

US-Iran War: The Destruction of Sustainable Development, A Critical Study of Global Peace Initiatives by India in Geopolitical Conflicts

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Summary

The international system of the third decade of the twenty-first century has not succeeded in addressing a series of interconnected challenges. Geopolitical competition, energy security, economic inequality, Climate change, food insecurity, Supply-chain crisis, and military conflict. The ongoing military conflict that started in 1947 offers an interesting case study to analyze the interconnected nature of these global challenges. The conflict was not just a military conflict between two states, regional security of West Asia, Global energy markets, maritime trade, and fertilizer supply, Food prices, It became a crisis with wide-ranging impacts on financial stability and the Sustainable Development Goals.

The conflict severely disrupted shipping in the Strait of Hormuz. United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)– UNCTAD The International Monetary Fund reported that nearly 25% of worldwide seaborne oil trade and a considerable quantity of LNG and fertilizer trade is moved via the Hormuz Strait, and disruption of that has led to increased prices of energy, transportation, insurance, and food United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) read the August 2026 report that the conflict had disrupted global trade and development finance severely, placing much more stress on developing countries.

Why It Matters for India is highly dependent on energy security, west Asia for Indian diaspora, maritime trade, irrigation, Fertilizer availability across the global South, India is a mediator in the conflict, Diplomatic intervention, Protection of Indian citizens, Freedom of maritime navigation and the freedom of international waters, 6 2026 India called for the de-escalation of conflict and a focus on dialogue and diplomacy. 1960s-1970s Engagement in regional institutions such as BRICS and SCO. Maintained the importance of peace and stability through the UN and bilateral diplomacy.

The paper investigates the interconnectedness of US and Iran with sustainable development. The paper also critically studies India's peace diplomacy. The paper finds that peace in contemporary geo-political conflicts is not just the ending of war; it is a state in which not only death and destruction are absent, but where energy, Food, Business, finance, Environment, Ensuring human security and continuity of development.

key term: US-Iran conflict, sustainable development, SDGs, India, West Asia, Strait of Hormuz, energy security, Geopolitics, Global South, Peace Diplomacy, Multilateralism.

1. Preface

After the end of the Cold War, it was expected that economic interdependence and globalization would reduce the likelihood of international conflict.²¹ This concept led to many wars in the 19th century., regional conflicts, sanctions, Russia faces challenges due to trade wars and strategic competition., Amid various conflicts in West Asia and US-China strategic competition²⁰²⁶ The war between the US and Iran in 2005 again exposed the weaknesses of the global system.

²⁸February²⁰²⁶ Following military action by the United States and Israel against Iran in 1978, the conflict became increasingly regional in nature.²⁰²⁶ According to the assessment of, ^{February}²⁰²⁶ Following the attacks that began in 1995, Iran launched retaliatory attacks across the Middle East and increased pressure on the Strait of Hormuz. A ceasefire was reached in April and a deal in June., But it could not remain in force permanently and expired by August. September²⁰²⁶ The conflict again continued at both military and diplomatic levels.

One of the most significant features of this conflict was that its impact reached countries thousands of kilometers away from the battlefield. The Strait of Hormuz disrupted the movement of energy and other essential goods, including oil and gas., gas, Fertilizer and transportation costs increased. UN DESA It has been described as a major supply-shock to the global economy.

Thus, it is not sufficient to study the US-Iran war solely in the context of international politics or military strategy., *human security, energy security, Food Security, Environmental Sustainability and Global Governance* It is necessary to look at it in the broader framework.

2. background of the study

Relations between the US and Iran have long been tense.¹⁹⁷⁹ Iranian Revolution of 1915, American hostage crisis, sanctions, Disputes over nuclear programmes and regional power balance have affected relations between the two countries.

Iran's nuclear program has long been a source of international concern. The United States views Iran's nuclear and missile capabilities as a challenge to its own and regional security., While Iran links its nuclear program to sovereign rights and national security.²⁰²⁶ nuclear program even in the struggle for, missile capability, Regional security and sea routes remained major contentious issues.

