

ORION FORUM

# Iran War from the Perspectives of China and Russia

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Operation Epic Fury is the 2026 U.S.-led military campaign against Iran. The operation marks one of the most significant escalations in Middle Eastern conflict in the post-Cold War era and stretches beyond the issues between Iran versus the U.S.-Israel sides.

As of 2026, the most [powerful countries](#) are the United States (U.S.), China, the European Union (E.U.), and Russia in the world. The scale of the power is a combination of aggregate economic weight, military capabilities, technological capacity, and agenda-setting influence in global governance. While the U.S. and the E.U. have been strategic allies against Iran, it is important to review the perspectives of China and Russia on the ongoing conflict between Iran and the United States.

The Shanghai Institutes for International Studies (SIIS) defines [China`s perspective](#) as a policy of “Strategic Pragmatism”. In that avenue, China has adopted a [non-interventionist](#) response to the War. China is well aware of that its explicit support to Iran has the potential to exacerbate the tension with the U.S. In addition, the strategic pragmatism involves to engage in trade with as many countries as possible, and Iran is currently attacking the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states, where China has a larger [trade volume](#) than Iran.

Another aspect of the Strategic Pragmatism is to maintain a [non-alliance policy](#), and the only formal military alliance of China is with North Korea. This strategy aims heavily to be the [top trading partner](#) to other countries, resulting in a self-reliant system of governance.

As the escalation of the Iran war continues, the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) aims to prevent a domestic fuel crisis, and the government [ordered a ban](#) on all refined

fuel exports that had not yet cleared customs.

So, China does not view Iran as an existential ally, prioritizes its economic stability and relationship with the Gulf region. This strategy is also obvious in the efforts of the Chinese government. Foreign Minister [Wang Yi's position](#) is that military action against Iran without U.N. Security Council authorization is a violation of international law, but China is also ready to [work with Bahrain](#) restore peace in the region.

Unlike the interventionist U.S., China is a trader that is seeking every opportunity to increase its volume of supply. In this vein, the type of regime does not make any difference in China's policy to work with. However, China has long [undermined the interests](#) of the U.S. and its allies in the region through [these carrots](#) rather than using sticks and direct confrontation with the West.

Russia, on the other hand categorizes Iran as its "[Strategic Rear](#)". It is obvious that since the beginning of the Iran war, Russia benefits from it, and the closure of the Strait of Hormuz [reopened Europe's door](#) to Russian energy. The U.S. lifted sanctions for India to trade Russian oil and waived them for some European countries too. The Strait's blockade [resumes](#) Russian energy in Europe. Despite Russia's win with the blockade, the conflict also created risks by tying short-term gains to [longer-term uncertainty](#) about future investment and regional stability.

Although China and Russia have different interests and challenges in the current conflict, the two countries are more likely to support one another as they have long [become closer](#) in the escalating global rivalry.

In the Iran-related conflict, the relationship between Russia and China has evolved into a coordinated partnership of "strategic silence" and "[indirect enablement](#)." This support mechanism falls below the threshold of direct participation. It includes alleged Russian intelligence assistance in movements of U.S. and Israeli forces and critical regional targets.

With respect to China, its technological and diplomatic measures indirectly sustain Tehran's military effectiveness without formal alliance commitments. Apparently, neither Beijing nor Moscow has been a part of the war directly, but they seem to operate as a unified diplomatic

and logistical “rear guard” for Tehran.

Arguably, the Sino-Russian bloc has a common strategy: let the U.S. and Israel become entangled in a costly regional quagmire while securing their own economic and geopolitical interests. The most salient evidence of the mutual support is the abstention of Russia and China from UNSC Resolution 2817 to condemn Iranian strikes on Gulf states. Furthermore, Russia supported Iran with intelligence on U.S. troop and ship movements while China integrated Iran into its military navigation system to increase accuracy of Iranian strikes.

Whether the 2026 conflict with Iran —Operation Epic Fury— leaves the U.S. stronger or weaker remains a central debate among strategic analysts today. Both China and Russia are actively seeking new avenues to benefit from the conflict to strengthen their own geopolitical influence. Both powers have also avoided taking a direct combat thus far. But this caution does not guarantee they will avoid a future confrontation with the U.S.

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