

Impact of Iran's Strategic Partnerships on its Nuclear Program

Hifsah Saeed ¹ Dr. Shazia Hashmat ²

¹ PhD Scholar, Department of Communication and Media Studies, Fatima Jinnah Women University, Rawalpindi, ORCID ID: 0009-0003-7282-2767

² Department of Communication and Media Studies, Fatima Jinnah Women University, Rawalpindi, shazia.hashmat@fjwu.edu.pk, ORCID ID: 0009-0002-3384-670X

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Abstract

This review paper investigated how Iran's strategic partnerships are affecting its nuclear ambitions. The purpose of the study was to analyze how Iran's alliances either deter or support its nuclear program, aiming at the impact of sanctions, geopolitical alliances and its role in proxy wars. The research investigated Iran's nuclear program that is being influenced as a result of its strategic relationships. The researcher reviewed the relevant literature from March 2025- April 2025. The review followed the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) framework. Based on the PRISMA method of screening, evaluation and selection, the researchers collected a total of 31 records from the selected database. After thorough screening, n=15 were reviewed for this research. The paper ultimately argued that while international sanctions have been imposed on Iran even then, it worked on its nuclear program and also manipulates regional security by supporting proxy groups. It also showed consequential impact of Iran's allies on its nuclear program despite the international disapproval.

Key Words: Geopolitics; Strategic Alliances; Nuclear Ambitions; Sanctions; Proxy Wars; Regional Security; Iran's Allies

1. Introduction

This review paper investigates how Iran's strategic partnerships are influencing its nuclear program. It highlights the growing significance or the role, Iran's regional alliances are playing in supporting or hindering its nuclear ambitions. Russia, China and Pakistan, being the most important partners or allies play an important strategic role. The study examines Iran's strategic partnerships and the way they help in mitigating the effects of international sanctions on its nuclear program.

Iran, officially known as Islamic Republic of Iran and formerly as Persia, lies in western Asia, on the north-eastern coast of the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz, not only this but it is an important maritime corridor for shipping the crude oil (Jones, 2009). Interestingly, it has fourth largest oil reserves and the second largest natural gas reserves in the world (Tarock, 2006). One of the significant satire about Iran is that its controversial nuclear program has become a major political issue, even though we may agree that many of the program's particulars remain masked in confidentiality and seclusion. Additionally, Tehran is public about its journey to obtain peaceful nuclear energy to serve a population that has doubled since the 1979 revolution (Chubin, 2010). Iran's quest for a nuclear capability dates back to the 1960s to the time of Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi, who was Iran's former emperor (Bazoobandi, 2020). Although

Iran claims that its nuclear program is absolutely and entirely for peaceful drives but this program has caused substantial unease that Tehran is following a nuclear weapons program (Kerr, 2009).

1.1 Iran's Nuclear Program

Ironically, the United States of America was the first country to provide assistance to Iran gain atomic technology. It provided a five-megawatt research reactor to Iran that became functional in 1967. In addition, the United States also supported Iran's plans to gather a nuclear-energy capacity (Ozcan, Ozdamar, 2009). Referring to the National Security Study Memorandum a declassified confidential U.S. government document, the Shah's government planned to purchase eight nuclear reactors from the United States for electricity generation purposes. Iran signed the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in 1968 and later on ratified it in 1970. In the 1980s Iraq attacked the Bushehr nuclear power reactor and after that Rouhani became active in forming ties and having talks with the Russian and Chinese governments to acquire nuclear power plants (Ismail, 2015).

1.2 Iran's Alliances

Presently, Iran is much less secluded and isolated as its armed collaboration with Russia has expanded massively since Moscow's February 2022 invasion of Ukraine (Ben Taleblu, 2024), besides this over last 18 months its oil deals with China have vividly increased (Thomas, Rosen & Elsea, 2024). In addition, Iran joined the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), which is a China-founded regional security alliance, in July 2023 (Sen, 2023). It also became the part of BRICS a political and an economic alliance of emerging market countries in August 2023 (Chiappa, 2023).

