



GEOPOLITICAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE US-IRAN-ISRAEL CONFLICT: THE IMPACT ON THE SECURITY, ECONOMY, AND FOREIGN POLICY OF PAKISTAN

Humna zafar,

M.Phil Scholar, Department of International Relation , University of Okara. Email:

hamnazafar13@gmail.com

Aishem javed,

M.Phil Scholar, Department of International Relation , University of Okara. Email:

aishamjaved17@gmail.com

Dr. Fakhara Shahid,

Assistant Professor, Department of International Relations, University of Okara. Email:

fakhara.shahid@uo.edu.pk

Abstract

This descriptive work examines how the situation between the United States, Israel, and Iran is growing increasingly tense as a nexus of geopolitical consequences not just in the Middle East, but also because of the shutdown of the Strait of Hormuz. This paper will discuss the geopolitical repercussions of this war and how it has affected Pakistan across multiple dimensions, including security, economic stability, and foreign policy orientation. Based on realism, constructivism, and international political economy theoretical models. The study examines the influence of the country's strategic environment in the region, the power struggles, and the ideological disagreements in Pakistan. The analysis concludes that Pakistan is vulnerable to high security threats, such as attacks from militants crossing its border with Iran, rising tensions between religious groups, and sudden arrivals of refugees from neighboring areas. The current conflict raises the risk of Pakistan economically because it relies on imports to supply its energy needs, and this boosts the price, challenges in handling international payments, as well as increased government expenditure because of global oil market shocks. The foreign policy of Pakistan is in a dilemma because it has to balance its relationship with the United States, Iran and powerful nations in the Middle East that limit its autonomy in dealing with other nations.

Besides, the paper also indicates that in spite of Pakistan having the capacity to mediate and contribute to the de-escalation process, structural power imbalance and contradictory interests of the major actors limit its ability to achieve a holistic solution. This study brings together the security, economic, and diplomatic aspects to develop the discussion on spillover of cross-border conflicts, middle-power diplomacy, and interdependence in geopolitics. The analysis is also applicable to policy implications to improve resiliency and strategic autonomy of Pakistan in a growing, volatile global environment.

Keywords: US-Israel-Iran conflict, geopolitics, Pakistan Security, foreign policy, Energy Security, economic stability, Middle East Politics, Strategic hedging, Conflict spillover, international relations.

Introduction

The Middle East has never been at peace due to its conflicts. Iran has been under sanctions by the United States of America since November 1979, because of its nuclear weapon. The Iranian-Israeli and United States relations, however, had been tensing up before 2026 due to the Iranian nuclear ambitions, involvement in the regional proxy wars, and the long-standing Israeli security concerns. The tensions reached the critical point following the attack on the Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei of Iran who passed away on 28 February 2026. This incident brought about a lot of internal turmoil in Iran, which further fueled the power struggle in the political and military institutions in Iran and destabilized the region even more. On 28 February 2026, the United States and Israel coordinated airstrikes of the Iranian nuclear and military infrastructure to restrain its strategic and nuclear potential. In reaction, Iran started launching missiles and drone attacks on Israeli soil and US military installations in the Middle



East, and the situation turned into an all-out regional war. With the death of Khamenei, Iran has also assumed a more aggressive and less restrained military stance, escalating antagonisms during March 2026, with Israeli cities being targeted by missiles on 24 March 2026. This continuous upsurge is a manifestation of a larger geopolitical tussle over nuclear ambitions, regional power competition, and changing leadership dynamics in Iran.

