



Chair Report

Security Council

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The primary role of the Security Council is to create and maintain international peace and security in accordance with the principals and purposes of the UN

<https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/>

REPORT: Iranian Aggression in the Persian Gulf

Introduction

The Persian Gulf and its surrounding geography have seen their fair share of war, sanctions, and embargoes, especially since the area is considered a pivotal location for Middle Eastern affairs, international peace, and global economic stability. In fact, nearly 21% of the petrochemical liquid consumed by the world in 2018 came through the 2 lane waterway in the Strait of Hormuz, making the Strait the most important oil transit chokepoint. Unfortunately, the Gulf's economic potential is threatened by regional and international disputes, in which oil trade is used as leverage. However, of all the countries in Gulf history, Iran is arguably the most mentioned. Iran, who has been bombarded with international sanctions and embargoes, has an extensive track record of using the Gulf for its own purposes, and the regional and international response to their aggression has caused the Persian Gulf to once again be forced into the middle of international tension and conflict. The duty of the Security Council should be to determine how to mediate Iranian aggression in all forms, while also curbing the inevitable fallout caused by the actions of international and regional intervention.

General Overview

The earliest example of Iranian aggression in modern history dates back to the 1980s when Iraq and Iran were attempting to overthrow the other to gain a more powerful hold of the Persian Gulf. Both countries targeted each other's oil resources to cripple each other's ability to continue the war. This tactic included targeting oil refineries and, more importantly, oil tankers that traveled across the Gulf and through the Strait of Hormuz. Initially, it was Iraq who began the offensive on oil tankers going to and from



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Iran, but Iran soon reciprocated in its own attacks and began the Tanker War. When Iran began to target oil tankers that traveled to and from Iraq and its allies, such as Saudi Arabia, the world's largest oil producer, and Kuwait, the world recognized the disastrous consequences of Iran's actions. Iran had essentially threatened the world's oil supply, and their strategic position as a bordering country to the Strait of Hormuz made them a force to be reckoned with. Iran's threat meant oil prices across the world would soar since developed nations like the US and Great Britain were oil dependant on Middle Eastern oil. The US ultimately decided to be directly involved in the conflict to safeguard its oil interests. American naval convoys escorted tankers across the Gulf to its destinations in Kuwait, Iraq, and Saudi Arabia in order to curb Iranian aggression. This tactic, however, led to a tragedy by the Americans, after they mistakenly shot down a civilian plane leaving Iran in response to Iranian fire on the US navy. The conflict ultimately ended in 1988, after the UN Ceasefire ended the Iran-Iraq War. Ironically, during the overall war, oil prices only spiked at the beginning and were relatively calm during the rest. The unfortunate consequences were, however, the loss of hundreds of civilian lives in the conflict. The Tanker War of the 1980s is a testament to the capabilities Iran and other regional powers have to bring about international conflict. The actions of Iran and Iraq in the war resulted in a worldwide coalition, from the US to the Soviet Union, to intervene, which in turn caused tragic civilian deaths and economic scares.

The Tanker War is the reason for international concern for the remaining stability in the Persian Gulf. The rhetoric and actions of the US regarding Iran, the attacks on Iranian oil vessels in the Red Sea, the attacks on Saudi oil installations and vessels by Iran backed Houthi rebels, and the recent string of non-middle eastern oil tankers being attacked by Persian Gulf actors are all examples of the recent example of turmoil in the region, and such chaos could result in a second Tanker War, which is predicted by analysts to create a surge in global oil prices, which could result in disastrous effects on a more complex and globalized oil economy.

The Security Council must evaluate the warrants of international blame on Iran and other regional actors regarding Gulf tensions and mediate any concerns for Iranian aggression. The Council must be wary of the complexity of the relations Gulf countries have with the rest of the world. Solutions to the growing tensions in the Persian Gulf should incorporate the success of previous conflicts in the Gulf region and take into account the failures.