1.2.1 Iran and Russia

Russia-Iran ties have been linked with many twists and turns throughout the history of their bilateral relations, clearly there have been times when they've been aligned together, and others when they've stood conflicting against each other (Ghaderi, Nouri & Ansarifard, 2022). Over the years, there has been a perspective in Moscow as well as in Tehran that has reinforced a "strategic partnership" amongst the two nations. Moscow has motivated Tehran once in a while by holding out such a doctrine, but never stayed dedicated to it (Parker, 2015). One more provocative and controversial area of Russian-Iranian collaboration is the Moscow's backing in construction of Iran's civilian nuclear power plant in Bushehr.

Furthermore, Russia's relationship with Iran enables Moscow's desire to play a central part in the Middle East, while Tehran's alliance with Moscow paves the way for a stable growth of Iran's profitable, political, and cultural connections with Central Asia (Jalali, 2001). The Iranian nuclear association to Moscow's dominant elite stands out as an influential representation of a novel Russian external strategy (Mizin, 2004). The Russian-Iranian partnership, which was unquestionably strengthened by their mutual animosity toward the United States, was primarily intended to enable both the countries to work with each other (Kam, 2021). In April 2019, while Washington was labelling the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) a "terrorist entity", Moscow took an entirely different stance: it highlighted the Revolutionary Guards' effectiveness and practicality in maintaining stability in Iran (IRNA, 2019) and accepted its part in outlining that country's national, regional and international strategies. The IRGC is undoubtedly the core of the bilateral association with Russia because the areas in which collaboration is most concentrated such as civil nuclear, space and the military are all ones in which the IRGC is particularly active (Therme, 2022).

The partnership between Iran and Russia in supporting the alliance of northern Afghanistan against Taliban attacks during the years 1996 to 2001 portrays another feature of the strategic cooperation of the two countries concerning the matters of Afghanistan (Karami, 2017). In addition, after the fall of the Taliban and the formation of the government of Hamid Karzai, Iran and Russia supported the central government of Afghanistan. Moreover, they also necessitated that the government of this republic be able to uphold the regional integrity, dominance and authority of Afghanistan and have control over the entire affairs of the country (Lukyanov, 2018). Additionally, the two countries are the chief supporters of multilateralism in the international structure. Moscow's approach to multilateralism is not a novel idea in fact it goes back to the Primakov doctrine and truly refers to the positions of the former prime minister of Russia in the late 1990s (Stronski & Sokolsky, 2020).

1.2.2 Iran and China

China-Iran relations rest on overlying benefits and interests, nevertheless they are the product of years of economic sanctions, diplomatic segregation, and geopolitical insecurity, which have kept most countries at arm's length from Tehran (Lim, 2021). The rise and formation of an alliance between Iran, China and Russia can encounter the hegemony of the United States (Shehu, 2021).

China and Iran have a timeless, multidimensional web of relations, with its origins in the pre-modern era, it endured the 1979 Iranian Revolution and have now touched the heights of a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (CSP) (Scita, 2021). Moreover, the China-Iran strategic deal which was signed on March 27, 2021 has kicked off an attention-grabbing debate in the regional political discourse; also the US sanctions against Iran compelled Tehran to have a historic deal with China to lessen the US influence in this region; also Iran under Chinese influence is taking advantage of the chance, by not only capitalizing on the Chinese US\$400 billion but also availing itself of the window of international opening despite the isolation (Rehman & Barrech, 2021). Fulton (2021) quoted in his research that the two governments of Iran and China have long looked to progress their relationship, and their collaboration and trust was developed as a mechanism to increase political and economic synchronization.

1.2.3 Iran and Pakistan

Pakistan, a nuclear power, lies on the eastern borders of Iran. Some of the differences between Iran and Pakistan are that the majority of Iranians are Shi'ia and Pakistanis are Sunnis, with Iran and Pakistan taking differing sides in the civil war in mutual neighboring country Afghanistan. Islamabad supported the Taliban, while Tehran supported the Northern Alliance. Additionally, Pakistan is a partner of the United States Iran's rival and Iran has close economic and military ties with India, Pakistan's core enemy (Bhagat, 2023).

