



Research Article

## Dynamics of the Iran-Israel Conflict and China's Strategic Role in Maintaining Stability in Asia

Syarifah Huswatun Miswar\*

Ph.D in Political Science and Foreign Studies, Central China Normal University, Hubei, Wuhan, China

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### Abstract

The armed confrontation that fanned out between Iran and Israel in June 2025 is used as a case study in this paper to analyze China's strategic role in maintaining peace in Asia. This conflict has not only resulted in serious geopolitical challenges to the Middle East but also has had a major impact on regional and global stability, especially in the Asian continent. The paper investigates the relationship between the conflict's evolution and China's diplomatic efforts to cool the situation while portraying itself as Iran's chief economic and diplomatic partner. China's reliance on energy supplies from the Middle East, which are crucial for its economic development and geopolitical influence, underpins its strategic role in the region. Notably, any disruption of energy flow through the Strait of Hormuz, an essential artery for Asian economies highly dependent on Middle Eastern energy imports, poses direct threats to Asia's economic stability. Furthermore, the conflict deepens global polarization between camps supporting Israel and Iran, with wide-ranging implications for security and politics in Asia. This paper highlights China's balanced diplomacy and realistic foreign policy in managing these effects, underscoring the need for multilateral cooperation to maintain peace and stability in the region.

**Keywords:** Armed Confrontation, Geopolitical Challenges, Energy Security, Diplomatic Strategy, Regional Stability

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\* Corresponding author: E-mail address: sayyidahuswah@gmail.com

## **Introduction**

The armed conflict that broke out between Israel and Iran on June 13, 2025, was a very serious escalation of tensions in the Middle East region. Israel's heavy airstrikes on Iran's nuclear facilities and military sites, which was known as Operation Lion Awakening, led Iran to send missiles and drones along with the response into Israeli territory. The clash has resulted in losses on both sides of the border, civilians among them, and has also caused the governments of many countries to rescue their citizens from the area of conflict to safe (Neria et al., 2025; Defense Security Asia, 2025). These tensions have not only impacted regional security, but have also raised global concerns about the possible that the situation could get out of control and that the major powers could even intervene militarily.

The importance of the conflict is immeasurable to the world as a whole, especially to Asia that is very dependent on the Middle East for energy. Any disturbance in the oil supply through the strategic waterways like the Strait of Hormuz may directly affect the economies of Asia, a region with very high energy consumption. Furthermore, this conflict escalates the global division between the two camps of the countries that are on the side of Israel, the United States and its allies, and the countries that are with Iran, including China, Russia, and some other Asian countries (Rashid, 2024; Malik, A, 2025).

In this particular case, China has surfaced as a power with large strategic interests in the Middle East. Apart from being the largest consumer of Iranian oil, China also has great economic and military relationships with Iran, and has actively contributed to peace efforts. The Chinese government indeed desires to keep the region peaceful for it to be able to get uninterrupted energy supply and at the same time penetrate deeper into the region's geopolitics since the US is still the dominant player there (Imam & Tijjani, 2024).

### **1. Literature Review**

The Iran and Israel conflict is the main reason that the Middle Eastern geopolitics is so volatile is definitely not true. It is, rather, an ongoing saga of a series of ideologies, political interests, and global influence changing hands. Previous studies have revealed that the war was not only executed through direct military assaults but also through proxy

wars, military diplomacy, and the creation of a good image in the international community (Mamadi, 2022) (Bukhari et al., 2024; Roomi, 2023). Iran sees itself as the defender of resistance against Israel and the provider of the Palestinian cause, with backing from groups such as Hamas and Islamic Jihad, which thus consolidates the position of Iran in the axis of the resistance in the region (Behnam, 2023). At the same time, Israel perceives Iran as a threat to its existence that can only be neutralized by stopping it from obtaining nuclear weapons and extending its military influence in the neighboring region (Zanotti et al, 2012).

In China's diplomatic behavior in the Middle East, particularly its relations with Iran, Western Realist theories, which frame state actions around power competition and national interest, prove insufficient. Realism's emphasis on material power and security struggles does not fully capture China's unique diplomatic culture. A growing body of scholarship highlights China's foreign policy as informed by a dual normative framework: a profound love for peace and sympathy for the weak, grounded in historical experiences of foreign aggression. This framework influences China's preference for multilateral cooperation and peaceful conflict resolution rather than dominance or confrontation (Nadya Helmi, 2025; Zhu, 2020).

China's diplomatic strategy is fundamentally shaped by two key cultural characteristics. First, a deep commitment to peace guides its preference for promoting cooperation and dialogue rather than engaging in conflict. This stands in contrast with more interventionist approaches seen in other global powers. Second, China exhibits sympathy toward weaker states, a stance grounded in its historical experience of foreign aggression and colonization. This sympathy manifests in China's strong support for countries like Palestine and Iran, which it views as resisting external dominance. This approach aligns with the broader framework of cultural diplomacy, emphasizing respect for sovereignty, historical context, and a normative commitment to peaceful development (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2022).

Although the conflict's consequences are mostly around the Middle East region, the disturbance has reached far and wide across the earth. The United States and its allies are revealed to be very pro-Israel, while China, Russia, and some other Asian countries are pro-Iran, thus deepening the world's geopolitical polarization (Pinfold et al., 2025).

The matter of multilateralism has been further tested by this conflict, with veto power at the United Nations Security Council and the national interests of each country interfering with making peace and a ceasefire possible (Saeed, 2025).