It is also not enough to understand this conflict solely as a bilateral dispute between the US and Iran. The Gulf countries are also involved in this, Israel, Yemen, Iraq, Lebanon, Syria and wider global powers were directly or indirectly affected. The conflict, particularly through the Strait of Hormuz, became linked to the global energy system.

3. 2026 Key events of the US-Iran conflict

The events of conflict can be broadly understood in the following stages:—

3.1 ²⁸February²⁰²⁶: The beginning of the military conflict

²⁸February²⁰²⁶ The war began on 25 November 1945, following a massive military offensive against Iran by the United States and Israel. Iran subsequently retaliated against various US and regional targets. The US Congressional Research Service considered this conflict to be a development that could escalate into a wider regional war.

3.2april2026: ceasefire

A ceasefire was reached between the US and Iran in April. However, tensions did not completely subside, and differences between the two sides persisted.

3.3june2026: Attempt at compromise

june2026In 1996, efforts were made to end the conflict between the US and Iran and reach a comprehensive agreement. However, subsequent developments made this arrangement unsustainable.CRSThe June agreement failed after just a few weeks and formally ended in August.

3.4september2026:Re-conflict and diplomatic efforts

September 2026 The war was not over until 1995. Negotiations were held between the US and Iran through mediators at the United Nations General Assembly. 24 of September Reuters The report says that the two sides are negotiating a phased agreement whereby the Strait of Hormuz would be reopened and the US economic blockade lifted. It is evident that diplomacy and war coexisted.

4.The concept of sustainable development

Sustainable development is usually assumed as the development that actually satisfies needs of the current people but without required ability of the future generations to satisfy their needs. Sustainable development is comprised of three main domains:

1.Economic Sustainability

2.social sustainability

3.environmental sustainability

Justice and strong institutions the importance of justice and building strong institutions is a fundamental demand of sustainable development. There is global evidence of this through the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG-16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions). International conflicts forecast a decline in violence in some areas; however, civilian casualties due to conflict are still high and conflict remains a cause of large-scale displacement. The UN has reaffirmed that ending armed conflict is probably the highest and immediate priority. The consolidation of strong institutions and respecting international law is important for sustainable development.

Therefore, war and sustainable development are incompatible processes. War diverts resources available for development toward security and military expenditure.,While education,Health,Resources for needs like poverty alleviation and environmental protection are reduced.

5.The US-Iran War and the Decline of Sustainable Development

5.1 SDG-1:Impact on poverty alleviation

War increases energy and food prices, affecting the real income of low- and middle-income families.

due to increase in oil prices

- Transportation is expensive.
- The price of food items increases.
- Electricity and industrial costs increase.
- Pressure on the household budget increases.

- The financial burden of subsidies increases for governments.

UN DESA the August 2026 said that energy crises and financial pressures could undermine sustainable development investments in developing countries. This means that the heaviest burdens of war may fall on societies that are not even directly involved in the war.

6.SDG-2:Impact on food security and agriculture

US-Iran conflict's consequences for fertilizer A major collateral effect of the US-Iran conflict is also the Pacific's trade in fertilizer. The Strait of Hormuz is not only the main passage of oil and gas, but also hosts large flows of fertilizer and chemicals. UNCTAD analysis indicates that 1/3 of all the global flow of fertilizer and chemicals on the high seas is present on that route. UNCTAD estimated that 16 million tonnes in 2026 of all marine fertilizer trade would be linked to the route.

The cost of agriculture increases as fertilizers become more expensive. This has the following effects:—

war→Oil/gas expensive→Transportation and fertilizers are expensive.→Agricultural costs increased→Food prices rose→The risk of food insecurity increased. Thus, the energy crisis can gradually turn into a food crisis.

7.SDG-7:Cheap and clean energy

Affordable access to all is an important goal of sustainable development. To ensure reliable and clean energy. The US-Iran war posed a double challenge to this goal.

The first challenge was- Availability and price of energy.

The second challenge was- The speed of energy transition.

According to the IEA, the current conflict has caused the most notable disruptions in the flow of oil in the Strait of Hormuz and is thus considered the largest disruption to the oil market in history. The international agency has provided evidence to substantiate this claim, stating that the current disturbance is considered the most significant oil supply disruption recorded yet. In addition to a similar impact on the gas market, the international agency has estimated that 20 percent of the world's liquefied natural gas supply was also affected, which has led to significant price fluctuations in Asian and European markets. This might increase reliance on old-fashioned fossil fuels, thereby straining the transition and climate change efforts.