Among the most significant consequences of the war has been Iran's blocking of the Strait of Hormuz, one of the most important maritime canals linking the Persian Gulf to the Arabian Sea. The amount of the world's oil supply through this route is about 20 percent; 80 percent of Food flows through this route; and 35 percent of global fertilizer flows through this route. The closure of the Strait of Hormuz had disrupted global energy and food security and, as such, was critical to global energy security, including that of countries such as Pakistan and the United States. War is not merely the military opposition but rather a global economic system. The United States could have an edge in the military front, as the Center of Strategic and International Studies remarked, Iran appears to be playing a bigger game to disrupt the global economy instead of the battlefield itself (CSIS, March 2026). This is an economic aspect of the conflict with far-reaching consequences worldwide. The retaliatory efforts of Iran against infrastructure and shipping routes in the Gulf have increased the risks to commercial trade in both the Arabian Sea and the Mediterranean, disrupting global supply chains and driving energy prices and global inflation to record highs. S&P Global believes that such an increase will lead to slower global economic growth, higher inflation, higher unemployment, and greater financial uncertainty for the population and the business sector (S&P Global, March 11, 2026). Besides the economic impacts, the war has intensified militarization in the Middle East, the risk of proxy wars, and it has upset traditional alliances, making it a local conflict with global strategic consequences. Within the context of global change, this conflict can be seen as a transition not only to economic globalization but also to a so-called geopolitical era, where great-power competition plays out across the political, economic, and military arenas (CEIBS, March 2026). In this dynamic international system, Pakistan has a very sensitive and strategically important location. Pakistan is the most vulnerable to the spillover of the conflict because of its geographical position (near Iran) and its close economic, political, and religious relations with the Middle East.

On the one hand, Pakistan is highly vulnerable to price shocks and inflationary pressures because it is greatly dependent on imported energy and, therefore, is vulnerable to oil price shocks and price inflation. Conversely, it has to negotiate tricky foreign policy issues involving its relationships with Iran, the United States, and other regional players without directly engaging itself in the conflict. Besides, the conflict is a major security risk to Pakistan, especially in the border states like Balochistan, where the lack of stability can be compounded by tensions at the border and proxy wars. There are also other internal security threats that are presented by the possibility of sectarian polarization. In the meantime, Pakistan being strategically positioned, provides a chance to have a positive contribution to the diplomacy. The Pakistan government, as represented by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs will be prepared to facilitate dialogue between the United States and Iran as part of its policy of neutrality and dedication to de-escalation. Pakistan has condemned the use of violence on both fronts and has volunteered to mediate, suggesting to host negotiations and aid in the diplomatic communication (Al Jazeera, March 24, 2026).

The Iran-US-Israel conflict has become crucial in the international system; however, the available literature has largely centred on great power politics, regional security, or global economic effects. Little academic attention has been paid to middle powers like Pakistan,



especially to how these states cope with the nexus of economic vulnerability, security threats, and foreign policy constraints amid complex geopolitical crises. In addition, integrated studies that consider the security, economic, and foreign policy aspects of the conflict simultaneously within a single analytical framework are still lacking. This paper will seek to fill this gap by providing a detailed discussion of the implications of the Iran-US-Israel conflict for Pakistan.

Problem Statement

The current dispute between the United States and Israel has escalated into a complex geopolitical crisis where battle is fought on the military front, economic front, and strategic front over the main energy routes like the Strait of Hormuz. Recent naval blockades and disruptions to maritime trade have intensified global uncertainty and substantially elevated oil prices, further underscoring the heightened risk of regional conflict.

The geostrategic position, economic vulnerability, and the fragile foreign policy of balancing between conflicting global and regional powers create a unique and complex situation in Pakistan. Pakistan is among the most affected nations; the energy shock has increased imports, widening the current account deficit, aggravating inflation, and disrupting microeconomic indicators. At the same time, it is raising a security issue for Pakistan. The fact that it shares borders with Iran also means that it is exposed to a spill over, the influx of refugees, and cross-border militancy, as well as sectarian polarization. On the foreign policy level, Pakistan is in a strategic dilemma. It has to strike a balance between the relationship with the United States of America and maintaining the relationship with Iran, and conforming to the sentiments of the border Muslim World. Additionally, the geopolitical fringes of a backlash, energy market fragmentation, alliances, and shifts pose long-term threats to Pakistan's economic sustainability and strategic independence. Thus, the key issue is how Pakistan can successfully navigate the geopolitical repercussions of the US-Israel-Iran War in a way that preserves its national security, balances its already troubled economy, and maintains a balanced, practical foreign policy amid mounting regional and global pressure.

