IRAN/ISRAEL WAR AND ITS IMPACT ON NIGERIA'S STRATEGIC INTEREST

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Abstract

The paper analyses the Iran–Israel war and its implications for Nigeria's strategic interests, showing how a geographically distant conflict can influence the country's economy, diplomacy, security, and ideology. Using secondary data and a qualitative analytical method, it applies Neo-realist and Neo-liberal theories to explore how the anarchic international system, power politics, and cooperation potential shape Nigeria's responses. Findings reveal that the war's effects extend far beyond the Middle East, presenting both challenges and opportunities for Nigeria. Economically, instability in the region raises global oil prices, potentially boosting Nigeria's short-term revenues. However, such volatility threatens macroeconomic stability, fuels inflation, and complicates fiscal planning. Diplomatically, Nigeria must navigate delicate relations with global powers and regional actors, while security risks include heightened extremist propaganda and transnational threats. This study is distinct from prior research by integrating Nigeria's economic, diplomatic, security, and ideological vulnerabilities into a unified framework, while linking oil price shocks directly to macroeconomic planning and inflation an often-overlooked dimension. The dual-lens use of Neo-realism and Neo-liberalism highlights both competitive power struggles and opportunities for cooperation, offering a nuanced understanding of Nigeria's positioning in the global system. The paper concludes that Nigeria must reduce dependence on oil to mitigate risks from conflict-driven price shocks. It recommends diversifying into agriculture, manufacturing, and renewable energy to strengthen economic resilience and ensure stability during geopolitical crises.

Keywords: War**,** Strategic Interests**,** Iran-Isreal, Neorealism, Security

Introduction

The Iran–Israel conflict, rooted in ideological, geopolitical, and security tensions, is one of the Middle East's most volatile flashpoints. While never escalating into a declared full-scale war, it manifests through proxy battles, cyber operations, diplomatic isolation, and intelligence activities (Roomi, 2023). Ideologically, Iran positions itself as a counterbalance to Israel's regional nuclear power status, leveraging anti-Israel rhetoric to strengthen domestic legitimacy and assert leadership in the Muslim world. The rivalry's broader

implications include threats to Middle Eastern stability, risks of escalation involving global powers, and disruptions to international markets.

Existing scholarship predominantly focuses on the Middle East or directly involved actors, offering limited insight into the conflict's effects on distant but strategically affected countries like Nigeria. Some studies address Middle East crises' influence on oil markets, but often group African oil producers together, overlooking Nigeria's unique position as a leading crude exporter, influential OIC member, and diplomatic heavyweight in Africa. Moreover, few analyses integrate Nigeria's economic dependencies, domestic religious dynamics, and foreign policy strategies into a single analytical framework.

For Nigeria, the stakes are significant. Disruptions to Iranian oil facilities may push global oil prices upward, creating short-term fiscal gains. Yet, heavy reliance on oil exports leaves Nigeria vulnerable to price volatility, threatening macroeconomic stability. Domestically, global Islamic and geopolitical narratives risk heightening religious polarization, while foreign policy must balance OIC commitments with African and Western alliances (Daily Trust, 2025).

This study fills a critical gap by offering a Nigeria-specific, multidimensional assessment of the Iran–Israel conflict's impacts. Using Neo-realism and Neo-liberalism, it captures both competitive, power-driven interactions and cooperative opportunities, revealing how even distant conflicts can influence Nigeria's regional and global posture.

Statement of Problem

Despite extensive research on the Iran–Israel conflict, most analyses emphasize regional security, proxy warfare, or energy markets without examining the nuanced consequences for Nigeria. Africa-focused studies often generalize oil-producing states, missing how Middle East instability intersects with Nigeria's economic fragility, religious sensitivities, and security concerns. Existing literature also tends to treat oil price shocks in isolation, ignoring their interplay with domestic politics and foreign policy alignments. This oversight leaves a conceptual gap in understanding how a remote geopolitical rivalry can generate both short-term economic windfalls and long-term strategic risks for Nigeria. By integrating economic, diplomatic, security, and ideological dimensions within a dual-theoretical lens, this study addresses that gap, exploring how the conflict shapes Nigeria's vulnerabilities, opportunities, and need for strategic recalibration.

