

# ANY WAR-LIKE SITUATION INVOLVING IRAN IS BOUND TO HURT INDIA

Relevant for: International Relations | Topic: Effect of policies and politics of developed & developing countries on India's interests

Since he pulled the US out of the Iranian nuclear deal last year, President Donald Trump has ramped up the pressure on the government in Tehran through economic sanctions to bring it to the table to negotiate a new arrangement to cap Iran's atomic and missile programmes. However, Mr Trump's introduction of military pressure – apparently because of the need to speedily conclude a new deal that he can then use for his re-election bid – has added a dangerous element to a rapidly escalating situation. Following attacks on oil tankers and the shooting down of a US drone, Mr Trump came dangerously close to ordering military strikes against Iran, a move that could have led to a conflagration in a region already buffeted by numerous security challenges.

Mr Trump's actions have only reflected his lack of understanding and experience of diplomacy and the need to work with other countries to resolve the situation with Iran. Clearly, if the sole intention is to bring Iran back to the negotiating table, the US administration would do better to stick with the sanctions, which have squeezed Iran's oil exports, sent the value of the rial plunging and placed tremendous pressure on the regime in Tehran. Iran's threat to resume uranium enrichment and to exceed limits set by the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) is also costing it the support of players such as the European Union, which had so far supported the nuclear deal.

For India, any war-like situation involving Iran would have wide-ranging ramifications, both economic, and in terms of the more than 8 million expatriates who live and work in West Asia. More significantly, India may be forced to choose sides in a potential conflict when it really shouldn't have to. The best course for India would be to back a process that leads to a negotiated settlement of the Iran issue.

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