The bilateral relationship blossomed while Iran was ruled by the regime of Reza Shah Pahlavi. Iran was the first country to officially accept Pakistan. During the 1965 Indo-Pakistan war, Iran conveyed its unease about Indian aggression against Pakistan and, alongside Turkey, supported Pakistan by sending military aid and two lakh tons of oil. Iran also vehemently supported Pakistan during the Indo-Pakistan war of 1971 and, in a disguised threat to India, even went to the degree of saying that Iran would not allow any effort to liquidate Pakistan (Choudhary, 1974).

1.3 Problem Statement

Understanding Iran's strategic partnerships is very important in analyzing and examining its nuclear ambitions and drives, as these coalitions offer access to critical technology, materials, and expertise, often bypassing and sidestepping global sanctions. Countries like Russia, China and Pakistan have supported Iran economically and politically, shielding and guarding it from international pressure and facilitating advancement in its nuclear program. Furthermore, regional

associations with groups and governments strengthen Iran's influence and security, letting it to focus on progressing its nuclear goals in spite of external opposition and resistance.

Generally, various researchers have carried out the researches on Iran's global and regional alliances, its nuclear program, international sanctions imposed on it and its involvement in the proxy wars. In the light of previously held researches, in this review paper the researcher has specifically tried to synthesize some of the researches published from 2020-2024 by examining how Iran's foreign policy is being shaped as a result of the global sanctions imposed on it. In addition, it has been analyzed how regional security is being affected as a result of Iran's involvement in the proxy wars.

1.4 Objectives

The objectives of the study are:

O₁: To examine the extent to which Iran's partnerships with Russia, China and Pakistan have contributed to the advancement of its nuclear program.

O₂: To analyze the role of Iran's regional alliances in supporting or hindering its nuclear ambitions.

O₃: Evaluate how Iran's strategic partnerships have helped it mitigate the effects of international sanctions on its nuclear program.

1.5 Research Questions

The primary research questions are:

RQ₁: How Iran's strategic partnerships with Russia, China and Pakistan has influenced the development of its nuclear program?

RQ₂: What role does Iran's regional alliances play in its nuclear ambitions?

RQ₃: How does Iran's strategic partnerships affect its ability to withstand international sanctions related to its nuclear program?

1.6 Significance

This study is significant as the topic is crucial and significant for categorizing and mitigating risks and threats, such as nuclear proliferation, or geopolitical conflicts. It aims to highlights the interconnected and interrelated nature of security challenges, underscoring the need for multilateral association and proactive measures. The findings have broader implications for predicting and preventing the crises, ensuring stability, reconciliation and harmony at both regional and global levels.

2. Methodology

This part of the review paper outlines the research approach for assessing the impact of Iran's strategic partnerships on its nuclear program. Review approach is adopted to scrutinize current research on Iran's strategic alliances and their contribution towards Iran's nuclear program. The review followed the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) framework (Sarkis-Onofre et al., 2021). The principal objective of this qualitative literature review was to establish, calculate, and blend the current body of knowledge on the subject, precisely aiming on the role of Iran's strategic relationship in its nuclear program.

2.1 Documentation

In this research, information was gathered from the numerous sources relevant to the topic under study, such as scientific journals, books, research reports, and other articles. Suitable journals/researches were recognized through the fundamental terms ("Iran", "nuclear program",

“strategic relationships”, “Iran-China relationship”, “Iran-Russia partnership”, “multilateralism”, “sanctions” and “missile”). The search term was then applied to the Google Scholar search engine.

2.2 Selection

The accessible and easy to get publications from Google Scholar search engine databases were evaluated, examined and vetted, where abstracts were read, and unrelated and irrelevant studies were excluded and omitted from this research. This was done through the selection criteria applied to get related publications—the selection criteria comprised of the inclusion and exclusion criteria as shown in the Table 1.