Aside from the military and political sides, the research also brings out the humanitarian and social sides of the story. The number of civilian losses is high in both countries. Iranian nuclear scientists and Israeli civilians are examples of those who have lost their lives as a result of this conflict. A polarised and biased media narrative, coupled with an unregulated inflow of information, has complicated the public perception of the issues at hand and thus reinforced the conflicts of identity tensions (Fieldhouse, 2025).

## **2. China's Strengths and Limitations in Asia**

China holds a strategic advantage in maintaining stability in Asia, reflected in its multilateral diplomatic reach and infrastructure investment network in the Middle East and Asia. Through its integrated Belt and Road Initiative, Beijing is consolidating economic and political supply chains, while portraying itself as a mediator and peacekeeper. However, this advantage is offset by a major weakness: energy dependence in the Middle East, a region plagued by recurrent conflicts. When energy supplies are strained, China's economy and underlying policies can be structurally impacted. Furthermore, sanctions imposed by Washington place additional pressure on Beijing's economic and diplomatic channels with several Pacific nations, reducing the opportunities for pursuing desired trade routes. This reality demonstrates that despite China's impressive tools and initiatives, its persistent instability continues to be a stumbling block in building stability and momentum.

The primary objective of this work is to explore the evolution of Iran-Israel confrontation and to assess the strategic part of China in the stable development of Asia after the rise of the conflict situation. The issue that is being raised here considers how this strife disrupts peace not only locally but globally and the role of China in the process of conflict impact mitigation. This work would be expected to bring a more profound insight into a convoluted relationship between the

regional conflict and Asian stability and China's position as a prominent player in the current international political scene.

*China's role in Middle Eastern geopolitics and strategic relations with Iran*

The role of China in Middle Eastern geopolitics has become much more significant in recent times, when Beijing has grown in confidence as a global player who seeks to challenge the dominance of the West, especially the United States, in the region. China is following a very clean and pragmatic diplomatic approach, trying to establish relations with almost all countries in the Middle East without directly involving itself in the regional conflicts that are complex, such as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict or the Iran-Saudi rivalry. Instead, China is carrying out the politics of peaceful resolution through dialogue and agreement, as is the case in the accomplishment of their peace process between Hamas and Fatah, which was brought about by the mediation of China in July 2024 and hence the Beijing Declaration (Blinova, 2024; Mastro, 2022; McCarthy et al., 2024).

The main point of China in the Middle East is to find energy resources and a market that is big enough to absorb its economic growth. The region is full of oil and gas, which are essential for China as the second-largest energy consumer in the world. China is also pouring a lot of money in infrastructure and energy projects while doing its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) in the Middle East, which is a strategic place to make sure its energy is safe (Chu et al., 2022; Qian, 2018).

China strategically aligns itself with Iran to pursue this policy further. Iran is the country with which China does most of its oil supply and also economic cooperation, which includes investing in the energy and infrastructure sectors. China additionally leverages its relationship with Iran to increase its geopolitical influence and to oppose US dominance in the region. At the same time, China is mindful that direct involvement in the conflict might become risky for them. Thus, it decides to act as a mediator and arbitrator and hence, a peaceful resolution of the conflict, is maintained in the region (Matamis, 2024; Awan, 2025).

Besides, China's foreign investment in the Middle East goes on to grow exponentially, targeting the renewable energy, tech, and

infrastructure that are in line with the economic transformation of countries in the region, for instance, Saudi Arabia and UAE. This move not only cements China's place as the number one economic partner for the Middle East but also extends the strategic friendship with Iran and other countries there (Dorraj & English, 2013).

China foreign policy with respect to the Israel-Iran conflict has been resolved but very cautious, mainly concerned with ensuring regional peace and avoiding the situation going out of control. Chinese have stated that they are against the Israeli actions directed at Iran, re-affirmed their staunch support to Iran as far as the sovereignty and the inviolability of the borders are concerned, and also appealed to settle the problem peacefully and through a political dialogue (Time, 2025).(China Condemns Israel's "military Adventurism" against Iran; U.S. Calls Strikes "Excellent," 2025) (Song & Pásztor, 2025). Wang Yi, the Chinese Foreign Minister, has been in touch with the representatives of both sides in order to find common ground, pushing for peace, and has also made an offer to act as a mediator in the conflict (Ministry Foreign Affairs People's Republic of China, 2025; Beijing Meeting Between China, Russia and Iran on the Iranian Nuclear Issue, 2025).

Generally speaking, China is adopting a different approach than the United States that is openly backing Israel. China sees itself as a neutral actor that merely desires to keep the situation balanced in the conflict, however, it also goes on to highlight that it is against any kind of escalation that may lead to more tense situations in the Middle East (McCarthy, 2025) This is exactly how China's role in the peacemaking between Iran and Saudi Arabia in 2023, which subsequently became the basis for Beijing to offer mediation in the current Israel-Iran conflict (Özekin & Sune, 2023), is also reflected.

Besides that, China has also taken some practical measures that guarantee the safety of their citizens in places that are affected by the war by evacuating their people in large numbers from Iran and Israel so that they can be safe. This, in turn, demonstrates Beijing's commitment to the proper handling of the security risks which have been generated as a result of the conflict. The Chinese position is consistent with the traditional principles on which their foreign policy is founded: non-interference in other countries' affairs, peaceful coexistence, and the promotion of multilateralism (Yuan, 2023). Also,

it is a part of their extensive diplomatic efforts to participate in the peace-making process and to be recognized as a major power of good influence in the world.