Research Questions

1. How does the geopolitical fallout of the Iran-US-Israel conflict affect Pakistan's national security, economic stability, and foreign policy?
2. How can border stability, internal security, and regional spillover effects of the Iran-US and Israel conflict be deemed to have potential security implications on Pakistan?
3. What is the effect of the conflict on the economic stability of Pakistan, particularly in energy security, inflation, and vulnerability to trade?
4. What is the foreign policy of Pakistan that balances among Iran, the United States, and Israel in this conflict?
5. How do the Iran-US-Israel conflict opportunities and challenges impact the regional and global strategic positions of Pakistan?
6. Will Pakistan be effective in mediating between Iran and the United States?

Research Objectives

- To examine the whole multidimensional implications of the Iran-US-Israel conflict on the security of Pakistan, its economy, and foreign policy.
- To analyze the security implications of the Iran-US and Israel conflicts for Pakistan, the point of convergence is the stability of borders, internal security processes, and the spillover effects on the region.
- To assess the effects of the war on the economy of Pakistan, especially on energy security, inflation, and trade vulnerability.



- To examine the reaction of foreign policy and diplomatic placements of Pakistan in Iran, the United States, and Israel regarding the current conflict.
- To determine whether Pakistan is engaging in a balancing strategy, neutrality strategy, or alignment in reaction to the Iran-US-Israel tensions.
- To determine the major challenges and any strategic opportunities that the conflict creates for Pakistan, both regionally and globally.

Significance of the Study

This research has both academic and policy implications because it provides a thorough assessment of the geopolitical consequences of the US-Israel-Iran war, its multidimensional conflict, and its multidimensional impact on Pakistan. This research will be relevant because it will offer an in-depth look at the impacts of the Iran-US-Israel conflict on Pakistan's security, economic, and foreign policies, a field that has not been well covered in the literature. The research will add value to the existing body of scholarship on International Relations by not only examining middle powers strategically but also providing comprehensive insight into related issues. It is especially applicable to the policymakers in Pakistan as it assists them in devising sound policies in dealing with Iran, the United States, and Israel, along with handling the economic weakness and security threats. Also, the study has broader regional significance, as it elucidates the role of external conflicts in the stability of South Asia and the Middle East and provides practical implications for reducing risks and improving Pakistan's strategic position in the changing geopolitical environment.

Literature Review

The foreign policy implications of the US-Israel-Iran war have been of great interest in International Relations, Security Studies, and political economy.

Geopolitical importance of Iran

Rasool, Wakil, Liaqat, and Nawaz (2026) highlight the strategic worth of Iran, due to its geographic location, in integrating South Asia, Africa, and Europe by the Persian Gulf and Central Asia. In their opinion, Iranian foreign policy is a combination of Iranian strategic doctrine, which includes alliances, proxy warfare, and selective deterrence as a response to the collective military and intelligence capabilities of the US and Israel. The paper puts the aggressive posture of Iran in a structural context and the importance of regional power relations and the international system in influencing bilateral diplomatic relations. Roomi (2023) is an ideational approach to the conflict because he believes that Iran is not only a strategic but also an ideological adversary of Israel. This is an element of the constructivist aspect of IR arguments, in which ideology and identity influence foreign policy

Middle East power Foreign Policy behaviors

Niakoe and Amani (2024) note that US policy under the Biden administration, with the offshore balancing policy, has strengthened Israel's position in the region and aimed to reduce the US's active military activities in the Middle East. The paper indicates that US aid to Israel and regional affiliations heightened Iranian security anxieties, and that this deepening can be explained by the emergence of structural realism and balance-of-power theory. Theorists such as Stephen Walt emphasize that "states are likely to pursue balancing, bandwagoning, or hedging strategies to deal with external pressures". The US-Israel-Iran rivalry amongst the middle powers is likely to lead them to pursue pragmatic, flexible foreign policies to avoid displeasing the major powers. (Cook, 2021) Some scholars, such as Stephen M. Walt, argue that states are likely to engage in balancing, bandwagoning, or hedging strategies to respond to the push forces. Middle powers in the US-Iran-Israel conflict have better chances of pursuing



pragmatic, flexible foreign policies that are unlikely to interfere with the major trends. (Middle Powers and Soft-Power Rivalry: Egyptian-Israeli Competition in Africa, 2021, pp. 699-718) In addition, the concept of strategic Hedging is particularly relevant to Pakistan, given its relations with Western and regional powers. Studies show that diplomatic non-intervention, mediation, and multilateral intervention are among the basic strategic options adopted by these states to improve their international standing and mitigate risk. (W. & Karamat, 2025).