Table 1 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria of the Study Literature

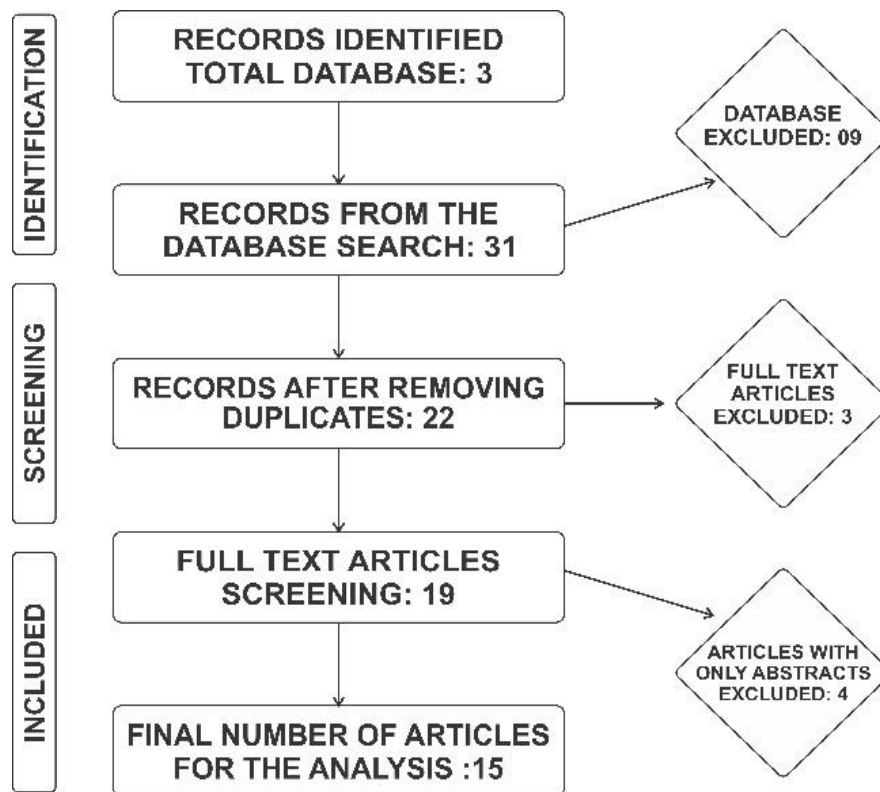
Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
Relevance to the topic: Articles that were appropriate and related to the Iran’s strategic partnerships with Russia, China, Pakistan and North Korea and its nuclear program.	Relevance to the topic: Articles that were unrelated to the research topic.
Time Frame: Articles published from 2020 onwards.	Time Frame: Articles published before 2020.
Language: Articles written in English language.	Language: Articles that were written in languages other than English.
Research Objectives: Accuracy regarding research objectives.	Research Objectives: Ambiguity regarding research objectives.
Outcomes: Studies reporting relevant outcomes.	Outcomes: Studies that do not report the outcomes of interest.

By following this inclusion criteria, the main and the core objective of this research was to conduct a detailed methodical literature survey by arguing the impact of Iran’s strategic partnerships on her nuclear program. Although, various thematic reviews and analyses exist on the Iran’s nuclear program and its strategic alliances but this specific study will analyze the role of Iran's regional alliances in supporting or hampering its nuclear ambitions; also how the strategic partners have helped it alleviate the effects of international sanctions on its nuclear program.

2.3 Eligibility

A total of n=15 publications were reviewed for the paper. The eligibility assessment involved thoroughly reviewing the entire research article. Based on the PRISMA method of screening, evaluation and selection, the researchers collected a total of 31 records from the selected database. As per the standard operating procedure after removing the duplicates, 22 total articles were left. Finally, the researchers selected n = 15 articles strictly observing to the selection criteria (See Fig. 1).

Fig. 1 PRISMA Flow Chart for the Articles Selection Process



2.3.1 Included

The publications found relevant to the topic, legible and considered in the full review were (n=15).

2.3.2 Excluded

The studies considered unqualified and irrelevant after the thorough review were excluded from the study.

Table 2 shows the frequencies of the literature according to their research design. It is apparent from the table that most of the researchers used descriptive analysis (n = 06), subsequently n = 05 opted for the case study while n=04 researchers used comparative analysis as their research design.

Table 2 Frequency of Literature According to their Design

Research Design	Case Study	Comparative Analysis	Descriptive Analysis
No. of Papers	5	4	6

Table 3 sums up the frequencies of the included literature as per their year of publication. As evident, most of the studies (n = 06) were published during 2024, followed by n=3 in 2020; whereas n=2 were published in the year 2021, 2022 and 2023.

