

## ABOUT THIS INITIATIVE

**Briefs**, scans the best academic platforms, national newspapers, and leading think tanks to pick the most relevant articles and research. It converts them into crisp, high-impact points you can directly use in your Mains answers.



## TODAY'S ARTICLES (fill in)

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1	Israel , the US and a war to build unipolar west asia - The Hindu	
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## Israel, the U.S. and a war to build a unipolar West Asia

**O**n February 27, Oman's Foreign Minister Badr bin Hamad Al Busaidi, who was mediating talks between the United States and Iran, told an American channel that a deal was within reach. He said Iran had committed not to make a nuclear bomb "ever" and not to stockpile nuclear material. The next day, the U.S. and Israel began bombing Iran, killing its Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, and dozens of senior Iranian officials. Israel described the campaign as a "pre-emptive" war to remove "existential threats", while U.S. President Donald Trump urged Iranians to "take over your government," adding, "This will probably be your only chance for generations." It was clear from the way the initial decapitation strike was carried out and the remarks issued by Mr. Trump and Mr. Netanyahu, that what the invading bloc wanted was regime change.

The Iranian government, despite the initial blow, has reorganised itself and is hitting back. West Asia, as a result of the actions of Mr. Trump and Mr. Netanyahu, is witnessing one of its most perilous moments in the post-Second World War era – a conflict whose outcome will define the region for the decades to come.

After the 12-day war in June 2025, Mr. Trump announced that he had "obliterated" Iran's nuclear programme. Mr. Netanyahu declared a "historic victory". So, why did they start another war eight months later? Israel has always wanted regime change in Iran. For Tel Aviv, Iran is the only revisionist country that challenges its supremacy in West Asia. Arab countries, many of them hosting American bases or dependent on American aid, have either established direct ties with Israel or accepted to live with Israel's militarism and its occupation of Palestinian, Syrian and Lebanese territories. But Israel sees Iran, a country of 90 million people with enormous economic potential and an advanced missile programme, as an existential threat.

When then U.S. President Barack Obama signed the nuclear deal with Iran in 2015, his focus was on addressing Iran's nuclear programme. He believed that a non-nuclear Iran would be good news for West Asia, where a "cold peace" between Tehran and its adversaries would be established. But, Israel had a different understanding. Its problem was not merely Iran's nuclear programme but its conventional might. That is why Mr. Netanyahu opposed the 2015 deal with all his might.

### Geopolitics of Iran

In recent times, when the U.S. and Iran were engaged in talks, Israel had repeatedly called for a deal to include Iran's missile programme and its support for non-state militias in the region. What Mr. Netanyahu wanted was a total disarmament



Stanly Johnny

This is a perilous conflict that is more about geopolitics and shaped by Tel Aviv's own interests

of Iran – a demand no Iranian leader, except someone installed by Mr. Netanyahu in Tehran – can accept. A Tehran-based security analyst told *The Hindu* on February 24 in unmistakable terms that Iran would not sign a deal with the U.S. on its nuclear programme. He said, "If Iran agrees to surrender its ballistic missiles today to avert war with the U.S., Israel will bomb us anyway a few months down the line. So, the question Iranians ask themselves is why should they give up their last deterrent?"

The only way Israel could meet all its objectives was to bring about a regime change. Regime change would also be geopolitically rewarding. Saddam Hussein's Iraq is gone. Qadhafi's Libya is gone. Bashar al-Assad is in Moscow while a former jihadist is running Damascus. Hezbollah has been weakened. Hamas has been pushed to the ruins of Gaza. The Arab countries are unlikely to do anything other than issue condemnation letters. Iran is the last revisionist power standing. If the Islamic Republic is taken down, the regional balance of power would shift, setting the stage for a unipolar West Asia, with Israel, fully backed by Washington, at its centre. This is more about geopolitics and Israel's own interests than about giving freedom to the Iranians.

### Decapitation strategy

But there is one problem. Iran, ring-fenced by tall mountains and roughly 70 times bigger than Israel, is a geographical fortress. Israel alone cannot bring about regime change. Typically, regime changes are achieved through a ground invasion – even then it is not guaranteed. Israel pulverised Gaza, a strip of land sandwiched between Israel and the Mediterranean Sea for 24 months and killed at least 70,000 of its people, but has still not unseated Hamas. No country, including the U.S., wants to send ground troops to Iran. If an Iraq-style ground invasion is not possible, the other options are Libya or Syria. But in Libya and Syria, there was armed opposition to the regime that led the battle on the ground.