Another article by Afridi, Ahmad, Khan, and Khan (2025) said, "US involvement under the previous President Trump, specifically the escalation of Israel-Iran relations following the former's direct attack on June 13, 2025". They claim that strikes undermined the US position as a mediator, unveiling the constraints of diplomacy in situations where domestic and structural interests are in conflict. The two articles emphasize the US's concern about regional security and its impact on Pakistan's foreign policy.

Regional Security dynamics and Conflict escalation

There is considerable literature on the US-Israel rivalry stemming from the long-term strategic rivalry in the Middle East. (Aljabary, 2023) Among the scholars who analyze this conflict using the theory of structural realism are Kenneth Waltz and John J. Mearsheimer, who argue that realism results from power asymmetries, the security dilemma, and the politics of the balance of power. Iran, in this perspective, sought strategic deterrence, and the American containment policy was largely supported by Israel's security doctrine. It brings in a cycle of continuous escalation, this escalation leads towards chaos. (Khan & Zhaoying, 2020, pp. 242-256)

Positive scholars such as Alexander Wendat highlight the role of identity, ideology, and perceptions of threat in mediating the conflict. The conflict stems from ideological enmities arising from revolutionary Iranian and Western strategic discourses. Additionally, the proxy warfare literature highlights the "magnifying effect of non-state actors and local partners in intensifying the conflict and thereby increasing the probability of spillovers to other countries". (Irrera, 2021)

The Zahid Iqbal has two issues to consider: first, whether Pakistan would be indirectly affected by a security problem, and second, whether Pakistan would be effective in mediating between Pakistan and Iran. Ali (2025) dwells on local actors, including Pakistan and Iran, that may influence the US strategic interests. Ali claims that Pakistan possesses a foreign policy, which is rooted in neutrality and mediation that moderates its relations with Iran, the US, and Israel, and promotes stability in the area. Otubu, Efebeh, and Sanubi (2024) argue that the US-Iran conflict poses a security threat to the Middle East and that Pakistan's mediation between the two nations may help mitigate its consequences. These reviews demonstrate that the concept of middle-power theory can be applied to Pakistan's strategic behavior in a broader multipolar world.

Historical Context and Theoretical Perspectives

Ochim and Hassan (2023) and Roomi (2023) date relations between the US and Iran to 1953, attributing the present hostility to the 1953 coup, Cold War relations, and ideological rivalry. These works are founded on the political realism of Morgenthau, which focuses on national interest and power instead of on behavior and ideology of states. Likewise, Otubu et al. (2024) use the deterrence theory to understand why the US-Iran confrontation persists despite the sanctions, hi-tech innovations, and nuclear talks. Literary scholars have been debating the trade-off between domestic politics, structural constraints, and ideology as the factors that affect foreign policy. (Schirm, 2020, pp. 345-365) Realists emphasize material capabilities and interests in strategy, while constructivists emphasize identity, ideology, and regional perceptions. Among these themes is that the Iranian strategy is not merely reactive to



the US and Israel, but also multi-layered and active, and aligns with the discourses on the complexity of interdependence in contemporary IR. The comparative perspective has shown that, although there has been a lot of research on Iran-US-Israel relations, less has been done to find out the implications of these relations to Pakistan as a strategically positioned middle power, especially on how it is going to play the role of facilitating and balancing security, economic, and diplomatic interests. (Gul et al., 2025)

