

2,000 Ships, 3 Slots a Day: A Journalist's Game Puts the Global Supply Crisis in Your Hands

A new browser-based newsgame, **BOTTLENECK**, puts players in charge of triaging cargo through the Strait of Hormuz during the 2026 closure. Built by journalist and artist **Jakub Gornicki**, the game is free, fully playable in a browser within 15 to 20 minutes, and is grounded in over 125 verified articles and real daily transit data from Windward Maritime Intelligence and Lloyd's List.

Play: <https://bottleneck.jakubgornicki.com>

Press kit: <https://jakubgornicki.com/bottleneck/press-kit>

Languages: English, Polish, Spanish

The Strait of Hormuz carries roughly one-fifth of the world's seaborne oil. On 28 February 2026, the United States and Israel launched Operation Epic Fury-coordinated strikes on Iranian nuclear and military infrastructure, totaling about 900 joint strikes in the first 12 hours. In retaliation, the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps mined the chokepoint, leading to its progressive closure. Daily transits collapsed from roughly 130 to near zero between 26 February and 12 April. Insurance markets seized up, fertilizer flows to South Asia stalled, and LNG shipments to Japan thinned out. The crisis was documented daily by the Associated Press, Reuters, Al Jazeera, CNN, the Guardian, Anadolu, Bloomberg, and Lloyd's List.

In **BOTTLENECK**, the player acts as a crisis maritime coordinator with only three transit slots per day for ten days, while two thousand ships wait in the queue. Each slot requires a grueling triage decision: oil tanker, food bulker, LNG carrier, fertilizer ship, container vessel, or military escort. Every decision triggers a cascade effect across five named stakeholders-Tehran, Washington, the shipping industry, the affected civilian populations, and the player's own credibility-as well as through global supply chains. Block oil, and fuel queues form in Mumbai. Authorize a military escort, and Tehran's trust collapses. Prioritize food cargo, and Japan loses its LNG supply. There are no clean solutions. Only trade-offs.

The game's consequence engine is calibrated against real-world data. The endgame confronts the player by comparing their decisions directly against the actual historical transit collapse. Each in-game "Dispatches" entry links back to the original source article by name and date-over 125 outlets in total. Five ship encounters carry "Verified Event" tags, mapped one-to-one to specific incidents in the real-world crisis, such as the IRGC navy chief's death, the April 18 re-closure, and the USS Spruance's seizure of the Iranian-flagged Touska on April 19.

BOTTLENECK was built session by session over 17 days by a single author. Gornicki directed every editorial call-the 40 ship cards, the five stakeholders, the 125+ source links, the cascade math, and the data calibration-while the underlying code was executed in collaboration with an AI coding tool, audited and corrected at every step. The honest framing of this workflow is fully documented in a case study published on Substack alongside the launch.

"I am not interested in dramatising Iran. I am interested in the queue. The chokepoint is not a story you read once and put down-it returns every week, in fuel prices, in fertilizer shortages, in food security in places far from any tanker. I wanted to give people a form of this reporting they could not skim past. Three slots a day. No clean solution. The exact same constraint a real coordinator would face." – Jakub Gornicki

Key facts

- **Title:** BOTTLENECK - The Strait of Hormuz Crisis Game
- **Format:** Free, browser-based, single-player
- **Languages:** English, Polish, Spanish
- **Duration:** 15-20 minutes per playthrough
- **Tech:** Next.js 16, TypeScript, HTML5 Canvas, Web Audio API
- **Sources:** 125+ verified articles, fully linked from the in-game Dispatches archive
- **Maritime data:** Windward Maritime Intelligence, Lloyd's List, PIB India, Kpler
- **Built:** 22 sessions over 17 days, April 2026
- **Author:** Jakub Gornicki (sole creator)
- **Hosting:** Vercel
- **Price:** Free, ad-free, no paywall (monetized streaming and Let's Plays allowed)

Assets available

A full press kit is available at <https://jakubgornicki.com/bottleneck/press-kit>, including:

- High-resolution key visual (5504×3072 master)
- Logo and app icon
- 30-second trailer (1920×1080, with audio)
- Five high-resolution gameplay screenshots
- Vertical 9:16 story spots (English and Polish)
- Author bio and portrait
- This release as a downloadable PDF

All assets are free for editorial use. Required credit: *Jakub Gornicki / jakubgornicki.com*.

About Jakub Gornicki

Jakub Gornicki is a journalist and artist working at the intersection of reportage, physical space, and interactive form. He works under the term Artistic Journalism. He is the co-founder and Creative Director of Outriders, an award-winning global newsroom. His work has been recognized with the Paszport Polityki (Digital Culture, 2022), INMA Global Media Awards, the Polsko-Niemiecka Nagroda Dziennikarska (2021), and a nomination for the European Press Prize. More: <https://jakubgornicki.com>

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