*A study of the impact of the Middle East conflict on Asian stability and economy*

The ongoing war in the Middle East, which mostly involves Iran and Israel, has indirectly affected political and economic conditions in Asia. In recent research, tensions between countries were found to be likely to cause a big recession in the global economy, mainly due to interruptions in the supply of oil from the region that is the largest energy producer in the world. (Meagher, 2025; Wang et al., 2024) The analysis done by Prince Future Group and Barclays Financial Firm has revealed that the unrest, which is going to last as long as the Ukrainian-Russian war, definitely made a big space in the oil prices that might lead to the devaluation of the Asian currencies and slow down of the economic development in the region. (Meagher, 2025)

This situation has a direct impact on Asian countries that are significantly dependent on energy imports, such as Indonesia, which is suffering from the inflation of prices caused by the increasing world oil prices. The Indonesian government and other Asian countries are making attempts to reduce the impact, but if the dispute goes on, the danger of economic crisis and energy supply interruptions is still there. (Tempo, 2025) Besides, the soaring energy prices justify more money demanded by other sectors to cover the extra costs of transportation and manufacturing. This, in turn, leads to reduced competitiveness and higher consumer prices.

On top of the economic factor, this dispute also worsens the political and security issues in the West Asia and South Asia regions that are close to the Middle East. The unrest in the Middle East can lead to a domino effect that might bring danger to the peace and stability of Asian regions. Thus, the military and defense sectors of several Asian countries need to keep heightened readiness in response to conflicts increasing in the neighboring countries. (Garuda TV, 2025) The changing situation makes the relationships of East Asian nations with other nations that are parts of global powers more convoluted as they try to balance those that have vested interests in the Middle East.

Despite the fact that Asian stock markets have demonstrated some resilience in the short term, uncertainty and heightened geopolitical tensions continue to be a major risk factor for investors and market participants in Asia. The literature, in general, is in agreement that the Middle East conflict has brought a bad situation not only for the region itself but also has triggered serious consequences for Asia's economic and political stability, thus the countries in the region have to be very careful and prepared with the right strategies if they want to mitigate the situation. (Jacob, 2025)

### **3. Theoretical Framework**

#### **Geopolitical and international relations theories regarding armed conflict and the role of great powers**

Geopolitical analysis is the main frame of reference for the understanding of armed conflict in the Middle East, most notably between Iran and Israel. Geopolitics is the study of how geographical factors impact the characters of politics and power among states, and how major powers exploit the strategic locations of certain regions to deepen their influence and gains (Boltuc, 2024; Bukhari et al., 2024; Roomi, 2023). The Middle East, being the world's energy powerhouse and situated at the crossroads of three continents (Asia, Africa, and Europe), has become a major battleground where great powers struggle to gain access and control of trade routes and vital resources (Rhoades et al., 2023).

Balance of power has got some traction among analysts on the topic of global politics. It is a theory in the field of international relations which says that great powers play the role of balancing forces, i.e. they make sure that no single power gets absolutely dominant by building up alliances and balancing of power, thus ensuring stability. The Iran-Israel conflict can be regarded as a regional rivalry, which is the result of the support that global powers such as the United States (which is on the side of Israel) and China, and Russia (that are with Iran) provide to the competing parties. (Belczyk, 2025) Those powers employ the conflict as a battleground for their proxy wars so that they can extend their geopolitical influence without having to get directly involved (Pinfeld et al., 2025).

The energy dependency theory is one of the factors that make it easier to understand how the energy needs of big consumers (like China) affect their foreign policy. The fact that China relies on oil from the Middle East (in particular, Iran) has made Beijing accept the task of keeping the region stable so that energy supplies are uninterrupted as they form the basis of economic growth (Khan & Guo, 2017; Pan, 2008).

The theory of multilateral diplomacy and the role of mediator also comes to mind in this context as China is looking for a mediator position to solve conflicts in order to have a lighter atmosphere and not to have eruptions that may interrupt both regional and global peace. This strategy is focused on the fact that dialogue, negotiation, and international cooperation are the main tools for the peaceful settlement of the armed conflicts, which are as a result of the participation of the multiple actors with the different interests (Haghirian & Scita, 2023; Matamis, 2024).

By the application of these theories, the author of this article will greatly be able to comprehend the course of the geopolitical situation, to recognize the role of energy dependency as well as the diplomatic mission of China and to measure the extent of the influence of an Iran-Israel conflict on foreign affairs in the Asian continent. It is evident that Middle Eastern geopolitics underpins China's energy strategy, which is itself deeply intertwined with the country's ambitions to expand politically and economically in the region. Hence, it follows that China wants to be the one responsible for leading the way in the future of the Middle East (Pan, 2008).

### **The concept of balance of power and multilateral diplomacy**

The concept of balance of power is a primary theory in the international relations field, that explains how the states attempt for their security and survival by ensuring no country becomes too powerful in the military or politics (Balance of Power Theory, 2014; What Is the Balance of Power and How Is It Maintained?, 2022; Lee, 2025). In an anarchic international system, where there is no central government to regulate states, the balance of power serves as a mechanism to create stability and prevent large-scale conflict. If a nation were to become disproportionately strong, other countries would most likely form coalitions or enhance their capabilities to

counterbalance that hegemony. Therefore, the balance of power not only leads to the emergence of multipolarity but also decreases the chance of aggression as the danger of confrontation is high (Kim & Han, 2023).

In terms of the Iran-Israel conflict and China's role, the balance of power theory illustrates how China aims at neutralizing the power of the United States in the Middle East by deepening its partnership with Iran and other Arab countries in the region. The Chinese are thus not only expanding their economic and diplomatic clout but also endeavoring to keep the conflict from flying out of hand so that they can continue to enjoy peace and prosperity in the region (ZHOU, 2024).