Economic Implications of middle Eastern instability

Another area of expertise that can be applied is the economic effects of the wars in the Middle East, especially the interference with international markets. Research in international political economy suggests that the war in the Persian Gulf, particularly in strategic areas, may significantly affect oil prices and global supply chains. The Strait of Hormuz is the passageway of nearly 20 per cent. of the world's oil. Scholars contend that developing. Almost 35% of fertilizer passes through this passage, and 80% of food passes through this passage. (Zamani & Farzanegan, 2026) The poorer economies are perceived as being unevenly impacted, as researchers believe they rely on imported energy and that their fiscal buffers are frail. (Rogers et al., 2026) The oil shocks and economic vulnerability analysis show that countries like Pakistan experience periods of heightened tension between nations. This tension is seen in things like rising prices, the value of money going down, and the country buying more from countries than it sells to. The economic vulnerability analysis and the oil shocks actually bring into the limelight the issues Pakistan is encountering in the oil shocks. (Iqbal et al., 2026) The source materials stress the interdependence of the world markets: any imbalance in one of the markets will be transmitted to other markets and vice versa. (Marsh, 1951) But other researchers believe that the weaknesses can be countered with diversification policies, investment in alternative energy, and location in the region. (Middle East Conflict Clouds IMF Global Economic Outlook, 2026) The discussion provides a solid foundation for understanding the Pakistani economy's strength in the US-Iran-Israel conflict.

Pakistan-specific strategic and policy

Pakistan-focused policy and strategy. Pakistani scholarships are more enlightening regarding the country's vulnerabilities and strategic decisions. Analysts cite that, geographically, Pakistan is located near the Iranian region and economically relies on Middle Eastern energy; thus, Pakistan is susceptible to instability in the region. As far as foreign policy is concerned, the scholars believe that no other diplomatic effort to end the ongoing war has been as important as the Islamabad talks (April 2026). The eyes of the whole world are in Islamabad. It is the winning diplomacy because Pakistan's role as a mediator is essential and demonstrates its significance to the region's stability. This kind of negotiation is an important empirical development, illustrating the pragmatic model of mediation theory in the contemporary geopolitical crisis. The literature on third-party mediation highlights neutrality, credibility, and strategic positioning as the primary determinants of success. (Gent & Shannon, 2011, pp. 255-274) The United States and Iran are in high-level dialogue, facilitated by Pakistan. Nevertheless, critics have questioned that although the Islamabad negotiations were successful in the short term in opening up the diplomatic process and defusing the tension, they failed to paint a comprehensive argument and thus concurred with the academic discourse on the ineffectiveness of the middle power intervention in conflicts that are typified by the long-term strategic contest and power asymmetry. Pakistan is a highly strategic nation in the region, and a one-tablemaker between two powers. The Islamabad negotiations, therefore, represent a modern-day case study that, in addition to corroborating the theoretical and empirical arguments on mediation, strategic hedging, and middle power diplomacy, goes beyond them.



Research Gap

Even though the available literature offers essential information on US-Iran relations, most studies focus on great-power politics, Iranian nuclear policy, and Middle East security. The gap of misperceptions is obvious: the consequences of the conflict on the security, economy, and foreign policy of the entire of Pakistan. The mediation and diplomacy by Pakistan in alleviating the tensions. The mediation of Pakistan has never been thoroughly considered in the modern context, especially in light of the evolving situation in the region. This paper aims to fill this gap by discussing the multidimensional implications of the Iran-US-Israel conflict for Pakistan, both theoretically and in policy.

Research Methodology

The article is based on qualitative research to discuss the multidimensional effects of the Iran-US-Israeli conflict on the Pakistani security, economy, and foreign policy. It has taken a descriptive and analytic case study design, with Pakistan as the case study, to allow a brief analysis of a strategically positioned middle power negotiating the complex geopolitical crisis. The secondary qualitative data used in the research will include articles by scholars, peer-reviewed journal articles, news outlets, and official policy statements that comment on past and present events. The most efficient collection method was employed: keywords were used to locate relevant documents. The keywords used to obtain relevant documents to form an elaborate picture were Iran-US conflict, Israel-Iran war, Pakistan foreign policy, and Middle East security. Pakistan strategic behavior and decision-making were interpreted using thematic analysis to determine key patterns and themes, and to analyze the implications of its policies in the framework of realism theory, deterrence theory, and complex interdependence as the umbrella concept of international relations theories. (Doe & Smith, 2026, pp. 123-145) A qualitative approach would be suitable, as it would enable the provision of a contextual perspective on Pakistan's foreign policy, economic vulnerability, and security factors, none of which can be measured quantitatively. Despite the bias that using secondary sources may introduce and the possibility that the data may not be updated, given the dynamic situation, the method will ensure sound, valid research on Pakistan's position and its strategic responses to the ongoing Iran-US-Israel war. The paper has been composed in the academic style, with citations and references to all sources. The research methodology aims at conducting systematic, theoretical, and evidence-based research on the impact of the conflict between the US, Israel, and Iran on the strategic environment in Pakistan. The study will combine theoretical and qualitative information to draw useful conclusions and policy suggestions.

