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Iran Threatens to Close Strait of Hormuz

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Iran has said that it could close the **strategic Strait of Hormuz shipping route** if it faces more “hostility,” from the United States.

- Recently, US tightened sanctions on Iran and lifted off Significant Reduction Exceptions (SREs) waivers.
- However, **Iran has said that it will continue to sell its oil and use the Strait of Hormuz.** But if Iran is prevented from doing that it will close the strait.

Hormuz Strait



- Strait of Hormuz, also called Strait of Ormuz, **channel linking the Persian Gulf (west) with the Gulf of Oman and the Arabian Sea (southeast).**
- The strait is **35 to 60 miles (55 to 95 km)** wide and **separates Iran (north) from the Arabian Peninsula (south).**
- It contains the islands of **Qeshm (Qishm), Hormuz, and Hengām (Henjām).** It is of **great strategic and economic importance.**

Importance of Hormuz Strait

- **Strategic Location**
 - Strait of Hormuz **connects the Indian Ocean with the Arabian/Persian Gulf.**
 - Strait of Hormuz separates the **modern Iranian state from the countries of Oman and the United Arab Emirates.**
 - The Strait of Hormuz is a **strategic artery linking the Middle East to the Asia Pacific, Europe, North America.**
- **Commercial Shipping**
 - In the all recorded history, the seaway has **connected Arab and Persian civilizations with the Indian subcontinent, Pacific Asia and the Americas.** Porcelain from China and spices from the Indochina peninsula often passed through the strait on their way to Central Asia and Europe.
 - **All shipping traffic from energy-rich Gulf countries converges in the strait,** including crude oil and liquefied natural gas exports from Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates.
 - **Thirty percent of the world's crude oil trade passes through Strait of Hormuz.** It is also the route for **nearly all the liquefied natural gas (LNG) from lead exporter Qatar.**

Impact of Closure

- Closure of Strait of Hormuz or even threatening can lead to a **rise in crude oil price due to supply concerns and unsettled stock markets.**
- It may also **disrupt trade between the middle east and the rest of the world** as commercial ships will not risk being confronted by the Iranian Navy.
- The closure may also have serious **geopolitical repercussions as United States Navy's Central Command is located in the Persian Gulf.** Any confrontation between the **US and Iran may escalate and will have larger security implication in the whole region.**