Besides, multilateral diplomacy is a very powerful tool in handling complicated international conflicts. Multilateral diplomacy means the collaboration of three or more countries by using international forums like the United Nations (UN), ASEAN, and other regional organizations to realize common goals in politics, security, and economics. Using the method of multilateral diplomacy, states may bargain, reach consensus, and solve disagreements peacefully on the basis of the principles of sovereign equality, non-intervention, and non-violent dispute resolution. This method is very much relevant to the current Iran-Israel conflict situation, where the three biggest powers and the local regions have to cooperate to prevent the escalation of the conflict and keep the peace in the region (Chaziza, 2013; Song & Pásztor, 2025).

China also uses multilateral diplomacy to act as a neutral and positive mediator, a party that helps the dialog and the negotiation between the parties in conflict, while it still keeps its strategic interests in mind and does not get involved in a war. Hence, the concepts of balance of power and multilateral diplomacy are mutually supportive in elucidating China's strategy of managing complicated and potentially destabilizing disputes in Asia. It is quite crucial to re-establish its relations with the United States in a way, that there will be no institutional and ideological rivalry feelings deepened and the "New Cold War" will be avoided (YIYUN et al., 2023).

### **Energy Dependence Theory and Its Impact on Foreign Policy**

Energy dependency theory explains how large energy importing countries, such as China, shape their foreign policies based on the

vital need for stable energy supplies. This dependency creates geopolitical vulnerabilities, where consuming countries become vulnerable to political pressure from supplier countries (Högselius & Kaijser, 2019; Kreft, 2006). For example:

- Geographically uneven distribution of energy resources creates asymmetric dependencies, forcing importing countries to build strategic alliances or political compromises with suppliers (Högselius & Kaijser, 2019; Ibekwe et al., 2024).
- Energy security (reliable access at affordable prices) is at the heart of foreign policy, often pushing aside other considerations such as human rights or environmental sustainability (Loh & Bellam, 2024).

China, as a rapidly growing economy with substantial energy needs, exemplifies how energy security concerns drive foreign policy decisions. China's dependence on energy imports, especially fossil fuels, has grown alongside its industrialization goals, which poses a substantial threat to its energy security and makes it imperative to diversify its energy sources and supply routes (Du & Liang, 2023). China's focus on its oil supply chain vulnerabilities, potentially at the expense of improving domestic electricity supply reliability, highlights the strategic prioritization of energy security, an issue rooted in historical events and the characteristics of energy systems (Leung et al., 2014).

### **Mechanisms of Influence on Foreign Policy**

#### **1. Formation of Strategic Alliances**

Energy importing countries tend to establish special relationships with suppliers to ensure supplies. China, as the world's second largest energy consumer, is building economic-military ties with Iran and other Middle Eastern countries through infrastructure investments and "resources for infrastructure" schemes (Vásquez, 2019; Watson, 1983).

#### **2. Proactive Diplomacy for Diversification**

To reduce vulnerability, large consumer countries like China are developing diversification strategies:

- Building alternative energy corridors (Example: China-Pakistan Economic Corridor) to avoid vulnerable points such as the Strait of Malacca (Bustelo, 2005; Shi & Cai, 2020).
- Global investment in energy assets, from Africa to Latin America, through state-owned companies such as Sinopec and CNOOC (Vásquez, 2019).

### 3. Energy as a Geopolitical Tool of Countermeasures

Despite their dependence on imports, large consuming countries have leverage through:

- Market power: The ability to pressure suppliers through large-scale purchases (YIYUN et al., 2023).
- Technological innovation: Investing in renewable energy to reduce long-term dependency. (Heggelund et al., 2022) Case Study: China in the Iran-Israel Conflict

The theory cited above would be used to illustrate China's actions in the present conflict. One of the actions was:

- The decision is to not engage directly with Israel but at the same time to continue relations with Iran as the main energy supplier (90% of Iran's oil exports go to China). (Eurasia, 2025) Besides that, China is also carrying the role of a mediator in the disarmament of the Strait of Hormuz situation, which will result in the uninterrupted flow of energy and no shutdown of the Asian economy (Eurasia, 2025).
- The dependency on energy resources is the determining factor of the foreign policy that also leads to the shifting of global power dynamics. Countries that import resources such as China are in a situation where they have to find the balance between strategic interests (ensuring that the supply is stable) and geopolitical ambitions (trying to weaken the position of the US) (Why China Is Emerging as a Main Promoter of Stability in the Strait of Hormuz, 2023). (Abdullah Baabood, 2023) This is the lens through which the theorist sees the behavior of the large energy consumers in conflicts at a regional scale.

### **Analytical Framework for the Role of Neutral States and Mediators in Regional Conflicts**

A neutral state and mediator are the ones who definitely play a very important role in solving the complex regional conflicts such as the Iran-Israel conflict. A mediating country in most cases is a country that is characterized by neutrality, trustworthiness, and good relations with all parties, so it can easily establish a dialogue and facilitate it (Goetschel, 2020; Siniver, 2006) The literature says that the mediator cannot, by any means, decide the final issue but is rather a person who provides both sides with the means for acceptable negotiation through the mediation process. (Mediation vs Negotiation, 2025) The power, impartiality, and timing condition are the main factors that impact the success of the mediation effort (Siniver, 2006). The factors may influence the decision of the parties in conflict to accept mediation and comply with its results (Goetschel, 2020). The Middle East's volatile geopolitical landscape is where the interplay between Iran and Israel is rooted in a host of issues ranging from mutual threats, reign ambitions to unesiness in the ideological domain (Awaad, 2020; Maher, 2020).

