

PSIR & GS-2

DAILY BRIEF

ABOUT THIS INITIATIVE

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



PSIR OPTIONAL BY
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| ForumIAS |

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Iran's escalation in the Strait of Hormuz : VIF India

Europe & Taliban- from isolation to engagement



Context EU is increasing engagement with the Taliban, arguing that migration pressures have compelled Brussels to pursue pragmatic cooperation without formal recognition.

Facts

- June 2026 : EU hosted its first official Taliban delegation on European soil since Taliban's 2021 takeover.
- Around 1 million Afghans sought asylum in the EU, with roughly half the applications approved.
- Over 17 million Afghans (one-third of the population) are food insecure, according to the WFP.

Analytical Crux

National interests often override normative commitments in foreign policy. When the EU continues to deny formal recognition to the Taliban, migration management has necessitated practical engagement, amounting to de facto recognition. It reflects the realist principle that governments frequently cooperate with regimes they politically oppose when domestic interests demand it. It highlights the distinction between de facto and de jure recognition and the tension between values-based diplomacy and strategic necessity.

Verbatim Quotes

"The Taliban's Brussels visit should be understood less as a diplomatic breakthrough & more as evidence of Europe's growing recognition that practical challenges cannot be addressed without engaging the authorities in Kabul."

- Shainee Malhotra and Maiwand Safi

Beijing's next play for South China Sea

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Beijing's Next Play for the South China Sea

How China Is Normalizing Its Control

LYNN KUOK

July 29, 2026



LYNN KUOK is Lee Kuan Yew Chair at the Brookings Institution.

[More by Lynn Kuok →](#)

Context A decade after the 2016 Hague Tribunal ruling, China has shifted from large-scale island building to incremental grey-zone tactics to consolidate control over the South China Sea without provoking major military escalation.

Facts

■ April 2025: China raised its flag on Sandy Cay, its first sovereignty assertion over an unoccupied feature in 10 years.

■ China has begun expanding Antelope Reef, potentially creating its largest military outpost in South China Sea.

■ The 2016 Hague Tribunal rejected China's 9-dash line claim under UNCLOS.

Analytical Crux

Grey-zone strategies enable a rising power to alter the status quo without triggering conventional conflict. Rather than relying solely on military force, China combines legal ambiguity, coast guards & administrative actions to gradually normalise its control. Such tactics challenge the rules-based maritime order while keeping escalation below the threshold of war. For India, the episode underscores the importance of UNCLOS, maritime domain awareness & Indo-Pacific partnerships in safeguarding regional stability.

Verbatim Quotes

"The steady accumulation of advantage rather than a single decisive victory."

"Countering China's strategy requires more than conventional naval power."
— Lynn Kuok

Iran's escalation in the Strait of Hormuz

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Iran's Escalation in the Strait of Hormuz: Domestic Drivers and the Risks of Strategic Overreach

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Context

Iran's increasingly aggressive posture in Strait of Hormuz is driven more by domestic political pressures & hard line factions than by strategic calculations, while its coercive leverage is gradually diminishing.

Facts

Iran established a Persian Gulf Strait Authority (PGSA) to regulate commercial transit through Hormuz.

India has diversified its energy imports from 27 to 41 countries, reducing dependence on the Gulf.

Japan imports nearly 80% of its crude oil through the Strait of Hormuz.

Analytical Crux

Domestic politics increasingly shape Iran's foreign policy, limiting room for pragmatic diplomacy. While Tehran seeks to leverage the strait of Hormuz, major energy importers are diversifying supplies and developing alternative routes, gradually reducing Iran's strategic influence. The Key lesson is that geographical leverage alone cannot sustain long term power; durable regional influence depends on stable relations with neighbours & realistic strategic objectives rather than coercive control of critical chokepoints.

Verbatim Quotes

"Iran's strategic objectives are considerably more ambitious than the leverage available to achieve them."

"The domestic political climate is gradually eroding the space for pragmatic diplomacy."

- Dr. Vishwajeet Singh Akhawat

PSIR 2023, Paper II, [15 marks] — Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD) performs an important role in India's strategic balancing act to withstand the dominance of China in Asia. Discuss.

PSIR 2024, Paper II, [10 marks] — Discuss the rationale for replacing "Asia-Pacific" with "Indo-Pacific."

PSIR 2023, Paper II, [15 marks] — What are the challenges and limitations in India–Iran relations.

GS-2, 2025 [15 marks] — Discuss about energy security as the kingpin of India's foreign policy and its influence in Middle Eastern countries.

PSIR 2023, Paper II, Q7(b) [15 marks]— What are the steps India has taken to regain its foothold in Afghanistan since the Taliban takeover of August 2021.



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