Conceptual Clarification

This section iinterrogates the Iran–Israel war through a multidimensional lens economic, diplomatic, security, and ideological challenging the prevailing one-dimensional oil-market narrative and positioning Nigeria's experience as a critical, yet underexplored, site in the global ripple effects of Middle East instability.

War: A conceptualization

War is traditionally understood as organized, large-scale, and often violent conflict between political communities such as states, nations, or groups. At its

core, war entails the use of force to achieve political objectives, reflecting the classic definition by Clausewitz, who argued that "war is merely the continuation of policy by other means" (Baylis *et al*, 2023). This perspective underscores war as an instrument of political intent rather than random violence, highlighting its strategic and rational dimensions. Despite its political character, war invariably involves significant human, material, and moral costs.

Modern scholarship emphasizes that war is not purely a matter of military engagements but a complex social phenomenon shaped by cultural, economic, and ideological factors. Constructivist theorists argue that perceptions, identities, and social narratives contribute significantly to why and how wars occur (Kaldor, 2022). For example, wars of nationalism or religious conflicts often stem from collective identities and beliefs rather than purely material interests. This broader view helps explain variations in the causes, conduct, and consequences of wars across different historical and cultural contexts.

Contemporary conflicts increasingly blur traditional distinctions between war and peace, as seen in phenomena like cyber warfare, terrorism, and hybrid conflicts where state and non-state actors employ both conventional and unconventional tactics (Kaldor, 2022). Such developments challenge traditional definitions and laws of war, raising questions about legitimacy, legality, and the protection of civilians. As the nature of war evolves, understanding its concept remains crucial not only for military strategy but also for international relations, law, and humanitarian efforts (Tadjdeh, 2024).

Contextual Overview of the Iran–Israel Conflict

The animosity between Iran and Israel is deeply rooted and can be traced back to the aftermath of the 1979 Iranian Revolution. Following the revolution, the newly established Islamic Republic of Iran, under the leadership of Ayatollah Khomeini, openly declared Israel an illegitimate state occupying Palestinian land and adopted a staunch anti-Zionist stance. The foundation of their enmity lies in a complex interplay of regional power rivalry, ideological opposition, proxy conflicts, the influence of external powers, and the strategic importance of oil politics (Baltaci, 2022). In recent years, Iran's support for Hezbollah and Hamas in their attacks on Israeli-occupied territories has further intensified tensions and sustained a long-standing cycle of hostility and indirect warfare, although neither Iran nor Israel is officially recognized as a nuclear weapons state under the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) the potential threat of nuclear conflict has increasingly entered global discourse. The issue of nuclear proliferation, particularly Israel's perception of Iran's nuclear ambitions as an existential threat, adds a critical and dangerous dimension to their rivalry (Minhas, Shujahi, & Saeed, 2024).

Key Features of the Conflict: Proxy Warfare

Iran's use of proxy forces remains central to its strategy against Israel and U.S. influence in the Middle East. Recent assessments suggest Iran's network

including Hezbollah in Lebanon, Hamas in Gaza, and pro-Iran militias in Syria and Iraq has faced significant military and political pressure in recent years, leading to operational setbacks (Task & Purpose, 2024). For example, Israeli strikes and Western sanctions have disrupted Hezbollah's logistics and diminished its battlefield strength, though the group continues to threaten northern Israel. Despite these setbacks, Iran continues to invest heavily in its proxies. As of 2023, Tehran was estimated to contribute approximately $700 million annually to Hezbollah and up to $350 million to Hamas (Fabian, 2023).

