

CURRENT AFFAIRS

Question

Can Iran really shut down the Strait of Hormuz?

Answer

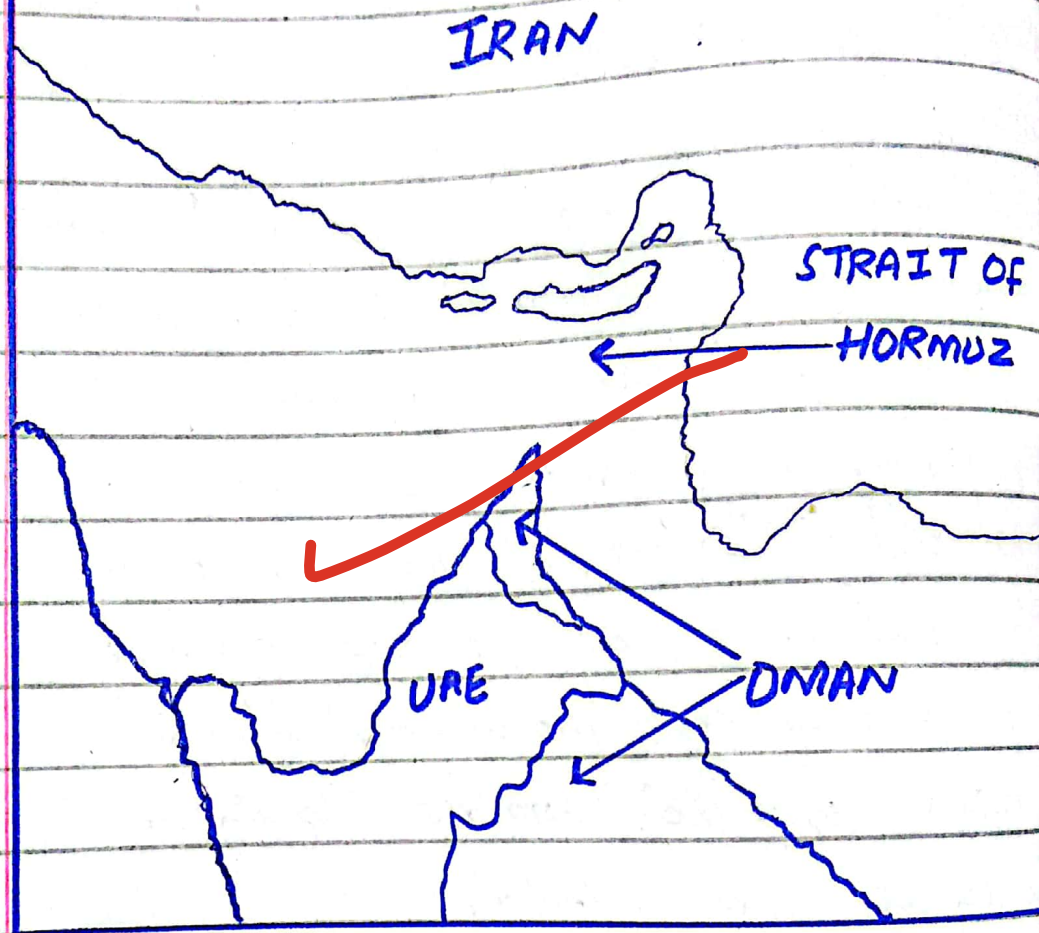
start with the summary of the answer as introduction.

a) The Strait of Hormuz is the world's single most important oil passageway forming a chokepoint between the Arabian Gulf and Gulf of Oman. The 39 km Strait is the only route to the open ocean for over one sixth of global oil production and one third of the world's liquified natural gas (LNG).

b) where exactly is the Strait of Hormuz?

It lies between Oman and Iran linking the sea passage from the countries on the Gulf (Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar and United Arab Emirates) with the Arabian sea and beyond.

LOCATION



(c) Is it really the only way out of the Gulf

Travelling by the sea, the Strait is the only means of transporting goods or people to the rest of world. For this reason, the ~~UAE~~ **UAE and Saudi Arabia** have proposed building more oil pipelines to avoid the problem.

air waterway.

d) How much oil & gas passes through

Around one-sixth of the world's oil moves through the Strait, 17-20 million barrels per day. This includes most of oil from ~~Organizations of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC)~~ members Saudi Arabia, Iran, the UAE and Kuwait. Qatar, the world's biggest exporter of LNG, sends most of its LNG through the Strait of Hormuz.

e) Which naval force protects the region

The United States 5th fleet, based in Manama, Bahrain, is responsible for ~~protecting~~ maritime shipping lanes.