Here are some examples of the role of effective mediator countries. These examples are from several countries such as Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Oman, and Turkey which are very active in the mediation of the conflicts in the Middle East and other regions (Hussain, 2025; Usef, 2022) For instance, Saudi Arabia had a neutral approach and was a very important player in the process of deescalation of the Iran and Israel conflict by organizing the talks. Also, Qatar is a mediator with a good reputation who is always present in the prisoner exchanges and secretly solves the issues that arise among the parties in the Middle East (Saleem & Bukhari, 2022) With its neutral position and broad relations with different countries, Turkey has been a reliable mediator in incidents such as the Ukraine-Russia war and African conflicts (Wilson, 2024).

China, in the situation of Iran-Israel conflict, has attempted to adopt a role of a neutral mediator and also has promoted multilateral diplomacy and economic cooperation. China's pragmatic policy and concentration on regional peace have enabled Beijing to establish a position as a trusted mediator, especially because China has strategic interests in continuing energy supplies and peace in the region. By

employing this strategy, China is aiming to decrease the possibility of the conflict that may lead to the disturbance of the peace in Asia as well as of its global interests (Mokolomban, 2025; Ding & Zhao, 2019).

#### **4. Methodology**

This study employs qualitatively through a geographic-political analysis perspective to understand the conflicts dynamics between Iran and Israel and the strategic position of China in peace keeping in Asia. The research method is very focused on geopolitical analysis. Data collection has been done extensively from diverse credible secondary sources including academic journals, government official reports, international organizations, think tanks, and leading media coverage issued between 2022-2025. Besides, energy flows data and economic indicators recognizing Asia and Middle East are also analyzed to underpin the research results.

The data collection process was done by locating those secondary sources that have extreme relevance to the research topic. Thus, they can give an extensive coverage of the issue of the dispute and China's diplomatic reaction in the region.

Content and thematic analysis techniques have been used in the data analysis work. These techniques help to locate repetition, it make clear words, and points of developing argument in discussing the dispute, China's foreign policy, and its effect on the peace in the Asian region. The theoretical background used in this research includes ideas of geopolitics, power relations, energy dependence, and multilateral diplomacy, which give room for understanding and explaining the major actors including China, their aims, and the methods they are going to employ in dealing with the Iran-Israel conflict. This research admits that it has limitations in depending on the secondary data that may suffer from the availability and credibility of sources, as well as the very rapid changing situation of the conflict that some of the recent occurrences may not have been fully incorporated in this study. This research model shows that it can depict the intricacies of the linkage of the conflict-ridden region and Asian peace, and furthermore, it highlights China as a prominent player in the present world politics.

## **5. Result and Discussion**

### **Dynamics of the Iran-Israel Conflict: Escalation of Military Attacks and Regional Impact**

The armed conflict between Iran and Israel that broke out on June 13, 2025 marked a serious escalation of decades-long hostilities. (Aljazeera, 2025) Israel initiated a series of surprise attacks on multiple targets in Iran, primarily focusing on nuclear and military establishments that were considered by them to be a threat on the existential level to Israel. The operation was carried out primarily through targeted killings of Iranian military leaders and nuclear scientists, air strikes on nuclear infrastructure and air defenses, as well as the destruction of Iran's air defense systems (Altman H, 2025).

In reply, Iran conducted missile and drone strikes on different military and urban places in Israel including oil facilities in Haifa and residential areas that resulted in a significant number of casualties and damage (Aljazeera, 2025). The Israeli attacks were not only confined to nuclear facilities but also extended to local institutions like police stations and the national television station in Tehran with the intention of quieting the voice of Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei and thus gaining leverage in the forthcoming negotiations. Partially, this would be achieved through the agreeing of an end to a nuclear program and the give up of the support for the local militants (Reuters, 2025). The conflict transformed the former threat and power dynamics in both countries (Pinfold et al., 2025).

In particular, the worsening of the situation occurs against the backdrop of the cessation of talks between Iran and the United States regarding the nuclear program of Iran that came to an end after the declaration by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) of Iran's non-compliance with the obligations issued 20 years ago

The 2023 attack on Gaza and the subsequent war, which saw Israel weakening Iranian support, is also a conflict that embodies the ongoing tension, which has escalated since October 7, when Hamas and Hezbollah were the main actors (Baker, 2025, Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2025). Israel's broader aims are to lessen Iran's presence in the region and to stop it from building nuclear weapons, while Iran plans to repel Israel and to increase its influence in the region using its proxy network (Bukhari et al., 2024). This war has greatly exposed the

highly complicated relationship between regional and global players along with the factors of power, ideas, and strategic necessities being the key ones, that are influencing the matter (Bukhari et al., 2024; Mehrdadi & Jahanbakhsh, 2016).

The whole region is deeply affected and the situation is reaching countries in the Middle East and Asia which are now very cautious. Such an environment of instability puts in jeopardy the main energy supply routes of the world, especially through the Strait of Hormuz, which is an essential part of Asia's economies. Countries like Indonesia therefore have decided to evacuate their citizens from areas of conflict for safety reasons (Kementerian Pendayagunaan Aparatur Negara dan Reformasi Birokrasi Republik Indonesia, 2025). Moreover, this issue can further go beyond the situation and deepen the rivalry between the two sets of countries one that is for Israel and the other for Iran thus making it even harder to come up with peaceful solutions and complicating the relationship between the United States and China, which have different strategic interests in the region (Aljazeera, 2025).