8.SDG-8:Economic growth and employment

The economic impact of the war is visible in several stages.

First stage -Oil and gas prices rise.

Second stage -Production costs increase.

third step-Inflation increases.

Fourth stage- Central banks can keep interest rates high.

Fifth step-There may be pressure on investment and employment.

UN DESA August of 2026 According to the assessment 2026 Global growth forecasts in 2.5 Growth slowed to 1.5 percent and inflation was projected to rise in developing economies. UNCTAD also warned that conflict could harm business. Pressure on finance and supply chains has increased.

9. SDG-9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure

The modern industrial economy is dependent on global supply chains. Disruption of a major sea route—

- The supply of raw materials is disrupted.
- The ships have to change their route.
- Insurance costs increase.
- Pressure on ports increases.
- The cost of industrial production increases.
- Timely delivery is affected.

According to UNCTAD studies, the Hormuz crisis has impacted maritime transport and international supply chains. The evidence shows that future sustainable development will probably be based not solely on countries' internal production capacity but on flexible and diversified international supply chains.

10. SDG-13: Climate change

The relationship between war and climate change is both direct and indirect. In the war—

- Energy infrastructure may be damaged.
- Oil and gas production is affected.
- Fuel consumption may increase.
- Military activities increase emissions.
- Rebuilding takes a huge amount of resources.

Additionally, when oil and gas prices rise, some countries may then prioritize greater fossil fuel production and use for immediate energy security. On the other end, renewable energy to energy-strapped countries. It can also spur a rapid move towards energy efficiency and diversified energy sources. So the climate impact of war is not one-sided. But in the short term, the pressure of energy security could undermine climate goals.

11. SDG-16: Calmness, Justice and strong institutions

The US-Iran conflict has the most direct impact on sustainable development. SDG-16 It is visible on. During the conflict—

- The safety of citizens was affected.
- The risk of displacement increased.
- Maritime security was affected.
- The need for mediation by international institutions increased.
- Military expenditure increased.
- Pressure on multilateral institutions increased.

2026 of UN SDG According to the report, conflict-related civilian deaths remain a serious concern globally and efforts to end conflict are essential. SDG-16 is necessary for achieving the .

12.The Strait of Hormuz: A Confluence of War and the Global Economy

Thus, the Strait of Hormuz is vital to understand the whole crisis. It is a strategic waterway that connects the Persian Gulf, the Gulf of Oman, and the Arabian Sea. Analysis indicates that a significant proportion of the world's gas and oil trade must have passed through this channel. As of 2023, a report by the United Nations estimated that around 100 million barrels of world crude oil production was given the previous region – through February–June 2026, daily ship traffic level dropped from 100-130 ships to less than 20 ships.

Its effect can be seen in the following series—

military conflict→Disruption of maritime traffic→energy supply shortage→Increase in oil/gas prices→Increase in transportation costs→Food and industrial prices rise→inflation→Financial pressure on developing countries. Hormuz therefore became not just a geographical strait but a strategic point of global sustainable development.

13.The importance of the US-Iran conflict for India

India's historical connection with West Asia,Economic,There is energy and human connection.

The major concerns for India are—

- 1.energy security
- 2.Indian diaspora in the Gulf region
- 3.maritime trade
- 4.Crude oil and gas prices
- 5.fertilizer supply
- 6.Trade with West Asia
- 7.Chabahar Port and connectivity to Central Asia
- 8.India's role in the global South
- 9.Maritime Security
- 10.Regional Stability

march2026In 2015, the Indian government clarified that approximately 10 million Indian citizens live and work in the Gulf region and their safety is India's primary concern. India called for an end to the conflict through dialogue and diplomacy and condemned attacks on commercial vessels.