In Libya, it took months-long bombing by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization to topple Qadhafi's regime. In Syria, which fell into a disastrous civil war in 2012, it took 12 years for Mr. Assad to fall. In Iran, there is no organised armed opposition. So, what Israel tried to do in June 2025 and February 2026 was to carry out decapitation strikes – give a blow so heavy that the regime would not stand up and fight back.

In June 2025, the Iranians recovered from the initial shock fast and began hitting back. Mr. Netanyahu had said that regime change would be a desirable outcome of the war, but he had to ask for American help and then agree to a ceasefire after 12 days. In February 2026, backed by a more willing U.S., Israel has launched a much broader

and more ambitious strike, killing Khamenei. Mr. Trump and Mr. Netanyahu want a quick, decisive victory. But if they thought the assassination of the "leader of the revolution" would lead to the crowds jamming the streets and taking over the institutions bringing down the regime, that has not happened – not as yet. Iran seems prepared for this moment, and is hitting back at American bases across the region, and Israel, widening the war.

### A regional war

During the 2025 June war, Iran's response was mainly focused on Israel. It launched a token strike on the U.S. base in Qatar following an American attack on its nuclear facilities and subsequently agreed to a ceasefire. But this time, Iran is hitting American bases across the Persian Gulf kingdoms and Israel. Iranian missiles and drones have targeted a military base in Cyprus and a French base in the United Arab Emirates. Iran has also announced the shutting of the Strait of Hormuz, the narrow chokepoint connecting the Persian Gulf with the Arabian Sea through which a third of the global energy supply flows. This is a risky gamble.

In two days, Iran has regionalised the war. This is the all-out war almost all critics of Mr. Trump's Iran policy had warned him about. The supporters of the war in Washington had said that Iran was bluffing. But it was not. If Iran continues to attack U.S. bases (some of them were hit hard) in the Gulf monarchies, these countries would be pressed to join the war. And if they do, the cross-Gulf conflict could have disastrous implications for energy trade, severely impacting the global economy. A prolonged conflict would also mean that the missile defence shields that are currently protecting these bases, Israel and other American assets in the region, would be exhausted.

This means that the clock is ticking fast for both sides. It is unclear whether Mr. Trump was prepared for a scenario in which the Iranian state survives the assault. Washington and Tel Aviv aim to destroy Iran's ballistic missile stockpiles and its launchers to blunt its firepower. But if Iran retains its strike capability and continues to widen the war, the pressure on Mr. Trump would intensify.

To be sure, there is a vast gap between the conventional strength of the U.S.-Israel alliance and that of Iran. Yet, conventional superiority alone does not guarantee victory, which depends on clearly defined and attainable objectives. If Mr. Trump seeks a swift and decisive triumph, Iran's doctrine is built precisely to deny it. Mr. Trump wants to kill the guerrilla because, as Henry Kissinger would agree, the guerrilla wins if he does not lose.

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## Context

February 27 .....

a deal was within reach. The next day, the U.S. and Israel began bombing Iran. Israel called it "a pre-emptive" war.

## Facts

- 12-day war in June 2025.
- Iran, ring-fenced by tall mountains and roughly 70 times bigger than Israel.

## Theoretical lens + Verbatim Quotes

"because, as Henry Kissinger would agree, the guerrilla wins if he does not lose."

## Analytical Crux



Iran is the last revisionist power standing; if the Islamic Republic is taken down, the regional balance of power would shift, setting the stage for a unipolar West Asia, with Israel, fully backed by Washington, at its centre.



Israel alone cannot bring about regime change; typically, regime changes are achieved through a ground invasion—even then it is not guaranteed.



There is a vast gap between the conventional strength of the U.S.-Israel alliance and that of Iran, yet conventional superiority alone does not guarantee victory.

# Our stakes are high in West Asia. Delhi must call for diplomacy, de-escalation



**THAROORTHINK**  
BY SHASHI THAROOR

Trump said of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. Any future outcome risks being marinated in blood feuds rather than statesmanship.

The irony of "Epic Fury" is that its proclaimed objective — denying Iran a nuclear weapon — had, according to Omani mediators, already been achieved through ongoing diplomatic negotiations. Just days before the strikes, significant progress had been reported in Geneva, with Iran nearing a deal to abjure nuclear weapons, freeze enrichment and hold zero stockpiles of weapons-grade material, in exchange for structured sanctions relief. By choosing the battlefield over the boardroom, the US and Israel have signalled that diplomacy is a dispensable tool to the overarching goal of regime change.