### **Dynamics of the Iran-Israel Conflict: Escalation of Military Attacks and Regional Impact**

The war between Iran and Israel that started on June 13, 2025 was a big step in a negative direction for the issues that had been going on for a long time. To be more precise, Israel carried out a number of surprise attacks on several places in Iran, mainly aiming at nuclear and military facilities, which were definitely the most dangerous for the existence of Israel among the reasons given. The operation was launched by targeted assassinations of the Iranian military leaders and nuclear scientists. The infrastructure of the nuclear program along with the air defenses were bombed. The destruction of Iran's air defense systems was also carried out by those who took over the operation (Aljazeera, 2025).

Iran retaliated by carrying out rocket and drone operations against multiple military and civilian places in Israel, among them oil depots in Haifa and residential districts, that led to a great number of killed and injured and heavy destruction (Altman H, 2025). The Israeli counteractions were not only directed at nuclear plants, but also spread to state institutions like police stations and the national television station

in Tehran. The idea was to weaken the pillars of Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei's rule and make Iran come to deep concessions, such as stopping the nuclear program and going along with the peaceful resolution of the regional conflicts (Moore et al, 2025).

So far, the crisis in the Middle East has overwhelmed the coverage of Ukraine and totally overshadowed it. That danger has not diminished at all and now it is leading to the possibility of a lot of fourfold confrontations. In his speech to the United Nations General Assembly in New York, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu stated that Israel would not allow Iran to get nuclear weapons, comparing Tehran with Hitler (AGI, 2025). He allegedly made the statement due to a report from the previous day that was public on CNN claiming that Iran was trying to obtain nuclear weapons through a secret project no later than September 2025.

Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi, on the other hand, accused the United States of escalating the situation and emphasized that Iran was not negotiating over its nuclear program (Hajek, 2025). Besides, the escalation comes at a time when negotiations between Iran and the United States over the nuclear program have reached a deadlock and have come to an end after the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) declared Iran non-compliant with its obligations for the first time in 20 years. However, it is still not clear if this is true, as Iran's state TV and the nuclear chief of the country deny the report (Iran TV, 2025). Moreover, the defense ministry in Israel has also presented a report on the issue at a press conference addressed by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, the head of the space program and the intelligence chief (Livni, 2025).

The upsurge also represents a continuation of a series of events and incidents that have not been calmed since the 7 October, 2023 attack on Gaza and the consequent war. As a result, Israel has diminished the support of the Iranian proxies, namely, Hamas and Hezbollah (Fitzgerald, 2025).

Damage in the form of war, invasion, fleeing, and burning affects not only those who are fighting but also the wider area, which will be scared and unstable for a very long time. Instability in the Middle East is leading to a domino effect, with countries in the region and beyond being on high alert. The instability threatens the main routes of energy transportation in the world, particularly the Strait of Hormuz, which is

crucial to Asian economies. In doing so, countries like Indonesia have taken the step to evacuate their citizens from the areas

### **China's Position: Diplomatic and Economic Support for Iran, as well as Mediation Efforts**

Since June 2025, China has firmly positioned itself as a supporter of Iran in a war that broke out with Israel. The Government of China openly declared that Israel's offensive against Iran was an act of aggression against Iran's sovereignty and a breach of international law. Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, in-line-with statements made by Israeli and Iranian officials, asserted that Israel's actions were unacceptable and restated that China stood with Iran regarding its sovereignty and the exercise of its legitimate rights. Additionally, President Xi Jinping reiterated this viewpoint when he spoke of great concern over the conflict becoming more intense and of being against any parts that break the law or are actions of the violation of the sovereignty of other countries (Foreign Policy, 2025; Mappes et al, 2025).

China is Iran's most significant strategic partner economically, in particular when it comes to energy supplies. China is the main importer of Iran's oil and has made 25-year cooperation agreement with Iran that covers not only energy but also infrastructural investments and BRI projects in Iran. Such relationship gives China a stronger position to support Iran diplomatically and economically while avoiding the necessity of military operations (France 24, 2025; Mappes et al, 2025).

On the other hand, China is making efforts to be a mediator in the fight between the two. Beijing has been the leading force in pushing for multilateral diplomacy and offering itself as a positive mediator to facilitate the situation. Foreign Minister Wang Yi has been in constant contact with both parties and has suggested that peaceful settlement be reached by talking, therefore, refusing that violence will be the answer to the problem.

Besides that, China has taken the initiative in such occasions as Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) to mobilize international communities for a ceasefire and a political settlement (CNN, 2025; Mappes; 2025).

Still, the position of China is not fully neutral. Strong position in favor of Iran as well as a very critical attitude towards Israel clearly

indicate that China changed its policy substantially. Besides, the support of the USA and China rivalry is also visible in this case, with China trying to increase its influence in the Middle East while driving the US out of the region (Eslami & Papageorgiou, 2023).

To sum up, China has a two-pronged approach: on the one hand, it gives diplomatic as well as economic support to Iran, its main strategic partner, and on the other hand, it tries to position itself as a mediator who can bring peace to the region and at the same time keep its business safe in Asia. By this, China wants to show that it is a global player capable of being at the core of resolving the world problems.

