

# Is There a China Strategy Behind the Iran War?

by [Michael Sobolik \(/experts/michael-sobolik\)](/experts/michael-sobolik/), [Grant Rumley \(/experts/grant-rumley\)](/experts/grant-rumley/)

May 4, 2026

Also published in *Dispatch*

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

### [Michael Sobolik \(/experts/michael-sobolik\)](/experts/michael-sobolik/)

Michael Sobolik is a senior fellow at the Hudson Institute and author of *Countering China's Great Game: A Strategy for American Dominance* (Naval Institute Press, 2024).



### [Grant Rumley \(/experts/grant-rumley\)](/experts/grant-rumley/)

Grant Rumley is the Meisel Family Senior Fellow and Director of the Diane and Guilford Glazer Foundation Program on Great Power Competition and the Middle East at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy.



Articles & Testimony

## The Trump administration's inconsistent China policy is undermining efforts to parlay the conflict into a geopolitical win.

There is a view in Washington that the U.S. operation against Iran has been a dramatic setback for China. This perspective stems from a belief that in launching Operation Epic Fury, the U.S. has not only degraded the Iranian regime but also diminished China's standing in the region and beyond. A corollary to this argument is the idea that the U.S. has sent a message of deterrence to Beijing with this operation, and thus the war fits into a broader China strategy. These claims rest on several faulty assumptions, namely that Iran is China's most important partner in the Middle East, that China is entirely dependent on the region for its own energy, and that this show of American combat power will give pause to Beijing's own aspirations to seize Taiwan. These beliefs misunderstand China's priorities in the Middle East and beyond...

[Read the full article on the Dispatch website. \(https://thedispatch.com/article/china-iran-war-great-power-competition/\)](https://thedispatch.com/article/china-iran-war-great-power-competition/) ❖

## RECOMMENDED