14. India's Diplomatic Policy: Exercise of Strategic Autonomy

An important element of India's foreign policy*Strategic Autonomy*Or have strategic autonomy.India had to strike a complex balance in the US-Iran conflict.On one hand, America is an important strategic and economic partner of India.Iran, on the other hand, is a threat to India.—

- Regional connectivity,
- energy,
- Chabahar,
- Access to Central Asia,
- and historical civilizational ties

It is important because of.That is why India emphasized dialogue and diplomacy instead of supporting the military stance of any one side.This policy is not only a moral appeal but is also linked to the national interests of India.

15.India's Global Peace Initiative

15.1 Dialogue and diplomacy

India has always been in favor of resolving of disputes by means of dialogue and diplomacy. In the early days of the conflict, India called for restraint and de-escalation on all sides and maintained dialogue with Iran. India stressed the importance of Dialogue and Diplomacy as well as long-term peace and stability in the region during a meeting on 15 June between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President of Iran Masoud Pezeshkian.

16.India's role in the United Nations

India has advocated for a political solution to the West Asia crisis in the UN Security Council.,Underlined the importance of mediation and dialogue.10june2026In a UN Security Council debate on 2015, India raised the issue of human loss due to war.,displacement,Drawing attention to the impact on sea routes and global trade.

India's perspectivebroadlybased on three principles—

- 1.Dialogue
- 2.International law
- 3.Security of citizens and maritime trade

17. BRICSIndia's role through

2026in IndiaBRICSwas chairing the .This forum provided India with an additional diplomatic platform for dialogue among countries of the Global South.May2026InBRICSMinisterial meetings revealed differences among member states on the Iran conflict, and a presidential statement was issued instead of a unanimous joint statement.ReutersAccording to him, the main difference among these differences was the different national perspectives on the West Asian crisis.This incident shows both the potential and limitations of India's diplomacy.on one sideBRICSProvides a platform for dialogue.On the other hand, the national interests of member states may be so different that it becomes difficult to formulate a collective security policy.

18.India-Iran High Level Dialogue

31august2026Meeting of Prime Minister of India and President of Iran Masoud Pezeshkian onSCOThe meeting took place during the summit. The two leaders discussed the situation in West Asia, and India reiterated its policy of seeking solutions through dialogue and diplomacy. India has also supported maritime commerce.,Freedom of navigation and safety of civilian and commercial vessels were also emphasized.11september2026The two leaders met in New Delhi onBRICSThey met again during the summit. India reiterated the need for long-term peace and regional stability and freedom of navigation and commerce.This continuous dialogue exemplifies India's strategy of maintaining dialogue with all concerned parties without severing ties with any one party.

19.India's Human Security Policy

An important aspect of foreign policy during wartime is the protection of civilians.India has deployed embassies and consulates to assist Indian nationals living in West Asia.Embassies remained active. India assisted civilians from conflict-affected areas.,Information,Prioritized advisory and evacuation efforts.march2026In 2015, the Government of India announced the Energy,Food,fertilizer,petroleum,Electricity, MSME,export,shipping,Reviewed potential impacts across a range of sectors, including trade and finance.This shows that India viewed the conflict not just as a foreign policy problem but as a problem of national economic and human security.

20. India's energy security and strategic response

India is one of the world's largest energy consumers and has a substantial dependence on crude oil imports. Therefore, the war in West Asia will affect India in the following ways: could—

- Rising oil import bill
- Pressure on the price of petroleum products
- Impact on the current account
- Inflation increase
- Increase in transportation costs
- Increase in fertilizer costs
- fiscal pressure

This is why India has adopted alternative energy sources., Focused on import diversification and availability of essential commodities. In the meeting, the Government of India discussed alternative fertilizer sources and chemicals, Discussed diversification of import sources for sectors such as pharmaceuticals and petrochemicals.

21. India's policy from the perspective of sustainable development

Three key policy lessons emerge from the US-Iran war for India.

First: Energy Diversification India needs to reduce its excessive dependence on limited geographical sources of oil and gas.

Second: renewable energy solar, wind, Investments in green hydrogen and energy efficiency can strengthen energy security.

Third: Strategic Reserves Strategic reserves of crude oil and buffer stocks of essential commodities can provide protection against external shocks.