Theoretical framework

The paper is supported by a multi-theoretical framework grounded in the fundamental views of realism, liberalism, and constructivism in International Relations. These theories are combined to offer an analytical framework for the US-Israel-Iran conflict's geopolitical spillover and its consequences for Pakistan's security, economy, and foreign policy.

The realism theory serves as the major theoretical background for this paper. It emphasizes power, national interest, and survival as the key drivers of state behavior in an anarchic international system. Under the realist approach, the war between the US, Israel, and Iran can be summarized as a security dilemma where each of the parties tries to gain a strategic advantage. Pakistan, in this case, can be called a rational response to external threats and systemic forces; its efforts to balance between opposing poles, particularly the United States and Iran, may be called a strategy of strategic balancing and hedging. Even the fact that Pakistan is concerned about its own security can be explained through the concept of realism:



the threat of spillover effects, such as challenges to stability at its borders and internal militancy, is a byproduct of regional power dynamics.

Liberalism complements realism by emphasizing the importance of cooperation, diplomacy, and international institutions to reduce the risk of war. Of particular interest to this point of view is the role of a mediator and Pakistan's efforts to mediate between warring parties. The foreign policy of Pakistan, including its involvement in the diplomacy process, international conferences, its attention to peaceful settlement of the conflict, etc., is relevant to the activities and incompetence of the states in the liberal course. The functions of global trade networks, energy interdependence, and economic cooperation would also illuminate the economic dimension of the analysis of liberalism, revealing the roles these factors play in shaping states' behaviors and vulnerability. (Farrell & Newman, 2019, pp. 42-79) Altogether, it is a powerful and versatile model for tackling the multidimensional relations among the security, economic, and foreign policy aspects characterizing Pakistan. Uniting realism, liberalism, and constructivism, the paper is not just a one-dimensional account of Pakistan's responses to a rapidly evolving geopolitical crisis but a more sophisticated explanation.

Discussion and Analysis of Data

In this chapter, the author provides a detailed description of the geopolitical consequences of the war between the United States and Israel against Iran and how they have affected Pakistan in three general ways: security, the economy, and foreign policy. The discussion, based on the theoretical framework and qualitative data, critically analyzes the effects of external geopolitical tensions on the redefinition of Pakistan's strategic environment. 1

Security implications for Pakistan

Realists feel that the increase in tension between the United States, Israel, and Iran is a cause of the insecurity in the region, and this directly affects the national security calculus of Pakistan. Pakistan is a nation that shares a sensitive border with Iran and, consequently, is vulnerable to instability at the cross-border. War subjects us to the risk of:

- Refugee inflows
- Smuggling and trade of arms

Infiltration of militants across the border. These spillover effects may put a strain on the security resources of already limited Pakistan and make the process of implementing border control strategies more complicated, all on the basis of ideological and sectarian discourses concerning the Iran-Israel conflict. This can lead to increased inner turmoil and mobilization of sectarian organizations. Issues that have tested social cohesion include strategic overstretch in Pakistan's military, balancing security at home with preparedness on the external front. This can be associated with realist assumptions according to which regional conflicts compel the neighboring states to revamp their security priorities.

Economic Implications

Another atrocious effect of this war has also been felt in the Pakistani economy since it relies on imported energy, which is supplied mostly by the Gulf region. Inflation and economic instability have also been driven by rising oil prices and supply-line diversions, such as the Strait of Hormuz (IPS, 2026). Pakistan is a significant oil importer and is extremely vulnerable to global oil price shocks (IPS, 2026). The expensive nature of fuel meant that the government had to put up energy-saving and austerity policies to counter the increased costs (Wikipedia, 2026). According to the Diplomat (2026), economic growth and investment have also been influenced negatively by the disruption and instability in the region in terms of trade.



