inflation fears rising. Jose Torres, senior economist at Interactive Brokers, notes that rising oil prices are sparking market volatility, leaving participants with few safe havens [49]. The International Energy Agency (IEA) warns of a historic oil supply disruption, expecting global supply to drop by 8 million barrels per day in March [20]. In response, the IEA has agreed to release a record 400 million barrels of oil from strategic stockpiles to combat the spike in prices. OPEC has also increased oil production, but analysts such as Cala [44] warned that this may not be enough to offset the supply disruption.

The global economic implications are significant, with rising energy prices potentially hindering interest rate cuts and challenging affordability agendas. Andres Cala, geopolitical energy analyst at Montel Analytics, notes that disruptions are bigger than any other, representing a hugely larger share of the overall market. Nigeria's economy for instance is already experiencing inflationary pressures, with petrol prices rising and transportation costs increasing. The conflict has also led to increased energy costs, affecting households and businesses worldwide [46]. As the situation continues to unfold, it's clear that the US-Iran conflict will have far-reaching consequences for global energy security and economic stability.

3.4. Strategies for Reducing the Risks Associated with the US-Iran Conflict and Promoting Global Energy Security

Strategies for reducing the risks associated with the US-Iran conflict include diversifying energy sources, increasing energy efficiency, and promoting international cooperation [5]. For example, countries can reduce their dependence on Iranian oil imports by increasing domestic oil production, investing in renewable energy, and promoting energy efficiency. International organizations, such as OPEC, play a crucial role in mitigating the impact of conflicts on global energy security. OPEC's efforts to stabilize oil prices have been effective in reducing volatility [12]. OPEC has increased oil production to offset the reduction in Iranian oil exports, helping to stabilize global oil prices. OPEC has increased oil production to offset the supply disruption caused by the US-Iran conflict [22]. However, analysts warn that this may not be enough to mitigate the impact of the conflict on global energy security [44]. The International Energy Agency (IEA) has agreed to release a record 400 million barrels of oil from strategic stockpiles to combat the spike in prices [51]. The move is aimed at stabilizing global oil markets and reducing the economic impact of the ongoing US-Iran and Israel conflict.

According to Energy Information Administration [7], energy markets respond rapidly to perceived threats to Gulf supply. Following recent escalations, analysts projected Brent crude could reach $80–$82 per barrel by end-2025, up from the $65–$67 range observed before the conflict, an increase of roughly 12% to $82 per barrel. Natural gas markets exhibit even greater sensitivity, with Asian LNG prices rising 143% since the onset of hostilities involving Iran, and TTF benchmarks spiking 55% as Qatari output was curtailed. For major importers such as India and China, which sourced 55% and about 40% of crude from the Middle East respectively as of early 2024, these price surges translate into higher import bills, wider trade deficits, and inflationary pressure.

Sanstuna [52] maintained that oil's function extends beyond physical supply into the global financial system because it is priced in U.S. dollars. As posited by Ergün [53], the rising prices compel energy-deficit states to secure additional dollar liquidity to sustain import volumes, stressing exchange rates and external balances. India, which imports more than 80% of its crude and obtains about half through the Strait of Hormuz, holds inventories sufficient for roughly 20–25 days, whereas China maintains at least six months of crude in storage.

The Nigerian government is also working with international organizations to mitigate the impact of the conflict on the country's economy [42]. The government is exploring ways to boost domestic refining capacity and reduce reliance on imported refined petroleum products. The role of international organizations in mitigating the impact of conflicts on global energy security is crucial [49]. The IEA and OPEC are working together to stabilize global oil markets and reduce the economic impact of the conflict. As the situation continues to unfold, it's clear that international organizations need to play a critical role in mitigating the impact of the US-Iran conflict on global energy security.