Table 3 Frequencies of the Literature According to their Publication Year

Year	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
No. of Papers	3	2	2	2	6

Table 4 gives the frequencies of the literature according to their database/source. It is obvious that an equal frequency of articles i.e. n=4 were from Geopolitics Quarterly, IJELS (International Journal of English Literature & Social Sciences) And Middle East Policy respectively. Congressional Research Service (CRS) provided n = 2, while n = 1 article was acquired from Taylor & Francis.

Table 4 Frequencies of the Literature According to their Database/Source

Database/Source	No. of Papers
Congressional Research Service (CRS)	2
Geopolitics Quarterly	4
International Journal of English Literature & Social Sciences (IJELS)	4
Middle East Policy	4
Taylor & Francis	1

2.4 Validation of Selected Methodology

To ensure the trustworthiness and inclusiveness, the methodology used in this research underwent a detailed validation method. Basic components of the validation process incorporated are discussed below:

2.4.1 Observance of PRISMA Guidelines

The systematic review methodology strictly observed the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines, as Page and McKenzie (2021) mentioned. PRISMA guidelines are broadly accepted and established criteria for carrying out the systematic reviews, thus ensuring a transparent approach to synthesize the literature available on Iran's strategic partners and their role.

2.4.2 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

For a strong methodology, the formulation of a clear and strict inclusion and exclusion criteria was mandatory. These criteria were intended to include the studies that precisely addressed the Iran's partnerships with Russia, China and Pakistan which contribute to the advancement of its nuclear program; thereby enhancing the significance and trustworthiness of the blended literature.

2.4.3 Search Strategy

The search strategy incorporated in picking the articles was extensive, using five dedicated sources—Congressional Research Service (CRS), Geopolitics Quarterly, International Journal of English Literature & Social Sciences (IJELS), Middle East policy and Taylor & Francis. The keywords were wisely picked to include varied aspects of Iran's strategic relations, ensuring none of the relevant and significant study was overlooked.

2.4.4 Data Tabulation and Analysis

Data tabulation was done on the Microsoft word and it turned out to be an organized and systematized approach for managing the diverse information dug out from the selected

articles. This approach was useful in determining frequencies, thereby guaranteeing data precision and connectivity in the write-up.

2.4.5 PRISMA Flow Chart

A PRISMA flow chart (Fig. 1) visually represents the systematic article selection, screening, and inclusion process. This chart improves transparency and serves as a visual validation of the methodological stringency applied in the study.

To sum up, this systematic review does not encompass the similar validation as experimental or modelling studies, rather the validation is in accordance with the customary guidelines, rigorous standards for article selection, and crystal clear reporting of the review procedure. These features on the whole contribute to the robustness and reliability of the methodology incorporated in this study.

3. Review of the Selected Literature

The literature studied in this section supports the discussion and analysis. This literature review provides a comprehensive and an inclusive overview of the existing research, helping to contextualize the existing study within the far-reaching educational landscape. This context is crucial for justifying the chosen methodology by demonstrating gaps in the literature that the current research aims to address. The two themes drawn from the selected articles firstly, Iran's nuclear program and secondly Iran's geopolitical alignments address our first research question. Coming towards the second research question, the two themes i.e. Iran's future strategies in global politics and Iran's geopolitical alignments provide insight into the phenomenon. The three themes established from the carefully chosen articles addressing the third research question are impact of sanctions, Iran's geopolitical alignments and Iran's nuclear program. Detailed review and tabular representation of the common themes addressing research questions is mentioned below:

3.1 Impact of Sanctions

In this part, it is discussed how sanctions have played a vital role in determining Iran's monetary strategies and diplomatic maneuvers. Referring to the Table 5, Scita (2022) categorically highlights China's strategic approach in developing strong and lasting trade relations with Iran despite the U.S. warnings and restrictions. Researcher is of the view that this points towards China playing evasive role in having relations with Iran (Table 5).

