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7 Things You Need to Know About the Strait of Hormuz – That Trump Didn't!

Iran's closing of a single waterway in the Persian Gulf could provoke a global recession – and topple the foundation of US power.

(By TEAM ZETEO)

Donald Trump is digging himself deeper and deeper into a war he seems to know nothing about. So when Iran shut down the Strait of Hormuz – a threat the US has known about for years – Trump was, of course, unprepared. But it was a predictable move to the officials who briefed him... or to anyone who has looked at history, or at a map, ever. Now, the tiny waterway is at the very center of this war, has spiked oil and gas prices globally, and is sending both developed and developing worlds into an economic crisis.

So, here are 7 things you should know about the Strait of Hormuz (that Trump probably didn't!)...

1. Where it is on a map...

Bordered by Iran to the north and Oman and the UAE to the south, the Strait of Hormuz connects the oil-rich Persian Gulf to the Gulf of Oman and the Arabian Sea. It's only 24 miles wide at its narrowest point.

Shipping is restricted to a pair of two-mile-wide lanes: one outgoing, one incoming. It's the only passage out of the Gulf to the rest of the ocean.

2. It's the world's most important waterway

The strait facilitates over one fifth of the world's oil shipments. In fact, this war is causing the world's largest oil supply disruption in history. Thanks to geography and political tension, there's no real alternative to the strait. Try as they might, Saudi and UAE pipelines can only carry a small fraction of the energy, and even then, are vulnerable to attacks from insurgent groups like the Yemeni Houthis.

Besides the US, China, India, and Japan also heavily depend on the oil that passes through the strait. Even if this block on oil tankers is only temporary, it will raise global energy prices, spike shipping costs, cause major supply delays, and could even lead to a worldwide food shortage – Hormuz is a crucial shipping route for fertilizers needed now for planting season.

3. “Opening the Strait of Hormuz” is virtually impossible

Trump is on a mission to forcefully “open” the strait, begging world leaders for help. He, and people like Lindsey Graham, are very “angry” that pretty much every country replied: “We’d rather not get involved, sir.” Now, the US seems to have bullied some of those countries into submission and is bombing targets around the strait, supposedly to wipe out anti-ship missiles.

But there is effectively no way to secure the strait. The short area, with shipping lanes only 3 miles from the Iranian shore in some places, allows Iran to launch missiles and drones from its coast, with complete fire control over the entire strait. The risk is too high for the US navy to enter, or even to escort commercial ships – Iran could easily hit them. Experts say it could be difficult for Iran to blockade the strait long term, but Iran has effectively closed the waterway since the war began by firing at oil tankers and reportedly laying mines.

4. The decline of the US empire?

We’ve seen this movie before...

In 1956, Britain, France, and Israel attacked Egypt after President Gamal Abdel Nasser nationalized the Suez Canal – a critical chokepoint in Egypt for much of Europe’s oil supply. The US and Egypt staved off Britain and France’s overreach, and the failure marked the decline of British and French imperial power.

If the US loses this fight, experts say it could permanently shatter the nation’s credibility as a superpower.

Could this be Trump’s ‘Suez moment’?

5. Just how badly the Hormuz closure could hit the global economy

According to Trump? “We don’t need oil. We have all the oil we need for ourselves.”

Meanwhile, US gas prices have surged to the highest they’ve been in years, the US has eased sanctions on Iranian oil, and Trump is threatening to strike Iran’s power plants. Sounds like we really need oil. That’s because oil prices are set on a global market, and countries across the Middle East choked off oil production by at least 10 million barrels a day – that’s about 10% of global supply, according to the I.E.A. The closure of the Strait of Hormuz is the “nightmare scenario” for the global energy system.

6. The US knew this would happen

Of course, Trump also said he knew this would happen all along in that bizarre and rambling way of his: “I knew about the strait, that it would be a weapon, which I predicted a long time ago. I predicted all of this stuff... I predicted Osama bin Laden would knock out the World Trade Center...”

Trump’s supposed precognitive gifts aside (he did not in fact predict Bin Laden would hit the WTC!) – the US has known for years that Iran could mine the Strait of Hormuz and use it as a threat. President Trump was warned that Iran would likely respond this way. He still went ahead and launched this war.

Plus, Iran has used the strait as a pressure point before when officials threatened a Hormuz shutdown in 2019 after Trump stopped waiving sanctions for Iranian oil importers.

7. Can the US win this battle?

For the US to win, experts say a ground invasion might be necessary. Former intelligence analyst Harrison Mann wrote that reopening shipping lanes would look like “an indefinite occupation” and “a full-fledged invasion” of the Iranian coast. To fend off missiles, drones, and clear out mines, fully reopening the strait could take a month and tens of thousands of troops. And even if Iran is significantly weakened, insurgents like the Houthis could attack ships in the strait instead.

The world's least competent president strikes yet again... but this time, the world's energy supply and global power politics are on the line. Zeteo's Layla Nayfeh contributed to this piece.

Image 1: A navy vessel in the Strait of Hormuz on March 1, 2026 and Donald Trump. Photos by Sahar Al Attar/AFP via Getty Images and Jim Watson/AFP via Getty Images

Image3: British troops evacuate wounded soldiers on Port Said, Egypt, during the Suez crisis. Released Nov. 9, 1956. Photo by INTERCONTINENTALE/AFP via Getty Images

Image 4: Trump speaks at a lunch with Kennedy Center Board Members on March 16, 2026 in Washington, DC. Photo by Alex Wong/Getty Images