These investments support not only military activities but also political influence and social infrastructure, giving Iran a durable presence in conflict zones without direct engagement. This allows Iran to extend its reach across the region while maintaining plausible deniability. However, signs of fatigue are emerging. Analysts from the Institute for the Study of War (ISW, 2024) noted a "deafening silence" from Iran's proxies during recent escalations with Israel, indicating internal fragmentation or diminishing responsiveness. This could either signal a strategic pause or the weakening cohesion of Iran's proxy apparatus. Either way, the region remains on edge, as the proxy system has historically served as a key driver of instability and a tool for asymmetric retaliation.

Cyber and intelligence warfare

Cyber and covert intelligence operations have emerged as powerful tools in the Iran–Israel conflict. One of the most notable cases was the Stuxnet cyberattack (circa 2010), which targeted Iran's Natanz nuclear facility and is widely believed to have been a joint Israeli-American operation (InCyber, 2023). Stuxnet not only delayed Iran's enrichment program but also revealed a new front in modern warfare: cyber sabotage of critical infrastructure. Iran has since expanded its cyber capabilities in retaliation. According to Radware (2024), Iran has increased its offensive cyber operations as a substitute for conventional military strikes, targeting Israeli banking systems, utilities, and civilian infrastructure. These campaigns are often linked to groups affiliated with the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), and their aim extends beyond disruption they also seek to erode public confidence and cause economic damage. The U.S. Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA, 2023) has confirmed that Iran-linked threat actors continue to target both regional and international networks. Meanwhile, Mossad-led assassinations and sabotage such as the 2020 killing of nuclear scientist Mohsen Fakhrizadeh underscore Israel's emphasis on high-level intelligence operations (Archyde, 2024). Together, these cyber and covert tactics reflect a persistent, high-stakes shadow war with global security implications.

Strategic alliances

Strategic alliances shape and intensify the Iran–Israel conflict. Israel enjoys unwavering U.S. support, receiving advanced military technology and diplomatic backing at the UN. More recently, Israel normalized relations with several Gulf states most notably the UAE

and Bahrain under the 2020 Abraham Accords, strengthening a regional coalition against Iranian expansionism (Sanam & Neil, 2023). Iran, on the other hand, aligns with Russia, Syria, and various non-state actors, forming a counter-bloc aimed at resisting U.S. and Israeli influence. Though Tehran has engaged in diplomatic normalization talks with Saudi Arabia, fundamental tensions remain, particularly around missile attacks and ideological divides over Syria and Lebanon (Washington Post, 2025). Iran's continued support for the Assad regime and Shiite militias places it in direct opposition to Western-aligned Arab governments. Recent events highlight how Gulf states are recalibrating. Following Iran's missile strike on a U.S. base in Qatar in 2025, GCC members like Saudi Arabia and the UAE responded cautiously, signaling a desire to balance between de-escalation and deterrence (Aljazeera, 2025). These diplomatic shifts demonstrate a complex regional chessboard where alliances are increasingly strategic rather than ideological, with states hedging between power blocs. The conflict threatens global energy supply chains and draws the attention of superpowers, thereby increasing its international significance.

Nigeria's Strategic Interests: An Overview

Nigeria's strategic interests reflect its pursuit of economic stability, national security, and regional influence as Africa's largest economy and most populous nation. These interests span critical areas such as energy security, counter-terrorism efforts, and diplomatic relations with global powers. Understanding them is essential for assessing how external conflicts, like the Iran–Israel war, shape Nigeria's policies and future trajectory. The following are Nigeria's Strategic Interests.

Energy Security

Energy security is a core strategic interest for Nigeria, given that oil and gas revenues account for over 80% of its export earnings and nearly half of government revenue (Adebayo & Bello, 2025). Nigeria aims to ensure stable production, secure infrastructure, and maintain access to international markets despite challenges such as pipeline vandalism, oil theft, and global price volatility. The government also seeks to diversify its energy mix to include renewable and gas-to-power projects, both to reduce domestic energy deficits and to align with global climate goals (Eze & Okafor, 2023). The geopolitical implications of Middle East conflicts, like the Iran–Israel tensions, further underscore Nigeria's vulnerability to external shocks in global oil markets, making energy security both an economic and diplomatic priority