However, history remains a harsh teacher: Regime change is rarely, if ever, achievable from the air. While modern weaponry may possess the precision to destroy infrastructure, it cannot bomb a new government into existence. Destroying a leadership from the air is one thing, building an alternative in a country of 88 million people quite another. The more likely result is either regime reassertion under new personalities (none of whom seems likely to turn out to be an obliging Iranian version of Venezuela's Delcy Rodriguez) or, worse, a failed-state scenario on a massive scale, creating a power vacuum far more dangerous than the regime it sought to replace.

The consequences of this action are already bleeding across borders. Iranian retaliation has not been confined to the primary aggressors; strikes have hit neighbouring countries that were not overtly hostile to Tehran. These actions, going beyond US bases, have caused tragic casualties among the local and foreign residents of those na-

Questions persist about the strategic logic of unleashing war. Was this gamble for regime change inspired by a desire to create a unipolar West Asia, integrating Iranian oil into world markets under a more friendly government?

tions, effectively dragging the entire region into a war they did not seek. We now face the worrying prospect of further indiscriminate retaliation by Iran and its proxies against American interests and civilians anywhere in the world. When a regime feels survival is at stake, the distinction between military and civilian targets vanishes.

The economic toll is equally staggering. The closure of regional airspace and the Strait of Hormuz have sent shockwaves through global markets. As a significant portion of the world's seaborne oil passes through this choke point, prices have spiked — one hopes temporarily — from the pre-war \$65 towards \$83 per barrel, and insurance premia are soaring. Qatar has declared force majeure and suspended its gas shipments, affecting factories around the world. Iran currently appears intent on widening the theatre of conflict in order to disrupt the Middle East's civil aviation hubs and stall the movement of oil and gas from the region, calculating that the economic shock, plus the damage wreaked on the "safe haven" reputation of its thriving neighbours, could persuade Washington to rein in the fighting.

Uncomfortable questions persist about the strategic logic of unleashing war. Was this gamble for regime change inspired by a desire to create a unipolar West Asia, integrating Iranian oil into world markets under a more friendly government? Such a theory is plausible, given that the stated reason, nuclear weapons, had already been settled at the negotiating table, and because regime change would achieve a number of broader geostrategic objectives: Reduce Russia's energy leverage over Europe and dilute China's clout in the region by pulling Iran and its energy resources into the West's

orbit. But the escalation may not unfold as the United States and Israel expect, and the resulting instability is likely to inflict significant damage on every actor involved.

Iran is estimated to have enough ballistic missiles for a couple of weeks of fighting, though half its missile launchers are said to have been destroyed and the remainder are not easy to hide from the "eyes in the sky" of modern technology. How much longer the US and Israel can sustain their barrage is uncertain, but one clue is that President Trump speaks of ending the war in four to five weeks. The threat of American "boots on the ground" seems a bluff, to signal determination rather than real intent. America may accept a solution short of regime change — perhaps a new government willing to seek accommodation — but such a prospect seems highly unlikely in the current climate of escalation. The Iranian regime could survive in a degraded state, prompting an era of proxy attacks, assassinations, terrorism and economic disruption.

For India, the stakes are high. Millions of Indians working in the Gulf now face an uncertain future, while thousands of travellers remain cut off from transit hubs like Dubai, though recent evacuations of stranded passengers have eased the strain. Our domestic priority of affordable oil is undermined, threatening the very growth that fuels our development efforts. India's call for de-escalation and diplomacy is a necessity. Our path to development requires peace and stability in our extended neighbourhood. We must lead the international community in demanding that the missiles flying in all directions stop, before the West Asian abyss grows wide enough to engulf us all.

The writer is MP, Lok Sabha, and chairman, Parliamentary Standing Committee on External Affairs

## Context

The war ignited by the missile strike on Tehran on February 28, has shattered a fragile regional order.

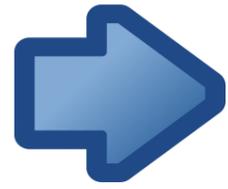
## Facts

- The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty deems enrichment below 20% permissible.
- Strait of Hormuz, through which nearly a third of world's seaborne oil passes, is controlled by Iran.

## Theoretical lens + Verbatim Quotes

"Any future outcome risks being marinated in blood feuds rather than statesmanship" - Tharoor.

# Analytical Crux



War for regime change inspired by a desire to create a unipolar West Asia.



When a regime feels survival is at stake, the distinction between state and citizen becomes blurred.



For India, the stakes are high. West Asia has always been India's closest strategic neighbourhood.

## West Asia at the Brink: Why De-escalation is India's Imperative

### THE GLOBAL & ECONOMIC TOLL



#### Oil Prices Surging to \$83

Seaborne oil prices spiked from \$65 to \$83 per barrel following regional instability.