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(f) Iran's Power Play: Threatening the world's oil lifeline

Amid Israel's ongoing attacks in Gaza and Iran, US President Donald Trump's unprecedented decision to bomb three Iranian nuclear facilities has deepened gears of a regional conflict in the middle East.

Over the weekend, the United States military carried out its first known strikes against Iran since 1979 Islamic Revolution toppled pro-western Mohammad Reza Pahlavi. Tehran has vowed to respond, prompting fears of escalation. During an address to a meeting of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in Istanbul, Turkey, Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said

"The US crossed a very big red line by attacking Iran nuclear facility."

One way Iran could retaliate is to shut the Strait of Hormuz, a vital trade route where one-fifth of the world's oil supply that is roughly 20 million barrels and much of its LNG is shipped each day. That would lead to surge in energy prices.

keep the description of a single argument brief and divide it into subheadings.

9) Who would need to approve the closure

Iran had in the past threatened to close the Strait of Hormuz but had never followed through on the threat. Iran's supreme National security council must make the final decision to close the Strait; Iran's Press TV said on Sunday, after parliament was reported to have backed the measure. However the decision to close the Strait is not yet final, as Parliament has not ratified bill to that effect.

Instead a member of Parliament National Security Commission, Esmail Kosari, was quoted in Iranian media

For now, [parliament has] come to the conclusion we should close the Strait of Hormuz, but the final decision in this regard is the responsibility of the Supreme National Security Council."

Asked about whether Tehran would close the water way, FM Aroghchi dodged the question and replied

"A variety of options are available to Iran."

In his first comments, since the US strikes, Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei said that

"Israel has made a grave mistake and must be punished."

but he did not make any specific reference to either Washington or Strait of Hormuz.

n) Closure of Strait of Hormuz in Practice

Iran could attempt to lay mines across the Strait of Hormuz.

The country's army or the ^xParliamentary Paramilitary Islamic Revolutionary

Guard Corps (IRGC) may also try to strike or ~~use~~ vessels in Gulf, a method they have used on several occasion in the past.

During 1980s Iran-Iraq war the two sides engaged in the so-called "Tanker wars" in Persian Gulf.

Iraq targeted ~~Iranian~~ ships, including Saudi and Kuwaiti oil tankers and even US navy ships.

Tensions in the Strait flared up again at the End of 2007 in a series of skirmishes between

the Iranian and the US navies. This included one incident where Iranian speedboats approached US warships, though no shots were fired.

In April 2023, Iranian troops seized the Advantage Sweet crude tanker which was chartered by Chevron in the Gulf of Oman. The vessel was released more than a year later.

i) What would it mean for Global economy

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio called China to encourage Iran to not shut down the Strait of Hormuz after Washington carried out strikes on Iranian Nuclear sites.

Speaking to Fox news, Rubio said

It's economic suicide for them if they do close the Strait

and we retain options to deal with that, but other countries should be looking at that as well. It would hurt other countries' economy a lot worse than ours."

i) Economic Crisis

For starters, shutting Hormuz risks bringing Gulf Arab states, which have been highly critical of the Israeli attack into the war to safeguard their own commercial interests.

Closing the Strait will also hit China.

The world's second largest economy buys almost 90% of Iran's oil exports (roughly 16 million barrels per day) which are subject to International Sanctions

According to Goldman Sachs a blockade of the Strait of Hormuz could push oil prices to \$100 per barrel.

That would push the cost of Production up eventually for energy intensive goods like food, clothing and Chemicals.

Oil importing countries around the world could experience higher inflation and slower economic growth if conflict persists.

But history has shown that severe disruptions to global oil supplies have tended to be short lived.

Before the start of Second Gulf war, between March & May 2003 crude oil surged by a whopping 46 percent at the end of 2002.

But prices quickly unwound in the days preceding to start of US-led military campaign.

These relatively quick reversals of oil price spikes were largely due to global spare production capacity available at the time, and the fact that the rapid oil price increase curbed demand.

improve the structure of the answer. use more subheadings/

Conclusion

Iran might think of shutting the Strait of Hormuz, a vital oil road, using mines and IRGC moves amid U.S. and Israel tensions. But it's a double edged katana, they lose 90% of oil to China which is 16 million barrels daily and 30-45% of their revenue, making it tough without the supreme council's permission. World oil prices could soar soar past \$100 with quick inflation, yet history (like 2003, 2022) shows it fades with extra oil and less demand. Pipelines and US navy strength soften the hit. So, Iran's threat feels like a clever strategy, not a real strike.