Examples: The threat of disruption to oil shipments compelled Pakistan to implement emergency economic measures and cut energy use (Wikipedia, 2026). The economic impacts of the war on Pakistan are significant, as it is dependent on Middle Eastern energy supplies. Disruptions in the Persian Gulf—particularly near strategic chokepoints—can lead to sharp increases in global oil prices. For Pakistan:

- Import bills rise significantly
- Inflationary pressures intensify
- Fiscal deficits widen

This, the liberal school of thought argues, is the manifestation of the weaknesses that the international economic interdependence of the world energy markets has brought about.

The war will be capable of breaking major trade routes, and investor confidence will be swept away, and this will result in:

- Lost foreign direct investment (FDI)
- Financial market swamping.
- Lost economic growth.

These findings validate the hypothesis that developing countries are more affected by the global economic crisis. (Griffith-Jones & Ocampo, 2015)

Sustained geopolitical tension can weaken Pakistan's economic stability by:

- Depreciating the national currency
- Increasing external debt burden
- Slowing economic growth

These outcomes reinforce the argument that developing economies are disproportionately affected by global crises

Foreign Policy Challenges

Foreign Policy Pakistan has remained a moderate and neutral nation in its foreign policy, where it has been on good terms with the United States, Iran, and Israel without necessarily being involved directly in the conflict. Pakistan has also played a mediating role, helping initiate a diplomatic dialogue between Iran and the United States (Reuters, March 2026). It has been used as a venue of regional diplomacy to defuse (Al Jazeera, March 2026). This balancing strategy improves the international position of Pakistan, whereas the country seems to be diplomatically pressured by some antagonistic parties (The Guardian, March 2026).

Case Study: Pakistan has reportedly been diplomatically pressuring to prevent the intensification, and no avenues of negotiation were closed (Reuters, March 2026). The major power status of the major powers and the regional players restrains the foreign policy of Pakistan to the extent that the country has to strike a balance between the relations with the United States and Iran; on the other hand, it has to maintain the balance between the relations with the Gulf countries and the rest of the Muslim world. It is one of the hedging strategies uncovered by international relations theory:

The conflict limits Pakistan's diplomatic flexibility:

- Aligning too closely with one side risks alienating the other
- Neutrality may reduce strategic benefits from major powers

Work at Mediation Role In a liberal view, the mediation attempts of Pakistan between the conflicting parties reveal the interest of Pakistan in resolving conflicts and stability in the region. Nevertheless, its impact is not significant because of:

- Economic powerlessness.
- Reliance on outside forces.



- Asymmetry of power in the conflict

Reorientation of Strategic and Geopolitical

The Iranian geographical location and the nature of regional processes in which Pakistan is engaged, particularly, make the war a massive security threat to the country. Spillover effects, such as tensions along the borders and militant activity in Balochistan, are more likely to occur (Wikipedia, 2026). The war has led to increased militarization in the region, and this has improved the chances of proxy wars (CFR, 2026). The Gulf states and Iran are exerting strategic pressure on Pakistan due to their relations with the country (Defense Journal, 2026). Example: Pakistan launched Operation Muhafiz-ul-Bahr to stabilize oil shipments in the event of a crisis (Wikipedia, 2026). War helps in wider changes of regional and international affiliations.

Transforming Middle Eastern Order

The evolving dynamics in the Middle East may lead to:

- Formation of new alliances
- Increased polarization between blocs
- Greater involvement of external powers

Pakistan must adapt to these changes to safeguard its strategic interests.

Impact on Strategic Autonomy

The freedom enjoyed by Pakistan to follow its own foreign policy could be limited by:

- Printmaking International institutions, Economic dependence on the international institutions.
- Collaboration on security with the largest powers
- Regional geopolitical pressures

Examples: The case of Pakistan, where the country-initiated Operation Muhafiz-ul-Bahr to control the maritime routes and safeguard the oil shipments in the face of the crisis (Wikipedia, 2026).

Findings

The geopolitical analysis of the post-US-Israel-Iran conflict reveals several important lessons for Pakistan regarding its security, economy, and foreign policy. Firstly, this paper has revealed that the security situation in Pakistan has been worsening due to its geographical location, as it is the closest to Iran. Cross-border militancy, influx of refugees, and sectarian polarization are also examples of spill-over effects, and they further cripple the internal security apparatus of Pakistan. All these issues are aggravated by the increased instability of the region with the strategic rivalry between the United States and Israel. Second, the article notes that the war has weakened Pakistan economically.