Economic Stability

Nigeria's strategic interest in economic stability revolves around safeguarding macroeconomic fundamentals, attracting investment, and reducing dependence on oil revenues (Nwachukwu, 2023). The country grapples with high inflation, currency volatility, and debt sustainability issues, all exacerbated by fluctuations in global oil prices and external shocks like geopolitical conflicts (Obi & Musa, 2025). Economic stability is also crucial for addressing widespread poverty and unemployment, which fuel social unrest and migration pressures. Nigeria's recent economic

reforms, including foreign exchange liberalization and subsidy removal, reflect efforts to align with global economic norms while ensuring sustainable growth (Brown, 2024). Ensuring economic resilience has thus become a priority in Nigeria's strategic calculus, influencing both domestic policies and international engagements.

Security and Counterterrorism

Security and counterterrorism remain critical strategic interests for Nigeria, given persistent threats from Boko Haram, ISWAP, and other armed groups operating in the northeast and across the Sahel (Folarin & Abdullahi, 2025). These security challenges not only threaten national cohesion and human security but also disrupt economic activities, especially in agriculture and cross-border trade. Nigeria has pursued military offensives alongside deradicalization and community engagement programs, while also seeking regional cooperation through frameworks like the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) (Agbaje, 2024). International partnerships, including security assistance from the U.S., EU, and regional bodies, are increasingly vital as Nigeria aims to balance hard security measures with development-focused strategies to combat the root causes of extremism

Diplomatic Alignment

Diplomatic alignment is a key Nigerian strategic interest, as the country seeks to position itself as a regional leader and influential global player, balancing relations among diverse partners including the U.S., China, the EU, and fellow African states (Udeh, 2024). Nigeria's foreign policy emphasizes economic diplomacy, regional peacekeeping, and active participation in multilateral institutions like ECOWAS, the African Union, and the United Nations. Recent geopolitical tensions, such as the Iran–Israel conflict and the shifting dynamics of great-power rivalry, compel Nigeria to carefully navigate diplomatic ties to avoid alienating partners critical for trade, security assistance, and investment (Ikenna & Yusuf, 2024). This strategic balancing act is crucial for safeguarding national interests while projecting Nigeria's vision as a stabilizing force in Africa and beyond

The Impact of the Iran- Israel War on Nigeria:

The Iran–Israel war reverberates far beyond the Middle East, posing economic, security, and diplomatic challenges for countries like Nigeria. As a major oil exporter and regional power, Nigeria feels the conflict's ripple effects through global oil markets and shifting geopolitical alliances. Exploring these impacts reveals how distant wars shape Nigeria's strategic interests and foreign policy choices. The followings age the Impact of the Iran- Israel War on Nigeria:

Economic Impact (Global Oil Prices and Supply)

The Iran–Israel war poses significant economic risks for Nigeria, primarily through disruptions in global oil markets, where tensions in the Middle East often led to price volatility and supply uncertainties (Adebayo & Bello, 2025). While higher oil prices might temporarily boost Nigeria's export revenues, they also threaten the country's economic stability by driving up domestic fuel costs and exacerbating

inflation, particularly following subsidy removals and currency reforms (Nwachukwu, 2023). Moreover, instability in oil shipping routes like the Strait of Hormuz can disrupt global supply chains, affecting Nigeria's trading partners and indirectly dampening foreign investment inflows. Thus, the economic impact of the conflict extends beyond mere price gains, creating a precarious balance between revenue windfalls and macroeconomic vulnerability (Obi & Musa, 2025).

Security Impact

The Iran–Israel war also affects Nigeria's security landscape, as heightened Middle East tensions divert global attention and resources from African security challenges, potentially weakening international support for counterterrorism operations in the Sahel and Lake Chad regions (Folarin & Abdullahi, 2025). Additionally, escalating conflict could embolden extremist networks with ideological or financial ties to Iran or other actors, indirectly influencing radical movements in Nigeria (Agbaje, 2024). Concerns about arms flows, illicit financing, and recruitment across transnational jihadist networks further complicate Nigeria's domestic security efforts. Consequently, the conflict intensifies Nigeria's challenge of maintaining internal security while adapting to a shifting global security architecture increasingly focused on Middle East dynamics (Jessop, 2024).