### **China's Strategic Interests in Maintaining Energy Supply and Regional Stability**

Although Iran is often cited as China's key energy partner, recent data shows that in 2024, China imported more oil from Russia (over 100 million tons) and Saudi Arabia (78 million tons) than from Iran (70 million tons). This data, recorded in the BP Statistical Review of World Energy 2025 report, shows that the current oil market is a buyer's market with numerous supplier options for China. China continues to import oil from Iran due to strategic relations, friendly relations, and competitive prices, despite international sanctions limiting Iran's export potential. Furthermore, China is investing heavily in energy and infrastructure projects in Iran as part of the Belt and Road Initiative. The growing trend of electric vehicles in China is also gradually reducing reliance on oil as a primary energy source. With this pragmatic approach, China seeks to maintain a balance between strategic energy needs and avoiding direct involvement in military conflicts that could threaten the stability of energy supplies and the region (Offshore Technology, 2025; MESS, 2025; Barron, 2025).

Although Iran is a significant oil supplier to China, by 2024 China imported more oil from Russia and Saudi Arabia than from Iran. The current global oil market situation is a buyer's market, giving China various energy source options. China maintains oil imports from Iran due to strategic relations, friendship, and discounted prices due to international sanctions that restrict the Iranian market. This relationship is strengthened by China's substantial investment in energy and infrastructure projects in Iran as part of the Belt and Road Initiative. Furthermore, the increasing use of electric vehicles is

gradually reducing China's dependence on oil. Thus, China is pursuing a pragmatic policy that maintains a balance between its strategic interests and efforts to avoid involvement in military conflicts that could threaten energy supplies and regional stability (Newseek, 2025).

The risk of US sanctions against Chinese companies transacting with Iran is a significant factor in China's oil import dynamics. Despite potential sanctions, Beijing continues its economic ties with Tehran as a form of strategic solidarity based on a long history of friendship and support for Iran's sovereignty. This relationship also symbolizes a shared resistance to external pressure from Western powers. Meanwhile, the growth trend of electric vehicles in China is accelerating; according to the latest data, the number of electric vehicles will increase by more than 30% by 2024, and national oil consumption is expected to decline gradually over the coming decade. These developments are also encouraging China to adapt to the energy transition while reducing its dependence on imported oil from conflict-prone regions (kpler, 2025; International Energy Agency; 2025).

Such a reliance has made the Chinese government participate actively in the peace-keeping operations in this region in order to ensure that the energy supply routes, particularly those through the Strait of Hormuz and the Gulf of Oman, remain not only safe but also accessible in the event of any military conflicts that may arise. China has significantly increased its presence of the military forces in the region by conducting joint exercises with Iran and Russia in the Gulf of Oman, and additionally, it has been growing its naval forces to be able to protect sea lanes, which are the major channels of global energy trade and are thus of utmost importance (Mazzucco, 2025).

Besides the army aspect, China also places great importance on multilateral diplomacy, by introducing a five- point plan to peacefully solve the Iranian nuclear issue, which highlights a political solution, the observance of the principles of sovereignty and the necessity of dialogue carried out through non-violence. This behavior of the Chinese side demonstrates that the country is trying to keep a balance between supporting its strategic partner, Iran, and at the same time, making sure that the regional stability, which directly affects its economic interests, is still maintained (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, 2025).

Nonetheless, this position of China is not without its share of risks. A situation of prolonged unrest will be able to jeopardize the delivery of petroleum and weaken the economic systems of China and Asia in general, thus Beijing remains eager to solve the conflict peacefully and at the same time, it is deepening its strategic friendship with Iran. In addition, China plans to keep peace with Israel and the United States that are the main actors of the region (South China Morning Post, 2025).

### **Impact of Conflict on Political and Economic Stability in Asia, Including Risks of Energy Disruptions and Geopolitical Tensions**

The June 2025 outbreak of the Israel-Iran conflict was the main cause that led to political and economic instability in Asia. The most significant immediate result was the surge in global oil prices that reached a level of around US\$74-75 per barrel, which represents an increase of almost 7-9 percent, after the conflict started. The main reason for the rise in price was the fear of interrupted oil supply from the strategic Strait of Hormuz, which is the main route for about a third of global oil supplies. Iran even contemplated the idea of closing the Strait of Hormuz if Israel decided to attack, hence this move, if carried out, could send the oil price soaring above \$100 per barrel (Daugherty, 2025). This is going to be very difficult for countries that are highly dependent on oil such as India, China, and Japan, to solve economic issues.

Energy prices have gone up, and this has a direct influence on the situation of inflation in Asian countries, including Indonesia, which is an oil-importing country. Sri Mulyani, Indonesian Finance Minister, stated the threat of oil price increase and inflation that might pull down the national economy as a result. On the one hand, as inflation goes up, it suppresses the purchasing power of people and, on the other hand, increases the burden of fuel subsidies, a factor, which, if not controlled, would lead the fiscal deficit to increase in the country (CNN Indonesia, 2025). Besides, the geopolitical uncertainty factor, on the one hand, results in highly volatile stock markets in Asia, including the Indonesia Stock Exchange (IDX), which, however, is expected to be only temporary and will recover in a few months after experiencing a brief weakening (Harian Jogja, 2025).

On the political and security front, the escalating tensions between the groups of nations that are backing Israel and those that are with Iran only make the Geopolitical situation in Asia even more complicated. The countries of the region are stepping up their defense preparedness and watchfulness to be ready for the potential consequences of a more extensive conflict, such as the risks to the trade routes and the peace of the region. The dispute has also become more intense in global polarization, putting Asian countries in a tricky situation where they have to find a way to keep their relationship with both the United States and China, which have different opinions about the conflict, without losing one or the other (Garuda TV, 2025).