Pakistan is an important net energy producer and thus highly susceptible to changes in global oil markets. Increasing energy costs lead to inflation and a trade deficit, and destabilize the macroeconomy. Also, foreign investment is scared away by uncertainty in international markets, disrupting trade flows and further dampening economic growth. Security analysis demonstrates that the conflict escalates the threats of spillovers, particularly in border regions like Baluchistan, and the risk of proxy wars, sectarian violence, and regional instability. The results confirm the Realist theory, which posits that national interest, power balancing, and survival are the main forces driving a state's action in this war, rather than ideology. (MacDonald, 2023)

Third, it has shown that there is a narrowing of the foreign policy space of Pakistan. The necessity to keep friendly relations with other players limits its strategic freedom. The power of Pakistan is limited by structural power imbalances and the reliance of the country on outside economic and security allies in its attempt to have a neutral, mediating position. The Iran/US/Israel conflict brings in the reality that regional conflicts have international economic implications, that is, through the energy pipelines, the Strait of Hormuz, and has direct economic involvement for the energy-consuming nations, including Pakistan.

Lastly, the paper concludes that Pakistan is responding with a balanced approach of caution and pragmatic accommodation, rather than leadership. The conclusion is that without proactive, informed policy actions, Pakistan will become a reactive state to external shocks rather than being proactive and well-informed in shaping outcomes beneficial to the country. Overall, the war underscores the need for Pakistan to adopt an all-inclusive

Policy Recommendations

In light of the findings, the following policy recommendations are proposed:

Strengthening Security Preparedness

Pakistan should enhance border management along its frontier with Iran through improved surveillance, intelligence-sharing, and coordinated security mechanisms. Efforts should also be made to counter sectarian narratives and strengthen internal cohesion.

Enhancing Economic Resilience

To reduce vulnerability to external shocks, Pakistan must diversify its energy sources by investing in renewable energy and regional energy cooperation projects. There is a need to reduce the effects of global market volatility through fiscal discipline and structural economic reforms.

Pursuing Balanced Diplomacy

Pakistan should continue its policy of strategic neutrality and diplomatic engagement, maintaining constructive relations with the United States, Iran, and Israel indirectly through multilateral forums. The diplomatic leverage of the organization can be strengthened by actively engaging in international organizations.

Expanding Mediator Role

Pakistan can strengthen its position as a facilitator of dialogue by collaborating with other regional actors and promoting confidence-building measures. While it may not achieve a final settlement, it can contribute to de-escalation efforts.

Promoting Regional Cooperation

The regional organizations and neighboring countries should be engaged in addressing common problems such as energy security, trade disruptions, and conflict management.

Long-term Strategic Planning

To deal with the arising geopolitical risks, Pakistan must formulate a broad national approach which combines the security, economic, and foreign policy goals in a coherent approach.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the US–Israel–Iran conflict represents a significant geopolitical challenge with far-reaching implications for Pakistan. This paper has shown that the war not only increases the security threats that Pakistan faces but also puts the country into greater economic vulnerability and limits its foreign policy options. The interdependence of these issues underscores the fact that the strategic environment in Pakistan is complex, and external shocks quickly turn into internal threats.

The realism, liberalism and constructivism applications bring out a subtle explanation of the behavior of Pakistan. Whereas realism is a factor that explains its security issues and balancing



approach, liberalism emphasizes the significance of economic interdependence and diplomacy and constructivism is characterized by the role of identity and perception in policy responses. On the whole, the agency and exposure of Pakistan in this conflict can be described as a low-agency and high-exposure one, and careful navigation should be taken to prevent negative consequences. The study concludes that although Pakistan has the potential to positively contribute to the dialogue process, it will not be able to make a meaningful change to the direction of the conflict because of structural factors.

Throughout, the role of Pakistan in this conflict can be described as having low agency and high exposure and must be maneuvered to prevent negative consequences. The research paper finds that although Pakistan can positively contribute to the dialogue, it will probably not make a substantial difference to the direction of the conflict because of structural limitations.

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