22. A critical assessment of India's peace initiatives

India's role should not be judged solely on its appeal for dialogue. The real question is whether India has sufficient diplomatic tools to influence the crisis.

positive side

22.1 multi-alignment diplomacy-India America, Iran, Russia, Can communicate simultaneously with the Gulf countries and the global South.

22.2 BRICS And SCO membership of-India has several platforms for multilateral dialogue.

22.3 Historical relations with Iran-India has some level of political credibility because of India-Iran relations.

22.4 Strategic relations with the US-Strong ties with the US enable India to understand the contours of Western policy-making.

22.5 Representation of the Global South-India is addressing the concerns of developing countries.—energy, Food, Development Finance and Global Governance Reform—Can connect to.

23.Limitations of India's Peace Policy-However, India's diplomatic role is important.,Still, it has some limitations.

23.1India is not a warring party-India cannot directly enforce the decision between the US and Iran.

23.2National interest and arbitration-Energy to India,Business,National interests such as migrant security and relations with the US have to be taken into account.

23.3Limited arbitrage capacity-India's appeal could be powerful,But any agreement requires the political will of the US and Iran.

23.4 BRICSdifferences in-May2026ofBRICSThe meeting showed that the group's members do not share a common view on the West Asia crisis.soBRICSIt would not be appropriate to consider it as an immediate peace-building mechanism.

24.The relationship between global peace and sustainable development

A broader theory emerges from the US-Iran conflict—

"Both sustainable development without peace and long-term peace without sustainable development are incomplete."

poverty,Unemployment,Energy insecurity and food crises can exacerbate social instability.On the other hand, war deepens these problems.Therefore, peace and development should not be seen as separate policy areas but as a combined framework.

25.The impact of conflict on development finance

Developing countries may face three types of financial pressures due to war.—

- 1.increase in import bill
- 2.Increase in debt servicing costs
- 3.Lack of resources for development projects

UN DESAthe August2026said the conflict had exacerbated pre-existing debt,This has further exacerbated problems such as lack of development finance and business disruption.2030 AgendaThere is a risk of reversing the progress made.Therefore, the economic impact of war can only be consideredGDPIt is not enough to measure by reduction in.

26.Uneven impact on developing countries

The economic burden of war is not evenly distributed.Oil importing countries may suffer losses due to expensive oil.Higher prices can, in some cases, provide additional revenue to oil-exporting countries.,But if the export route is disrupted, they also suffer losses.Small island developing states may face particular pressure from expensive fuel and transportation costs.High-debt countries have limited fiscal capacity to deal with crises.UN DESAAndUNCTADBoth have particularly highlighted this inequality.

27.Food and Fertilizer Security: In the Indian Context

Fertilizer supply is very important for a huge agricultural country like India.If natural gas,fertilizer orSea transport is expensive—

- The cost of urea may increase.

- The price of other fertilizers may increase.
- The subsidy burden of the government may increase.
- The production cost of farmers may be affected.
- Food inflation may increase.

This is why India marched 2026 Alternative fertilizer sources were considered in 2010. This incident shows how directly linked geopolitical conflict is to agricultural policy.

28. Maritime Security and India

India is a maritime trade-dependent economy. Oil comes from West Asia., gas, Chemicals and other products are linked by sea routes. The Hormuz crisis is therefore not just a foreign policy issue for India but also *Maritime Security Issue*. The key elements of India's policy should be—

- Merchant Shipping security of
- Safety of Indian seafarers
- Marine Insurance Risk Mitigation
- Alternative trade routes
- Increasing port capacity
- Maritime surveillance
- Compliance with international maritime law

India has 2026 He consistently stressed the need to avoid harming commercial ships and sailors and to maintain freedom of navigation and commerce.

29. Conflict and environmental security

The environmental damage of war is often less visible than the human toll, But its long-term effects can be serious.

The potential impacts are—

- Fires at oil facilities
- air pollution
- water pollution
- Damage to marine ecology
- industrial chemical spills
- Destruction of energy infrastructure
- Carbon emissions from rebuilding

Local and regional environmental risks may increase if oil and gas installations face military attacks. Therefore, in future peace agreements *Environmental Security* should also be included.