On one hand China is interested in having relations with Iran and on the other hand as outlined by Fiedler & Dehnavi (2024) U.S. is imposing financial sanctions to minimize Iran's access to the international markets. Ghani & Asgarian (2021) argued that U.S. employs economic restrictions to segregate Iran from the universal finance but Iran counters this by developing strategic alliances with countries like Russia. It is noteworthy to refer to Koolae et al. (2024) who has summed up in the study how cleverly Iran has used its energy resources as an element of power politics worldwide. In this context, Iran controls oil and gas distributes to demonstrate power; regional military-energy collaboration reinforced through Syria (Bagheri et al., 2024).

Table 5 Key Insights of the Cited Researches Regarding Impact of Sanctions

Theme	Title / Focus	Authors (Year)	Key Insight
	China's Role in Evasion	Scita (2022)	China sustains trade with Iran by bypassing U.S. sanctions through strategic channels.
	U.S. Strategy of	Fiedler &	U.S. employs financial sanctions to

Sanctions & Iran's Foreign Policy	Economic Pressure	Dehnavi (2024)	isolate Iran from global financial systems.
	Barriers to the Formation of the Strategic Alliance between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Russia	Ghani & Asgarian (2021)	U.S. employs economic restrictions to segregate Iran from the universal finance.
	Factors Affecting Syria and the Islamic Republic of Iran's Strategic Alliance in the 1980s	Bagheri et al. (2024)	Iran controls oil and gas distributes to demonstrate power.
	Iran's Energy Diplomacy	Koolae et al. (2024)	Iran leverages oil and gas exports to build strategic influence globally.

3.2 Iran's Nuclear Program

Another commonly found theme is Iran's Nuclear Program and here it is discussed how Iran's nuclear drives persist as a fundamental concern for the U.S. and its allies, shaping global diplomatic and military strategies. Ghani & Asgarian (2021) claimed that Post Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action distrust fuels Iran's strategic seclusion and fragile coalition are also obvious in Iran–Russia dynamics. Referring to the U.S. Mistrust and Withdrawal from JCPOA, Fiedler & Dehnavi (2024) observed the growing and intensifying uncertainty between the U.S. and Iran soon after Trump's JCPOA withdrawal (Table 6).

Table 6 Key Insights from the Included Researches on Iran's Nuclear Program

Theme	Title / Focus	Authors (Year)	Key Insight
Iran's Nuclear Program	Russia-Iran Nuclear Collaboration	Ghani & Asgarian (2021)	Post Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action distrust fuels Iran's strategic seclusion.
	U.S. Mistrust and Withdrawal from JCPOA	Fiedler & Dehnavi (2024)	Focus on post-JCPOA withdrawal dynamics and growing U.S.-Iran mistrust.

3.3 Iran's Geopolitical Alignments

The academic papers under consideration have thoroughly discussed how Iran's foreign policy is molded by alliances with international and regional key players, particularly China, Russia, Pakistan and Middle Eastern states. As highlighted by Scita (2022) China-Iran 25-Year agreement has enabled Iran to develop comprehensive strategic partnership with China with a focus on energy and trade. **Bagheri et al. (2024)** provided historical depth by showing Iran and Syria's sociopolitical and strategic bond that helped shape contemporary coalitions like Iran-Russia in Syria. Russia-Iran cooperation as examined by Koolae et al. (2024) showed how both the countries have cooperated in different fields particularly politics, military and economic sector. Ghani & Asgarian (2021) highlighted that China and Russia use Iran as force rather than their allied state. Iran's influence and role in Middle Eastern conflicts as analyzed by Fiedler & Dehnavi (2024) shows Iran's support Hezbollah, Hamas, and the Houthis in the proxy wars. Another strategically important country in the region is Iraq, Koc (2021) examined Iran's relations with the Iraqi Kurdistan Regional government and the Gulf states. Karim (2023)

assessed Pakistan-Iran ties by stressing upon the cross-border security issues strategic differences (Table 7).