Diplomatic and Foreign Policy Impacts

The Iran–Israel war places Nigeria in a complex diplomatic position, given its desire to maintain positive relations with Western allies like the United States and the EU, while also engaging constructively with Muslim-majority nations and non-aligned blocs (Udeh, 2024). Nigeria must tread carefully in multilateral forums such as the UN or OIC, where geopolitical alliances can become contentious, particularly over Middle East conflicts. Public opinion within Nigeria, influenced by religious and ideological affiliations, also pressures the government to adopt positions that could strain external relationships (Ikenna & Yusuf, 2024). Thus, the Iran–Israel conflict complicates Nigeria's foreign policy, forcing it to balance economic interests, regional solidarity, and strategic alliances without alienating critical partners or destabilizing internal cohesion

Geopolitical Impact

Geopolitically, the Iran–Israel war reshapes global alliances and regional power dynamics in ways that indirectly affect Nigeria's strategic positioning in Africa and beyond (Adebayo & Bello, 2025). Rising tensions between major powers like the U.S. and Iran, or Israel's alignment with Gulf states, influence broader geopolitical trends, including energy politics, arms trade, and multilateral diplomacy, all of which intersect with Nigeria's interests. Nigeria must navigate these shifting fault lines to secure economic partnerships, security assistance, and investment while avoiding entanglement in polarized global rivalries (Nwachukwu, 2023). Additionally, geopolitical instability in the Middle East threatens to redirect global attention and aid away from Africa, weakening momentum on critical issues such as counter-terrorism, development

assistance, and climate finance (Obi & Musa, 2025). Thus, the Iran–Israel conflict has far-reaching geopolitical repercussions for Nigeria's long-term strategic outlook.

Table 1: Showing the Iran–Israel War and Its Impact on Nigeria's Strategic Interests:

Dimension	**Impact on Nigeria**
Economic Impact	- Potential rise in global oil prices due to Middle East instability → Short-term revenue boost for Nigeria as an oil exporter. - However, volatility threatens macroeconomic stability and complicates budget planning. - Risk of supply chain disruptions for imports (e.g., refined fuel, machinery).
Security Impact	- Heightened global insecurity could embolden regional extremist groups. - Possible increase in arms trafficking and illicit flows through West Africa. - Nigeria's armed forces may need to reassess regional threats linked to broader Middle East tensions.
Diplomatic Impact	- Pressure on Nigeria to take diplomatic positions in international fora (e.g., UN votes). - Need to balance relations with Western partners and countries in the Middle East. - Risk of diplomatic fallout if Nigeria's stance displeases key allies or trading partners.
Geopolitical Impact	- Shift in global power alignments may affect Nigeria's partnerships, investments, and foreign aid. - Increased global focus on Middle East conflicts could distract attention from African security issues. - Opportunity for Nigeria to position itself as a mediator or advocate for peace in international diplomacy.

Source: *Nigerian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2024. Press releases and statements.*

Theoretical Discourse

Nweke & Enwere (2024) in their work stated that it is more practical for man to change and use diplomatic strategies to assure his survival in the world of interests and violence, an unforgiving, cruel globe where he must contend with the elements, animals, and the like through cordial communication and relationships. Man has embraced a variety of ideologies and/or ideas in an attempt to rationalize the essence of his existence and the method by which his fundamental problems can be resolved in order to deal with the challenge of hostility. This article adopts Neorealism and Neoliberalism to explain Nigeria's strategic posture amid the Iran–Israel conflict.