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Major Parties Involved

Iran

Iran was one of two participants of the Iran-Iraq War, during which the Tanker War occurred. They are currently facing threats of sanctions from the US and the international community for their nuclear proliferation and aid of rebel militias in Middle Eastern conflicts including Yemen and Syria. They are currently blamed by the US and other western nations for the seizure of commercial tankers in the Persian Gulf in August of 2019, destruction of Saudi oil infrastructure and oil tankers, and the destruction of a US drone. The commercial tankers have since been released.

Iraq

Iraq, during Hussein's reign, was an enemy of Iran and was partly responsible for the casualties during the Tanker War. The country was invaded in 2003 by an international coalition for the purpose of overthrowing Saddam Hussein. They currently face threats of vessel seizures from Iran and face growing internal pressures in the form of nationalist riots and protests.

Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia is the Middle East's largest producer of oil and has a history of animosity with Iran. Both nations deem to be the Islamic center of the world, and as a result attempted to weaken the other's grip in the Middle East, including the Persian Gulf. Both nations have participated in proxy wars in Syria and Yemen, resulting in the deaths of thousands. Out of all the countries in the Gulf region, Saudi Arabia arguably stands to lose the most from Iranian aggression on oil tankers and infrastructure. The country as recently faced attacks on their oil refineries, which they maintain was perpetrated by Iran.

United States

The US has been at the forefront of all international responses relating to Iran in the last 50 years or so. They have brokered deals to curb Iranian proliferation of nuclear warhead and have sanctioned Iran's oil-based economy. They have frequently supported Saudi Arabia in their proxy wars against Iran. Currently, the US blames Iran for the attacks on oil and commercial vessels in the Persian Gulf and has rescinded the Iran Nuclear Deal, which has resulted in increased sanctions on Iran, which in turn has increased Iranian animosity towards the US and its allies.



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Timeline of Key Events

September 1980: The Iran-Iraq War begins

1981: Iraq begins to attack ships going to or leaving Iranian ports

1984: Iran begins to reciprocate Iraqi naval attacks by attacking oil tankers going to or leaving Saudi Arabian and Kuwait port

1987: The US launches Operation Earnest Will to protect oil vessels traveling the Persian Gulf

August 1990 - February 1991: Persian Gulf War

March 2003 - February 2011: Iraq War

May 2018: The US withdraws from the Iran Nuclear Deal

May 2019: 4 oil tankers, 2 of which are Saudi Arabian, are attacked in the Persian Gulf. The US blames Iran for the attack

June 2019: 2 Taiwanese and Singaporean oil tankers attacked near the Strait of Hormuz. The US blames Iran for the attack

June 2019: Iran shoots down US drone

July 2019: British marines seize Iranian supertanker near Gibraltar in violation of EU sanctions on Syria

July 2019: Iran seizes and later releases two British-operated oil tankers

Past Attempts at Resolving This Issue

UN Security Council Resolution 552: Condemned the attacks of Iran in the Tanker War and reiterated that member states should not use force in international relations

Suggested Websites

- Importance of the Strait of Hormuz:
<https://www.eia.gov/todayinenergy/detail.php?id=39932>
- Summary of First Tanker War:
<https://www.usni.org/magazines/proceedings/1988/may/tanker-war>



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<https://www.npr.org/2019/08/01/747170673/remembering-the-tanker-war-of-the-1980s>

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2019/06/14/last-time-us-witnessed-tanker-war-persian-gulf-it-ended-tragedy/>

- Timeline of Current Aggression:
<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-iran-britain-timeline/timeline-irans-recent-clashes-with-the-west-over-gulf-shipping-nuclear-plans-idUSKCN1UG0EU>
- Importance of Current Gulf Country Tensions:
https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle-east/as-tensions-boil-in-the-persian-gulf-iraq-seeks-to-rein-in-iran-aligned-militias/2019/09/26/e363075a-d94c-11e9-adff-79254db7f766_story.html