#### Global Supply Chain Disruptions

The closure of regional airspace and the Strait of Hormuz has stalled international shipping.



#### Erosion of International Law

The conflict bypasses UN Charter sovereignty rules, creating a dangerous "pre-emptive self-defence" precedent.

### THE HIGH STAKES FOR INDIA



#### Millions of Citizens at Risk

Millions of Indians working in the Gulf face an uncertain future and physical danger.



#### Threat to National Development

Instability undermines the energy security required to fuel India's domestic growth.



#### The Necessity of Diplomacy

India must lead the international community in demanding an immediate halt to hostilities.

The screenshot shows the ORF website header with navigation links for Research, Centres, Forums, Events, and About Us. The article title is "Rethinking Multilateralism in an Age of Contestation" by Nina Sajić, published on March 05, 2026. A sub-header reads: "In an era of strategic rivalry and fractured consensus, the future of multilateralism lies not in restoring hegemony but in building institutions capable of working amid contestation". The author's bio states she is a Professor at the Institute of Political Science at the University of Banja Luka. A large image of various national flags is featured on the left side of the article.

**Context** "Multilateralism is not collapsing; it is being contested."

## Facts

- Emerging market and developing economies now account for about 61% of world GDP in purchasing-power terms.
- Africa - 1.4 billion people & 55 states, still has no permanent seat in UNSC.

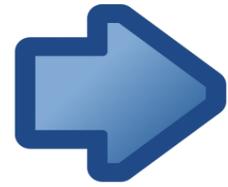
## Theoretical lens + Verbatim Quotes

"competitive & contested multilateralism"  
"multilateralism after hegemony has to be built to operate under contestation & not assume consensus"

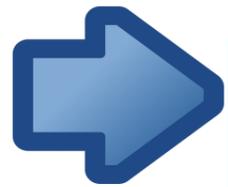
# Analytical Crux



Multilateralism must “operate under contestation and not assume consensus”; the aim is ‘guardrails’ not ‘harmony’.



A workable multilateralism has to “increase legitimacy, preserve functionality, and lower the temperature of rivalry.

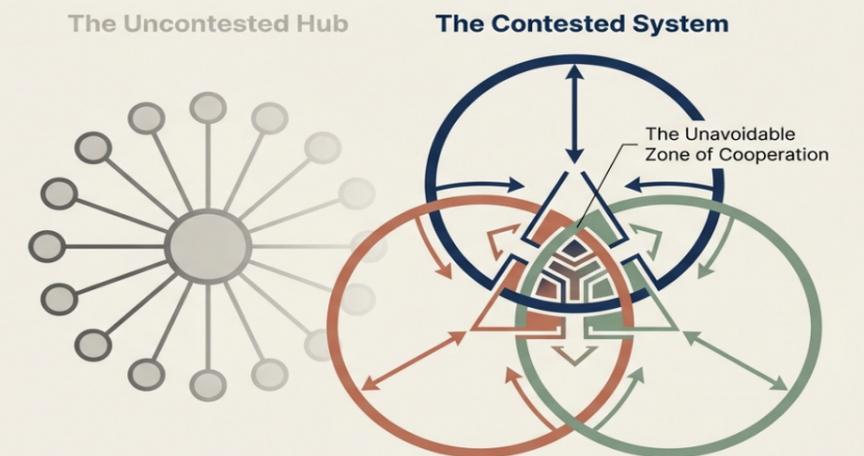


Cooperation shifts to “smaller, issue-specific modules, plurilateral agreements, technical coalitions”, risking exclusive clubs that fragment the wider system.

Multilateralism is not collapsing; it is being contested

The system still requires shared institutions, but major powers fundamentally disagree on who shapes them, what rules bind them, and when sovereignty should yield.

*“Global problems will not be solved by one power calling the shots... Nor will they be solved by two powers carving the world into rival spheres of influence.”*  
— UN Secretary-General António Guterres



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## The Global Costs of Instability in the Strait of Hormuz

AUTHOR : PRATNASHREE BASU

Expert Speak Raisina Debates  
Published on Mar 04, 2026

Tensions in the Strait of Hormuz reveal how a single maritime chokepoint can disrupt energy flows, paralyse trade, and transmit regional conflict into wider global economic instability

**Author**

**Pratinashree Basu**  
Pratinashree Basu is an Associate Fellow with the Strategic Studies Programme. She covers the Indo-Pacific region, with a focus on Japan's role in the region. ...  
Read More +