Neo-Realism Theory

Neo-realism or structural realism, as developed by Kenneth Waltz, assumes that the international system is anarchic, meaning no central authority exists to regulate state behavior, and that states are rational actors primarily driven by the pursuit of power, security, and survival (Waltz,1979). It expands on classical realism but adds a systemic viewpoint, emphasizing the international system's structure as the main factor influencing state conduct rather than human nature. The underlying premise of neo-realism is anarchy, which holds that there is no central authority in the international arena that can enforce laws or guarantee state security. States are forced to function in a self-help structure under an anarchic scenario, where each must rely on its own resources to ensure its survival.

According to Waltz, nations are logical, cohesive entities that constantly work to maintain their security and relative strength in a cutthroat and frequently antagonistic international setting. Even if states do not want violence, they must foresee threats, develop their militaries, and utilize power-balancing tactics because there is no overarching global government. Therefore, actions like establishing alliances, upholding strategic neutrality, or practicing deterrence are logical reactions to systemic vulnerability rather than necessarily hostile ones.

Under this framework, Nigeria's actions ranging from diplomatic neutrality to economic hedging reflect a realist calculation to preserve sovereignty and internal stability in a volatile global environment. Rather than take ideologically motivated positions, Nigeria prioritizes material national interests such as oil revenue, regional influence, and internal cohesion, this is evident in its cautious engagement during the Iran–Israel crisis, where Nigeria neither takes sides nor escalates tensions, but rather calls for de-escalation while positioning itself to benefit economically from disruptions in global oil markets. This aligns with the neorealist emphasis on relative gains where a state is less concerned with maximizing absolute benefits and more focused on maintaining or improving its position relative to others (Amao, 2019). Moreover, the theory's assumption that states act rationally in a

self-help system explains Nigeria's diplomatic balancing between the West, Islamic countries, and regional allies, seeking to avoid entanglement while ensuring strategic advantages (VDU, 2022). In conclusion, neo-realism provides a convincing paradigm for comprehending Nigeria's interest-based, pragmatic foreign policy during external crises like the war between Israel and Iran.

Neo-liberalism Theory

Neo-liberalism theory was not founded by a single person but emerged through the ideas of several influential economists and thinkers in the 20th century. Key figures such as Friedrich Hayek and Milton Friedman played central roles in shaping neoliberal thought, advocating for free markets, limited government intervention, privatization, and deregulation as pathways to economic efficiency and individual freedom. Hayek's The Road to Serfdom (1944) warned against excessive state control, while Friedman promoted monetarism and economic liberalization. Additionally, the Mont Pelerin Society, founded in 1947, brought together scholars like Hayek, Friedman, and others to promote neoliberal principles globally. Thus, neoliberalism developed as a collective intellectual movement rather than being the creation of a single theorist. Neoliberalism rests on several key assumptions about how economies and societies function best. It assumes that free markets are the most efficient way to allocate resources and drive economic growth, believing that competition fosters innovation, efficiency, and consumer choice. It holds that individual freedom especially economic freedom is fundamental, and that people should be free to pursue their own interests with minimal state interference. Neoliberalism also assumes that government intervention often leads to inefficiency, bureaucracy, and distortion of markets, so the role of the state should be limited mainly to protecting property rights, enforcing contracts, and maintaining monetary stability. Additionally, it presumes that privatization and deregulation improve efficiency by transferring services and industries from public to private control. Overall, neoliberalism is built on the belief that market-oriented reforms create prosperity and personal liberty.

Neoliberalism has faced significant criticism from scholars, activists, and policymakers who argue that its policies often lead to growing inequality, as wealth becomes concentrated among the rich while social safety nets are weakened. Critics contend that an excessive focus on free markets and privatization undermines essential public services like education, healthcare, and social welfare, leaving vulnerable populations without adequate support.

Neoliberalism is relevant in explaining aspects of the Iran–Israel conflict and its impact on Nigeria's strategic interests because it highlights how global economic interdependence and market-driven policies influence international relations.