Table 7 Key Insights on Iran’s Geopolitical Alignments from the Reviewed Researches

Theme	Title / Focus	Authors (Year)	Key Insight
Iran’s Geopolitical Alignments	Iran as a Power rather Ally	Ghani & Asgarian (2021)	Highlights Iran’s role as a poer rather than ally.
	Iran’s Relations with Iraqi Kurdistan	Koc (2021)	Examines Iran’s relations with the Iraqi Kurdistan Regional government and the Gulf states.
	China-Iran 25-Year Agreement	Scita (2022)	Details Iran-China strategic deal emphasizing long-term trade and energy cooperation.
	Iran and Pakistan Relations	Karim (2023)	Focuses on border security, sectarian tensions, and strategic divergence in Iran-Pakistan ties.
	Iran and Syria’s Bond	Bagheri et al. (2024)	Explores Iran and Syria’s sociopolitical and strategic bond that helped shape contemporary coalitions
	Iran’s Influence in Middle Eastern Conflicts	Fiedler & Dehnavi (2024)	Covers Iran’s proxy support for Hezbollah, Hamas, and Houthis to expand regional influence.
	Russia-Iran Military and Political Cooperation	Koolae et al. (2024)	Analyzes joint operations and alliance in Syria and broader military ties.

3.4 Iran’s Role in Proxy Wars

In light of the under review research papers it is evident that Iran’s involvement in regional encounters through proxy groups is a critical component of its foreign policy. Ghani & Asgarian (2021) claimed that Iran's most long-lasting and robust alliances are with the non-state actors that are determined by ideological and security concerns. In their research Fiedler & Dehnavi (2024) pinpointed Iran’s support for proxy groups by shedding light on Iran’s backing of Hamas, Hezbollah, and the Houthis. Iran and Syria’s military cooperation as analyzed by Koolae et al. (2024) shows Iran’s military presence in Syria as a part of its comprehensive anti-U.S. approach and strategy. **Bagheri et al. (2024)** in his research has a central focus on Iran-Syria military cooperation - an alliance that is **inherent, ideological, and strategic**, tracing back to 1980s shared opposition to Israel and Iraq. Likewise, Koç (2021) highlighted Iran’s involvement in Iraq and its realistic connection with the KRGthereby, exercising its influence in Iraq and Kurdistan. Karim (2023) examined how Iran’s rivalry and sectarian divide with Kingdom of Saudi Arabia fuels conflicts in Yemen and Syria (Table 8).

Table 8 Key Insights from the Cited Researches on Iran’s Role in Proxy Wars

Theme	Title / Focus	Authors (Year)	Key Insight
	Iran’s Influence in Iraq and Kurdistan	Koç (2021)	Examination of Iran’s pragmatic relations with Iraq and the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG).
	Iran and Non-State	Ghani & Asgarian	Analysis of Iran's most long-lasting

Iran's Role in Proxy Wars	Actors	(2021)	and robust alliances are with the non-state actors
	Iran vs. Saudi Arabia Rivalry	Karim (2023)	Exploration of sectarian conflicts and rivalry fueling wars in Yemen and Syria.
	Iran-Syria Military Cooperation	Bagheri et al. (2024)	Discussing Iran-Syria military cooperation as an alliance that is inherent .
	Iran's Support for Proxy Groups	Fiedler & Dehnavi (2024)	Iran's support for Hamas, Hezbollah, and Houthis as instruments of regional influence.
	Iran-Syria Military Cooperation	Koolae et al. (2024)	Analysis of Iran's sustained military presence in Syria against U.S. influence.

3.5 Iran's Future Strategies in Global Politics

The last yet not the least important commonly found theme is Iran's long-term strategy that includes balancing alliances, progressing its nuclear program, and directing economic pressures. Scita (2022) highlighted how China and Russia are serving as economic lifelines for Iran by discussing Iran's dependence on China and Russia to counter the Western economic seclusion. Referring, to the potential U.S.-Iran re-engagement Fiedler & Dehnavi (2024) assessed whether future U.S. governments might reconsider nuclear dialogue or not. Discussing Iran's military and energy diplomacy Koolae et al. (2024) argued that there is an increase in Iran's military presence and energy diplomacy in order to sustain its global standing. Similarly, Bagheri (2024) also examined the military strategy in Syria by arguing that energy and security diplomacy are knotted. Discussing the security consequences of Iran's mounting influence in the region Karim (2023) explores how Iran's growing regional role influences the strategic stance of its neighboring states. Ghani & Asgarian (2021) analyzed how Iran relies on Russia and China, but the point to be noted is that the strategic depth is partial; these two states use Iran strategically against the Western countries (Table 9).

