

KEY TAKEAWAYS
RTC ON BLUE WAR – STRATEGIC AND MARITIME RAMIFICATIONS
OF US-ISRAEL-IRAN WAR

1. The following Key Takeaways synthesise the conference's collective analytical judgment, which are organised by thematic cluster into actionable assessments for perusal:

a. **STRATEGIC RAMIFICATIONS OF US-ISRAEL-IRAN WAR**

(1) The RTC delineated three conflict scenarios:

(a) **The optimistic scenario**. US declares victory, alliances weaken, conflict ends — still leaves the maritime order permanently damaged.

(b) **The less optimistic scenario**. Trump is isolated internationally, pressure escalates, Iranian production is targeted, and it drives oil prices to systemic collapse levels.

(c) **The pessimistic scenario**. Regime change attempts and the Balkanisation of Iranian territory create a decade-long regional vacuum that would dwarf the post-2003 Iraq experience in maritime, refugee, and security consequences.

(2) The US-Israel entered this war without clear, stated objectives — policy statements ranged from regime change, nuclear dismantlement, neutralization of ballistic missile capability and established dominance of Israel in Middle East. As the objectives of war are not clear, war termination is not clear.

(3) Multiple high-risk escalation pathways remain live: strikes on Iranian energy production, possible US ground involvement, widened regional participation, and prolonged campaign fatigue.

(4) Iran, despite severe damage, has responded methodically and with remarkable national unity rooted in Persian nationalism, progressively raising the cost of the conflict for the aggressors.

(5) For the first time in the post-Cold War era, a permanent UN Security Council member has deliberately circumvented the UN Charter, bypassed its own Congress, and sidelined its alliance architecture.

(6) This is not a regional crisis, rather a systemic fracture of the rules-based international order. Maritime consequences of the war are irreversible regardless of how the fighting ends.

(7) Despite the US claims that Iranian Navy and Airforce has been completely neutralized but still Iran retained its strategic leverage through missile/ drone launch capability, closure of Strait of Hurmuz and asymmetric Naval power.

(8) As the war has entered in its third week, it appears that United States is isolated and none of its allies are supporting the war efforts particularly participation of warships for opening Strait of Hurmuz.

(9) Hormuz has been functionally closed without Iran deploying a single conventional warship. This is the defining tactical lesson of modern maritime conflict. Geography weaponised through denial, not fleet engagement.

(10) Iran has identified the global economic system's vulnerability as its most effective lever. Sustained Hormuz disruption imposes systemic economic pain on adversaries, oil above \$100 per barrel weakens them structurally, without triggering the overwhelming international retaliation that a direct attack on Western territory would invite. The battlefield is geoeconomic, not merely military.

(11) Iran is attacking Gulf States on the pretext of American bases on their soil. Despite repeated attacks, Gulf countries are not responding which is considered a positive sign and rather a strategic calculated choice.

(12) A controlled Hormuz disruption partially serves Washington's own strategic energy interests: it strengthens domestic shale producers, accelerates the global transition away from Gulf oil dependency, and advances renewable investment. Does Washington genuinely need to reopen Hormuz, or does sustained strategic volatility serve its long-term energy market reconfiguration objectives? Needs evaluation.

(13) Any extreme escalation, including potential use of tactical nuclear weapons if the US faces strategic defeat, could shatter global non-proliferation norms and trigger cascading proliferation across an already nuclearised region.

(14) The conflict carries a significant information warfare dimension including attacks on key data centres and deliberate manipulation of maritime AIS signals.

(15) Counter-narratives like Israel's religious and ideological claims must be challenged through institutionally developed, scholarly, legally grounded responses. State institutions must enforce source discipline; no unverified claim may be amplified officially.

b. **MARITIME RAMIFICATIONS AND THE CHOKEPOINT MATRIX**

- (1) In the recent maritime history, the Strait of Hormuz-one of the world's most vital trade corridors is under intense and sustained scrutiny. The network of critical chokepoints that once supported global supply chains is now showing signs of breakdown.
- (2) By converting the Strait of Hormuz into an active theatre of warfare, the conflict has shattered the foundational UNCLOS principle that maritime chokepoints must remain neutral passages for global commerce.
- (3) Freedom of navigation is no longer guaranteed but contested. A precedent that will reshape naval strategy, insurance markets, and port development globally for a generation.
- (4) The IOR's enclosed geography, accessible only through a handful of narrow straits, makes this the most consequential maritime security failure since the Second World War.
- (5) War-risk insurance withdrawal has functionally closed the Strait to commercial operators regardless of naval presence. P&I premiums, war-risk surcharges, and crew hazard pay are structurally reshaping voyage economics.
- (6) Rising freight costs and insurance premiums are cascading directly into import prices, food costs, and inflation across all trade-dependent economies.
- (7) The US security umbrella extended to Gulf Arab states, predicated on forward-based military infrastructure, has been exposed as a liability rather than a guarantee. Gulf states hosting US bases have become targets rather than protected parties.
- (8) The strategic alignment built around American guarantees is under fundamental reassessment in Abu Dhabi, Doha, Kuwait City, and Manama.
- (9) The growing role of asymmetric naval strategies and hybrid maritime warfare is now definitively established. Conventional fleet superiority is irrelevant when a coastal state deploys mines, drone boats, and land-based missiles at a fraction of the cost.
- (10) New naval warfare tactics, vessel design standards, and convoy doctrine must be developed on an urgent basis in response to this permanently altered threat environment.