### **Challenges and Limitations of China's Role as a Mediator in Complex Conflicts**

China has been highly aggressive in its attempts to establish itself as a negotiator in the Israel-Iran conflict that broke out in June 2025, by setting up initiatives calling for the termination of hostilities and also by offering to act in a positive manner in the process of lowering the tensions. Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi has been in contact with senior Israeli and Iranian officials repeatedly and also stated that China is ready to help bring peace and stability to the Middle East region. President Xi Jinping has also reiterated the significance of a solution through politics and diplomacy in the settlement of the Israel-Iran conflict (China-MENA Newsletter, 2025; Xinhua, 2025). A look at China's stance upon the issue of conflict resolution in the Middle East shows that, although China is still being loyal to the ideas of peace, development, and cooperation, however, its involvement is only facilitated by cautiousness and a dearth of specific plans to realize durable peace (Ding & Zhao, 2019).

Nevertheless, China's ventures are impeded by many hindrances and restrictions. Top among them is very limited influence over Israel that China has. Israel has throughout its history remained the closest to the United States and its allies, and it is generally quite mistrustful of the role of the Chinese as the mediator, especially after the clear support that China has given diplomatically and economically to Iran. A major stumbling block to Beijing's acceptance as a neutral party in Israel-China's mediation is definitely the distrust of China's neutrality that Israel has (Foreign Policy, 2025). The relations between Israel and

China are complicated and they are characterized by mutual interests as well as by wariness (Shichor, 2025). At the same time, its relations with Iran may be seen based on energy and economic ties, however, they are certainly complicated by the presence of international sanctions and the worries about proliferation (Hong, 2013).

Second, this conflict is very complicated and it is affecting global geopolitical interests of different countries. The battle between China and the United States is quite fierce. China is however cautious not to be drawn into a direct fight with the US who is Israel's main ally and has established a large military force in the Middle East. An over-aggressive move by China, however, can lead to the conflict steeping in and therefore weakening the position of China as a neutral party (The Diplomat, 2025; Council on Foreign Relations, 2025; Debuglies, 2025).

Third, indeed, China has established strong economic and military relations with Iran, but the reality is that they do not want to be involved directly in a war that can put in jeopardy their main investment projects and their energy supply which is of utmost importance. Beijing is inclined toward a more practical and less confrontational method in handling a delicate situation. This method, according to China, entails keeping a balance between assisting its strategic partners and guaranteeing the peaceful coexistence of the region (TIME, 2025; Debuglies, 2025).

Forth, at first, the rapidly changing conflict dynamics and political uncertainty in the region are making mediation a very difficult task. Then the agendas of the different parties, namely the regional and international ones, are different, and consequently, it is very difficult to identify the common ground that is acceptable (Hart International., 2025). The situation around the conflict in China requires a very strong statement of commitment and a clear plan of action, but due to the fact that China has had very little experience in resolving conflicts in the Middle East, it is very difficult for them to achieve this (Song & Pásztor, 2025).

Although China has demonstrated that through mediation it still has some change to be a major player in this region, the political influence of China that is quite limited, the distrust of Israel, the danger of conflict with the US, and the difficult situation of the conflict are major problems that would really hinder the role of China from being very effective. Beijing's peacekeeping attempts are more like a

strategy to keep its own interests and to be sure that the region will be stable, than a deciding force in the solving of the conflict.

### **Long-Term Geopolitical Implications for Asia and China-US Relations**

The June 2025 Iran-Israel conflict has profoundly changed the political landscape of Asia and the nature of the interactions between China and the United States. The still burning hot tensions in the Middle East are not only a source of danger for the region but are also a perfect fuel that can feed the fire of strategic rivalry between the two superpowers (Aljazeera, 2025).

For Asia, the conflict represents hazard that can easily become a reality in the form of disturbances in the energy supplies that are crucial for the region's economic growth. Around one third of the global oil transported through to the world's energy network travels via strategically important waterways such as the Strait of Hormuz. In the case of a blockade or any disruption in the oil shipments, there will be a rapid and high increase of energy prices which will lead to the inflation of the countries of Asia, including Indonesia, and the development of their economies will face difficulties. These impacts have been witnessed in the increment of the international oil prices to US\$74-75 per barrel and the increased volatility in Asian financial markets since the inception of the conflict (Channel News Asia, 2025).

### **Conclusion**

On the geopolitical front, the conflict has further intensified the polarization between the two blocs of countries. On one side, there is the Israeli bloc, which is supported by the United States, and on the other side, there is the Iranian bloc, which is supported by China and Russia. These frictions compelled the Asian nations to deal with rather intricate relations with both major powers, thereby possibly generating political and security uncertainty in the region. Besides, the exacerbation of this conflict can lead to the deepening of the China-US competition in their strategic rivalry, notably in the geographical context of the Middle East and Asia (Robert Lansing Institute, 2025; Khan, 2025; XT Overview Podcast, 2025).

China-US relations have been severely tested lately because China is now more active than before in supporting Iran both diplomatically and economically. On the other hand, the US, as the main ally of Israel, continues to be dominant in the area and is still playing the lead in security policy in the region. This competition is definitely not confined to the military aspect only, but also the economic, technological and global diplomatic fields are involved. The conflict has turned out to be a new venue for each of the two countries to play out their game of power and influence, thus, it might end up with the indirect confrontation becoming more obvious in the region (The Soufan Center, 2025; Foreign Policy, 2025)

It is quite possible that in the long run, this conflict will become a driver for Asia to reinforce the cooperation in the region and also to diversify the energy sources so that the vulnerability to the geopolitical tensions would be minimized. Besides that, the countries in Asia have to come up with a well-drafted diplomatic plan so that they can not only have good relations with China and the United States, but also be able to stay out of the power struggle between these two great powers that could cause the region to become unstable.

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