Table 9 Key Insights on Iran's Future Strategies in Global Politics

Theme	Title / Focus	Authors (Year)	Key Insight
Iran's Future Strategies in Global Politics	Iran's Reliance on China and Russia	Ghani & Asgarian (2021)	Analyzing how Iran relies on Russia and China, but the strategic depth is partial.
	China and Russia as Economic Lifelines	Scita (2022)	Iran's strategic dependence on China and Russia to survive Western economic pressures.
	Security Implications of Iran's Rising Influence	Karim (2023)	Analysis of how Iran's regional ascendancy impacts neighboring countries' security strategies.
	Iran's Military Strategy in Syria	Bagheri et al. (2024)	Examining the military strategy in Syria by arguing that energy and security diplomacy are knotted.
	Potential U.S.-Iran	Fiedler &	Evaluation of future possibilities for

	Re-engagement	Dehnavi (2024)	renewed nuclear negotiations with the U.S.
	Iran's Military and Energy Diplomacy	Koolaei et al. (2024)	Analysis of Iran's increased military assertiveness and energy diplomacy to sustain influence.

4. Conclusion

The assembled data clearly highlights the impacts of Iran's strategic partnerships on its nuclear program in the light of commonly found themes i.e. impact of sanctions, Iran's nuclear program, Iran's geopolitical alignments, its role in proxy wars and its future strategies in global politics.

First of all, conclusively sanctions have been used by the United States as an alternate and a substitute to the use of military force in quest of definite policy goals such as non-proliferation. Clearly, it seems, Iran is in pursuit of having nuclear-weapons capability and competency that can be swiftly put into place when it makes the ultimate decision. Or we can say, nuclear strategy for Iran is a long-term negotiating tool rather than an instantaneous military plan. Most importantly, efforts to overturn and unsettle Tehran's nuclear activities by pressurizing external actors will yield limited result because Iran is progressively manufacturing and developing much of its nuclear infrastructure on its own.

Summarizing Iran's strategic relations, it is evident from the researches reviewed that Iran is collaborating with Russia to uphold military operations against Western-backed blocs. Interestingly, Russia has been observed supporting Iran time and again to counterbalance U.S. influence in regional conflicts. Likewise, China-Iran partnership cannot only be seen in strategic relations but both the countries are having strong economic ties as well. A point to be noted is that trade and investments have both profited from and suffered under UN and US sanctions. China - Iran agreement also has a positive signal for Pakistan as both Iran and Pakistan evidently and clearly incline towards China for apparent motives.

In a nut shell, Iran has proven its position as an autonomous power in the region and has improved its diplomatic negotiating power and acting capacity at the regional and international levels. Not only this but Iran is also able to draw the backing of Russia and China and demonstrate its role as one of the strategic actors in the region.

4.1. Implications

The reason for underlining the implications is to develop a **deeper understanding of Iran's strategic activities and their wider geopolitical impact**. The implications are:

- Iran's capacity to develop its nuclear infrastructure independently reduces the effectiveness of external pressure.
- Iran seems to use its nuclear program more as an influence in dialogues rather its direct armed use.
- Cooperation in different fields with Russia and China fortify Iran's regional influence and minimizes its seclusion.
- Lastly, through proxy wars and strategic connections, Iran places itself as a significant rival to the U.S. supremacy in the region.

4.2. Recommendations

The recommendations given below are intended for multilateral bodies such as the United Nations and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), looking for a balanced approach that combines pressure with diplomacy to redesign Iran's regional behavior and nuclear drive.

- Sanctions to be combined with nonstop diplomatic engagement to effect Iran's behavior more efficiently.
- Backing international monitoring bodies like the IAEA to keep a close watch on Iran's nuclear progress.
- Involving Iran's strategic partners in talks to create broader and operational pacts.
- Investing in peace keeping and administrative solutions in the regions that are affected by Iran-backed groups.

To wind up the whole debate, researcher has identified Iran's geopolitical alignments to assess its relationships with main global and regional actors such as Russia, China and Pakistan.

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