30. India's potential role in peace-building

India can strengthen its role in the following areas—

30.1 Track-I diplomacy At the government level, the United States, Regular dialogue with Iran and Gulf countries.

30.2 Track-II diplomacy universities, think tank, Dialogue through experts and former diplomats.

30.3humanitarian aid-Humanitarian aid for conflict-affected civilians.

30.4Maritime Security-Multilateral cooperation in the security of sea lanes.

30.5Energy cooperation-Long-term arrangements to make energy supplies less affected by political conflict.

30.6Voices of the Global South-UN, BRICS, SCOAndG20Such as giving priority to the economic interests of developing countries on forums.

31.Policy suggestions for India

31.1Diversification of energy sources-India needs to reduce its excessive dependence on West Asia and Africa.,America,Russia,Energy supplies should be diversified from Latin America and other sources.

31.2Renewable energy boom-Energy storage with solar and wind power,Investment in green hydrogen and smart grids should be increased.

31.3strategic petroleum reserves-Adequate strategic reserves are essential for long-term energy crises.

31.4Fertilizer Security-Fertilizer production and import sources should be diversified.

31.5Diversification of sea corridors-India should invest in alternative sea and land trade corridors.

31.6Chabahar and international connectivity-Connectivity projects with Iran can be developed in a long-term economic and strategic context,While regional political risks will need to be taken into account.

31.7Multilateral peace initiatives-India should play an active role in efforts to strengthen UN mediation and regional dialogue mechanisms.

31.8global peace andSDGsconnecting to-India should advance the argument that peace,Development,Energy and climate policies should be viewed as integrated rather than separate.

32.Key findings of the research-

The consequences of the US-Iran war have been far beyond the scope of the USA and Iran relationship; the war had repercussions on the global economy. The importance of the Strait of Hormuz in the international economy implies the repercussions of the disappearance of a sea lane on the world economy and food system. There are indications that the war touched all the dimensions of sustainable development.Developing countries bore the brunt of the crisis relatively more because they have limited financial and institutional capacity.India has preferred dialogue rather than taking a military side in the conflict.,Emphasized diplomacy and restraint.India's strategic autonomy gave it the ability to maintain dialogue with both the US and Iran.The limitations of India's diplomatic role are also clear as the final solution depends on the political will of the conflicting parties.BRICSAndSCOForums are useful for dialogue like,But the divergent national interests of member states may limit a collective response.For India, energy and maritime security are no longer just economic issues but issues of national security and sustainable development.Economic reconstruction with the end of military conflict for long-term peace,energy security,Food Security,Environmental protection and restoration of development finance are essential.

33. Conclusion

US-Iran War 2026 The energy market made it clear that in the current world order, war in one region can affect development globally. Maritime trade, Food Security, Financial systems and supply chains are so interconnected that a regional military conflict can impact the pace of global sustainable development.

UN DESA According to the assessment of 2026 The Middle East conflict further exacerbates the development finance vulnerabilities of developing countries and 2030 Agenda risks reversing progress. India's role is crucial in this context. India has prioritized dialogue and diplomacy. Protection of citizens, August and September 2026 The continuation of India-Iran high-level dialogue in 2015 is also indicative of this policy.

Yet, it would be unfair to exaggerate India's peace initiatives as a mediating or decisive force for conflict resolution. India's true role is that of a dialogue facilitator. *Active participant in multilateral forums, Voice and strategically autonomous power of the global South* appears more clearly as September 2026 The conflict situation has not yet fully stabilized. During the UN General Assembly, reports emerged of talks between the US and Iran through mediators and a possible phased agreement on reopening the Strait of Hormuz. Therefore, it is more appropriate to understand the current situation as a transitional stage between conflict and diplomacy rather than a final peace.

Ultimately, the most important conclusion of this study is that sustainable development and global peace are complementary. If war destroys energy and food security, Weakens development finance and sets back climate goals, So peace cannot be understood simply as a ceasefire. Real peace is a situation in which civilians are safe, open trade routes, Stabilize energy and food supplies, Finance should be available for development and disputes between countries should be resolved through dialogue and international law. For India, this is the area where its strategic autonomy, The role of multilateral diplomacy and leadership from the global South may become even more important in the future.

34. Context list

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