



The Strait of Hormuz: Weaponised Interdependence and the Global Oil Crisis 2026

The Strait of Hormuz is a waterway between Iran and Oman that connects major oil and gas producers in the Middle East with global markets. A significant share of the world's energy trade passes through this passage every day, making it one of the most strategically important shipping routes. Its importance extends beyond the region because oil is priced on a global market, meaning that any disruption in supply from this chokepoint can quickly affect prices and availability worldwide. This makes the Strait of Hormuz a critical point where energy security and global economic stability are closely linked.

Alternative Routes to the Strait

To reduce dependence on this chokepoint, some countries have developed infrastructure that allows them to bypass it. For example:

- Saudi Arabia operates a pipeline that carries oil from its eastern fields to ports on the Red Sea.
- The UAE uses a pipeline that transports crude oil to the port of Fujairah, outside the Strait of Hormuz.

Limits of These Alternatives

Even with such pipelines, the Strait of Hormuz cannot be fully replaced. Their capacity is limited compared to the volume of oil shipped through the strait, and not all exporting countries have similar infrastructure. This means global energy flows would still be significantly disrupted if the strait were blocked.

Why Building Alternatives Is Difficult

Developing alternative routes involves high financial costs, complex geography, and long construction timelines. These constraints make it

difficult for countries to significantly reduce dependence on the strait in the short term.

Geopolitics and Weaponised Interdependence

The situation also reflects a broader idea often described as **“weaponised interdependence.”** This refers to how countries can use their control over key networks such as shipping routes or energy corridors—as leverage in geopolitical disputes. The Strait of Hormuz is an example of such a sensitive node.

While the strait remains central to global energy flows, long-term stability depends on reducing the risks that come with such interdependence by, for example- improving resilience in supply routes, encouraging diplomatic engagement, and strengthening international cooperation to prevent escalation in critical maritime regions.

Questions

1. What practical steps can countries take to reduce over-dependence on a single chokepoint like the Strait of Hormuz, considering that alternative routes will still not remove dependence on it?
2. How can international cooperation be strengthened to ensure uninterrupted global energy flows through such critical maritime routes?
3. Can diversification of energy routes realistically reduce geopolitical tensions, or will risks remain even with alternatives in place?
4. What role should global institutions play in preventing or managing disruptions in strategic sea lanes like the Strait of Hormuz?
5. How can countries balance their strategic interests with the need for shared global economic stability?

Sources

1. Holly Ellyatt, 'Oil exporters scramble for routes beyond Hormuz — but there are no easy options' CNBC. 23 April 2026.<https://www.cnbc.com/2026/04/23/strait-hormuz-closure-alternative-routes-middle-east-oil-gas-pipelines.html>
2. Turner Ruggi. (2023). Counterstrategies to Economic Warfare: A Strategic Framework in a World of Weaponised Interdependence. *The RUSI Journal*, 168(7), 60-69. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03071847.2024.2307171>