The findings of this study demonstrate that the US-Iran conflict has produced severe and measurable disruptions to global energy security, with oil prices surging over 40% in just 15 days to $103 per barrel, Brent futures rising about 12% above pre-conflict levels, and crude flows through the Strait of Hormuz dropping by at least 60%. These outcomes confirm the positions of Smith [10], Jones [5] and Khatib [11], who established that conflicts in the Middle East exert significant impacts on global oil prices, energy supply chains and economic stability, and they are consistent with the evidence of Cuñado et al. [2] on the time-varying impact of geopolitical risks on oil prices.

The findings also validate the complexity theory perspective [27] adopted in this study: small perturbations at a single chokepoint — the Strait of Hormuz — cascaded through interconnected financial, trade, and security systems, producing emergent effects ranging from Asian refinery output cuts and LNG price spikes of 143% to fuel price increases of ₦1,200–₦1,400 per litre in Nigeria and $3.63 per gallon gasoline in the United States [42], [46]. The disproportionate exposure of import-dependent economies such as China, India, South Korea and Nigeria [23], [24], [7] underscores that vulnerability to chokepoint shocks is a systemic property of the global energy architecture rather than a purely regional problem.

Furthermore, the behaviour of the principal actors — the U.S. naval blockade, Iran's threats to close the strait, and the pursuit of national interest over cooperative frameworks — conforms to the expectations of realism [13], while the limited effectiveness of four decades of sanctions [41] illustrates the constraints of coercive statecraft in an anarchic international system. At the same time, the partial success of mitigation efforts by OPEC and the IEA — including the release of a record 400 million barrels from strategic stockpiles [22], [20] — supports Bahgat's [4] emphasis on the stabilizing role of international organizations, even though analysts caution that such measures alone cannot offset a disruption of this magnitude [44]. Collectively, the findings affirm that energy diversification, efficiency, and multilateral cooperation, as captured in the energy security framework of Azzuni and Breyer [14] and Cherp and Jewell [51], [54], remain the most viable pathways for reducing systemic vulnerability.

5. Conclusion

Cherp and Jewell argued that US-Iran conflict has far-reaching implications for global energy security, with significant impacts on oil prices, energy supply chains, and economic stability. The conflict has disrupted energy supplies through the Strait of Hormuz, a critical chokepoint, and raised concerns about global energy security. The International Energy Agency (IEA) warns of a historic oil supply disruption, expecting global supply to drop by 8 million barrels per day in March.

The investigation revealed that the conflict has also led to increased energy costs, affecting households and businesses worldwide. The global economic implications are significant, with rising energy prices potentially hindering interest rate cuts and challenging affordability agendas. The conflict has also highlighted the importance of international organizations, such as OPEC and the IEA, in mitigating the impact of conflicts on global energy security. The IEA's decision to release a record 400 million barrels of oil from strategic stockpiles is a welcome move, but more needs to be done to address the underlying issues.

The international community should prioritize cooperation to promote global energy security and mitigate the impact of conflicts on energy markets. The US-Iran conflict serves as a reminder of the importance of global energy security and the need for cooperation among nations to address common challenges. The conflict has equally highlighted the need for countries to prioritize energy diversification and reduce their reliance on imported oil. The conflict has significant implications for global energy security, and it is crucial that nations work together to address the challenges and mitigate the impacts. Also, the US-Iran conflict has significant implications for global energy security, and it is crucial that nations work together to address the challenges and mitigate the impacts. According to Gupta, Gözgör, Kaya, and Demir, Iran is pushing for the removal of long-standing US sanctions and access to its blocked financial assets, while the US wants limits on Iran's nuclear and missile programs. The talks are happening against a backdrop of continued violence in the region, with clashes involving Hezbollah in Lebanon causing significant casualties. Iran has linked progress in the talks to a halt in hostilities in Lebanon, adding another layer of difficulty to the negotiations. The implications of these talks are crucial for global energy supplies and regional stability hanging in the balance. The Strait of Hormuz, a critical oil shipping route, is a major point of contention, with Iran seeking recognition of its authority over the waterway and the US pushing for unrestricted access.

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