Unlike Nweke & Enwere (2024), who approach the question of survival in a hostile world largely through the lens of diplomacy and ideological adaptation, this paper applies Neo-realism to Nigeria's Iran–Israel war posture in a way that fuses

systemic power analysis with domestic vulnerability considerations. Earlier works using Neo-realism to study African foreign policy (e.g., Amao, 2019; VDU, 2022) tend to emphasize military alliances, deterrence, and geopolitical alignments as expressions of state rationality in an anarchic system. In contrast, this paper extends the framework to capture non-military strategic calculations such as economic hedging, religious cohesion management, and diplomatic neutrality that Nigeria deploys to preserve sovereignty and avoid entanglement in distant conflicts. This approach reframes Neo-realism beyond its conventional military-security focus, showing that for resource-dependent and religiously diverse states like Nigeria, the pursuit of relative gains also involves internal stability and economic positioning, not just external power balancing.

Similarly, while prior studies have often used Neo-liberalism to explain Nigeria's domestic market reforms, trade liberalization, or participation in regional economic blocs, this paper innovatively applies it to the foreign policy consequences of global market disruptions caused by geopolitical crises. Rather than limiting neoliberalism to the logic of free markets, this study connects its assumptions market stability, foreign investment flows, and global economic integration directly to Nigeria's diplomatic behaviour during the Iran–Israel conflict. This differs from earlier literature that treats neoliberalism as a purely economic model, by showing how its principles shape diplomatic restraint and strategic neutrality in order to safeguard oil revenues, avoid sanctions, and maintain investor confidence. In doing so, the paper offers a dual-theoretical reading that integrates Neo-realism's survival logic with Neo-liberalism's interdependence logic, producing a more holistic explanation of Nigeria's strategic posture a perspective absent in previous related works.

Empirical Literatures

Adebayo and Bello (2025) conducted an empirical analysis of how geopolitical tensions in the Middle East, including conflicts involving Iran and Israel, influence Nigeria's economic stability through oil price volatility. Using econometric modeling on monthly oil price data and Nigeria's macroeconomic indicators from 2000 to 2023, they found that even short-lived conflicts significantly impact Nigeria's exchange rates, inflation, and fiscal balances. Their findings show that while oil price spikes initially increase government revenue, prolonged instability creates uncertainty for investors and triggers macroeconomic instability due to Nigeria's over-dependence on oil exports. This study provides empirical evidence that external geopolitical shocks, such as the Iran–Israel war, are critical determinants of Nigeria's economic resilience and underline the urgency for economic diversification policies.

Udeh (2024) conducted a mixed-methods study examining how Nigeria's diplomatic and foreign policy decisions are shaped by geopolitical crises in the Middle East, including the Iran–Israel conflict. Drawing on interviews with Nigerian diplomats and content analysis of Nigeria's official foreign policy statements from 2010 to 2022, Udeh found that Nigeria increasingly adopts a pragmatic, non-

aligned stance to avoid alienating key partners in both Western and Islamic blocs. The study highlighted that Nigeria's policy is deeply influenced by neo-liberal concerns for market stability and economic partnerships, rather than purely ideological or religious solidarity. Empirically, the research shows how conflicts like the Iran–Israel war indirectly pressure Nigeria's foreign policy apparatus to balance economic interests, domestic public opinion, and regional leadership ambitions.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this paper reveal that the Iran–Israel war has multidimensional impacts on Nigeria's strategic interests, influencing its economy through volatile oil prices, creating security risks by diverting global counter-terrorism resources, and complicating Nigeria's diplomatic balancing act among global powers and regional partners. Importantly, the paper demonstrates that Nigeria's foreign policy responses are increasingly shaped by a neo-liberal concern for maintaining economic stability and investor confidence, even a midst geopolitical turmoil (Ikenna & Yusuf, 2024). This analysis differs from previous studies, which have largely treated Nigeria's foreign policy as reactive or driven solely by political or religious solidarity, without fully integrating the economic imperatives of neo-liberalism into the explanation (Obi & Musa, 2025; Udeh, 2024). Unlike earlier works focusing narrowly on domestic economic reforms or regional security issues, this paper uniquely links distant geopolitical conflicts like the Iran–Israel war to Nigeria's broader strategic calculus, emphasizing how global market dynamics and geopolitical shifts intersect to shape the country's foreign policy choices. Nonetheless, it also aligns with prior research in recognizing Nigeria's vulnerability to external shocks and the need for pragmatic diplomacy to safeguard national interests (Nwachukwu, 2023). Thus, while this paper builds on existing scholarship, it contributes a novel analytical lens by situating Nigeria's geopolitical strategies firmly within a neo-liberal framework. The central thrust of this research lies in interrogating how a conflict geographically distant from Nigeria the Iran–Israel war can still penetrate Nigeria's strategic environment in economic, diplomatic, security, and ideological terms. Conventional scholarship on the Middle East crisis often assumes that its effects are confined to the region itself or to major global powers. Even when Africa is mentioned, it is frequently in the context of generalized oil price dynamics, neglecting the unique vulnerability and agency of Nigeria as both a top African oil producer and an influential member of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). This paper challenges that narrow framing by asking: *If the Middle East remains a crucible of geopolitical instability, what does it mean for the strategic autonomy, policy flexibility, and internal stability of a country like Nigeria?*

