

Israel vs. Iran and the responses from the West

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Israel continues to show its determination to push world politics into two bleak choices: to take part in supporting Israel to punish Iran, or to bear all (bad) consequences from Israel retaliation to Iran. The United States and the European Union are facing difficult choices.

Either way, the West will be the first to bear the costs of military confrontation that Israel asked. So far, though, the EU chose to offer a different kind of punishment for Iran. The EU vowed on

April 17, 2024 to ramp up sanctions against Iran. According to French President Emmanuel Macron, “those who are helping to produce the missiles and drones that were used”, should be the target of sanctions.¹ The US stayed with its statement that it defends Israel, would

¹ AP World News, “EU leaders vow to impose tougher sanctions against Iran as Ukraine’s president pleads for support”, April 18, 2024. See <https://apnews.com/article/eu-summitmiddle-east-ukraine-87bb82db49af62b98e0ec7d2de7e38ca>

sanction leaders and entities connected to Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, Iran's Defense Ministry and the Iranian government missile and drone program.² But the next day, April 19, 2024 US Secretary of State Anthony Blinken said that the US was not involved in Israel's predawn aerial strike inside Iran and declined to confirm reports that the US was notified of Israeli plans to attack Isfahan.³ The US wants the world to see that the US doesn't want an offensive approach but it stands by Israel.

Some say that now the ball is in Iran's court but as of now really the ball is in the West court. Iran wants to downplay Israel's attack, saying that what happened to Isfahan is by "infiltrators" rather than by Israel.⁴

Though Isfahan is an indeed important city that houses weapon making facilities, making Israel's attack on Isfahan as a

symbol of attack to Iran's center of missile production, research and development did not work. Thus, it is Israel who is still struggling to show the West and the world that it is suffering so badly that everyone concerned should take strong measures against Iran. Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu wants to show its independence to decide when and how to defend itself. In Indonesia, policymakers from the executive and legislative branches are interested in taming the conflict between Israel and Iran. While Indonesia doesn't import oil from Iran, the global impacts to oil supply would affect Indonesia negatively. Also discussed is the weakening of the Rupiah against the US dollar and the danger of the existing energy subsidy program. Indonesia's Foreign Minister claimed to have called the Foreign Minister of Iran, Saudi Arabia, Jordania, United Arab Emirate, Egypt, Turkey, Netherlands, and Germany to use their influence to tone down the tension.

Highlights

- The EU is Iran's largest trading partner, along with China, and the United Arab Emirates. According to Eurostat, Germany was Iran's top trade partner in Europe in 2023.
- China has been the top buyers of Iran's sanctioned oil. Iran oil supplies around 10% of Chinese imports. On the other hand China has become Israel's second-largest

² White House. "Statement from President Joe Biden on Iran Sanctions", April 18, 2024. See <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2024/04/18/statement-from-president-joe-biden-on-iran-sanctions/>

³ Voice of America, "US not involved in Israeli strikes on Iran, says Blinken", April 19, 2024. See <https://www.voanews.com/a/us-not-involved-in-israeli-strikes-on-iran-saysblinken/7576882.html>

⁴ RTE, "Iran's Foreign Minister downplays drone attack, says Tehran is investigating, April 20, 2024. See <https://www.rte.ie/news/middle-east/2024/0420/1444642-irans-foreign-ministerdownplays-drone-attack/>

trading partner for Israel in 2020, investing billions of dollars in the high-tech sector, interested in investing in transport infrastructure and are negotiating bilateral free trade agreements.

- As of January 2024, the US is experiencing trade surplus with Iran.

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2024/04/18/statement-from-president-joe-biden-on-iran-sanctions/>

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