



[U.S. Military to Increase Presence in the Gulf](#)

Continuing the monitoring of the Strait of Hormuz, the United States has committed to sending F-35 and F-16 fighter jets in addition to the previous military shipments to the Middle East. This is an effort dating back to a commitment from the Biden administration this past May to increase its presence and control of the region. The Strait of Hormuz, located between Iran and Oman, is an area of great contention as about a fifth of the world's crude oil and oil products are transported using the sea passage. Since 2019, the region has faced multiple military transgressions, the most recent being Iran's recent attempt to seize two oil tankers earlier this month. The United States' recent shipment of jets aims to help deter future attacks of a similar nature, in addition to providing more military resources for the U.S. to monitor nearby situations in Russia and Syria.

After President Trump's withdrawal from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) in 2015, tensions between the two powers have continued to escalate, especially within the Strait of Hormuz. Immediately following the U.S.'s unilateral suspension of the JCPOA deal was a series of reinstated sanctions on Tehran, intended to leverage their nuclear programs with limits on international trade. Most recently, new sanctions were imposed that imposed limits on Iranian energy exports and petroleum sales and trade. Iran has continued to increase its nuclear capabilities, now having the ability to make the fissile material for a nuclear bomb in an estimated 12 days, compared to the full year it took back when the deal was in place.

Despite these sanctions, Iran has attempted multiple methods of evasion to continue its participation in the global market. Recently, Iraqi officials constructed a deal to barter oil for gas with Iran, attempting to curtail the sanctions by using a loophole of "bartering" rather than financial transactions. Iraq heavily relies on Iran to sustain its energy needs, as conflict and government mismanagement have created a long-term issue of electricity shortages within the country. While the U.S. has previously provided exemptions regarding Iraq and Iran trade for Iraq to meet its energy needs, the U.S.'s recent tightening of Iraq's foreign reserves. This happened under suspicion that Iraqi funds were being transferred to Iran and calls into question if the U.S. will crackdown on the bartering deal.

The U.S. claims its increase in military presence allows for more assistance in the Strait of Hormuz and an opportunity to monitor Russia's military involvement closely. With Russia's increasing military aggression and presence within Syria, the shipment of F-35 and F-16 fighter jets will allow the U.S. to pursue military action in response to Russia if needed. This increasing pressure from Russia alongside Iran aims to force the U.S. out of Syria, where over 900 U.S. forces are present. With no clear indication of where the jets are specifically being sent or for how long, it appears that they will be utilized on a needs basis to address security concerns within the region. As Russia and Iran continue their new trends of political and diplomatic realignment within the broader Middle East, only time will indicate what capacity the U.S. jets could potentially be deployed.