c. **PAKISTAN'S STRATEGIC POSTURE AND IMPERATIVES**

- (1) Pakistan shares a significant border with Iran, depends on Gulf Arab states for energy and remittances, holds a strategic partnership with China, and maintains security cooperation with the US. This intersection is unique among non-belligerents.

(2) Vocal, principled neutrality, actively pursued through forums such as the OIC, SCO, and the UN, is the only posture that preserves all relationships and positions Pakistan as a credible mediator. There is no fence-sitting option available.

(3) Pakistan's diplomatic response requires a specific, tangible coalition: Pakistan, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia, backed by Russia and China, pursuing a multilateral ceasefire framework.

(4) Pakistan must strengthen its maritime capabilities, enhance maritime diplomacy with like-minded countries (such as AMAN Dialogue), and operationalize Gwadar Port.

(5) This grouping spans the Islamic world, the BRICS alignment, and the Gulf economic bloc, possessing collective leverage that no single nation commands unilaterally. This demands phone calls, visits, and joint communiqués. Not position papers.

(6) Pakistan must explicitly claim a leadership role grounded in international law: advocate applying humanitarian law to all shipping incidents; call for UN- and IMO-mandated assessments of attacks on commercial vessels; and convene an OIC-level maritime safety framework anchored in legal, not military, instruments.

(7) Pakistan should also establish a structured, neutral legal-expert platform, drawing on the OIC's credibility, to provide continuous, politically independent conflict assessments.

(8) Balochistan's strategic geography makes it a pressure point in any regional escalation scenario. Regional non-state actors and Afghan-based networks could exploit tensions to heighten cross-border risks.

(9) Soft political management in Balochistan, addressing legitimate grievances while maintaining security, is a prerequisite for Pakistan leveraging its maritime geography. Internal stability and external maritime opportunity are inseparable.

(10) Pakistan must manage threats from Afghanistan effectively and proactively efforts be made to end the kinetic operations in early time. Relations with the United States should be kept strictly transactional, cooperative where interests align, firm where they diverge. Strategic partnerships, particularly with China, must be deepened and operationalised rather than treated as diplomatic decoration.

d. **ECONOMIC FALLOUTS AND ENERGY SOVEREIGNTY**

(1) IMF programme disruption, energy import cost escalation, Gulf remittance loss, and domestic inflation are compounding simultaneously on Pakistan's thinnest fiscal margins.

(2) Economic security must be treated as the supreme national interest in this crisis — above rhetorical solidarity, above geopolitical alignment, above every other policy variable. No relationship is more valuable than the economy's ability to function.

(3) Pakistan can reduce vulnerability through energy diversification, solarization, and Electric Vehicles.

(4) Strategic petroleum and foreign exchange reserves reduce the leverage external actors hold over Pakistan's decisions during precisely this type of crisis. Building them is a strategic imperative, not an economic luxury.

e. **PAKISTAN AS A MARITIME HUB AND TRANSHIPMENT PIVOT**

(1) The Hormuz crisis has transformed Gwadar from a long-term CPEC aspiration into an immediate strategic asset. Located outside the Strait's conflict perimeter on the Gulf of Oman, Gwadar is Pakistan's most valuable geographic card. Bunkering, LNG storage, ship repair, and transshipment infrastructure must be accelerated on a crisis timeline.

(2) China's acute Hormuz exposure makes this the most leverageable diplomatic moment in CPEC's history.

(3) Pakistan's three major ports (Karachi, Port Qasim, and Gwadar) collectively offer a credible alternative trade and transshipment corridor outside the conflict zone.

(4) A coordinated port-led economic model, integrating feeder services, off-dock logistics, and inland dry port connectivity, can capture diverted cargo from disrupted regional hubs. Geography alone is insufficient; it must be actively operationalised through national strategy, not left to individual port authorities.