Conceptually, this research draws from Neo-realism to explain the competitive power politics shaping state behaviour in an anarchic global system, and from Neo-liberalism to account for the cooperative opportunities and economic interdependencies that arise even amid conflict. The findings suggest that while Nigeria's short-term economic gains from oil price spikes echo trends observed in

prior works on resource-exporting states during crises, its long-term vulnerabilities inflationary pressure, fiscal instability, religiously charged domestic tensions, and diplomatic balancing acts are underexplored in the literature. Theoretically, this dual-lens approach exposes a tension: Neo-realism underscores Nigeria's reactive posture to systemic power shifts, while Neo-liberalism highlights its potential to leverage economic diversification and multilateral cooperation to mitigate conflict-driven shocks.

This study's findings diverge from earlier Africa-focused analyses that reduce the impact of Middle East conflicts to crude oil market fluctuations. It expands the debate by integrating domestic ideological and security dimensions into the analysis and by showing that Nigeria's diplomatic alignments are not static but recalibrated in response to shifting global fault lines. At the same time, the research aligns with previous studies in acknowledging the volatility that oil-dependent economies face during geopolitical crises. By bridging these perspectives, the paper situates Nigeria not as a passive bystander but as an active node in the web of global interdependencies shaped by the Iran–Israel conflicts a framing that redefines how distant wars are understood in relation to African strategic interests.

Conclusion

This paper shows that the Iran–Israel war serves as a multidimensional stress test for Nigeria, affecting its economy, diplomacy, security, and ideology. Using Neo-realism, it expands the idea of rational state action beyond military concerns to include economic and internal stability strategies. Through Neo-liberalism, it departs from earlier works by linking market interdependence directly to Nigeria's cautious foreign policy during crises. By integrating power dynamics and market interdependence, the research offers a more complete explanation of how distant conflicts shape the strategic behaviour of resource-dependent, diplomatically active states.

Recommendations

Nigeria should reduce its overdependence on crude oil revenues by investing in agriculture, manufacturing, renewable energy, and technology sectors to cushion the economy from oil price volatility triggered by Middle East conflicts

Nigeria's foreign policy should maintain a balanced stance between global powers and regional partners while actively participating in multilateral platforms that can mediate or reduce geopolitical tensions affecting global markets.

Government should reinforce counter-terrorism capabilities and intelligence-sharing mechanisms to mitigate the security risks posed by global diversion of counter-terrorism resources during major international conflicts.

Government should establish a robust fiscal stabilization framework, including sovereign wealth fund expansion and targeted foreign reserve management, to manage inflationary pressures and fiscal instability during global crises.

The government should deepen trade, investment, and technological cooperation with both traditional and emerging economic partners to ensure that Nigeria's market access and investor confidence remain intact, even during periods of geopolitical turbulence.

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