**Context** A fulcrum of geopolitical risk and economic disruption in the early months of 2026.

## Facts

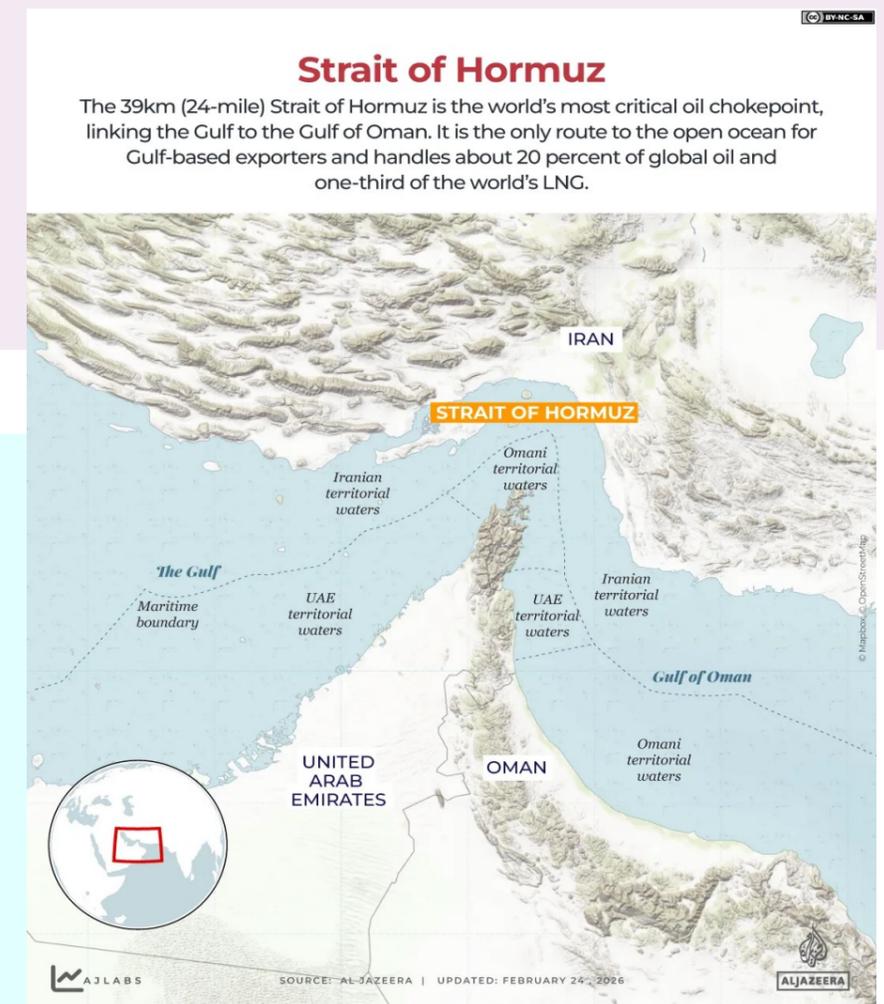
- On 2 March 2026, Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps declared the waterway effectively closed to commercial shipping.
- Roughly 20% of the world's crude oil & a substantial share of liquefied natural gas transit daily.
- Almost half of country's monthly oil imports pass through the Strait of Hormuz.

# Analytical Crux

“ Geopolitical risk → logistical paralysis ” ; near collapse of normal shipping flows, halting bookings and insurers withdrawing coverage.

Hormuz as “ systemic risk to global energy security ” ; Increased risk pricing and freight costs and rising insurance premiums.

India's exposure and advisories + wider importer vulnerability : “ chokepoint risk translates into actual economic vulnerability. ”



The Programme in Political Science and International Relations emphasizes advanced research, critical thinking, and enhances interdisciplinary understanding. It provides comprehensive coverage in structured way for strategic advantage in upsc.

## PSIR OPTIONAL FOUNDATION

The program focuses on Comprehensive coverage of the topic mentioned in PSIR Syllabus supplemented with regular handouts.  
Upcoming Batch: 6th July, 2026

## OGP (OPTIONAL GUIDANCE PROGRAM)

Focus will be on conceptual clarity and building the ability of the candidates to interlink the static portion with current developments.  
Upcoming Batch: 9th June, 2026

## PSIR DYNAMICS

The program focuses on Current-Relevant dedicated classes covering national and international developments, integrated with PSIR syllabus.  
Upcoming Batch: 22nd June, 2026

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ATS sharpens structure, presentation, and depth converting effort into higher score.  
Upcoming Batch: 26th April, 2026

## O-AWFG (ANSWER WRITING FOCUS GROUP)

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## O-AWFG PRIME

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Upcoming Batch : 20th April, 2026

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The series focuses on PYQ practice anchored in conceptual clarity and contemporary relevance.  
Upcoming Batch: 22 June, 2026

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