

DAILY BRIEFING

The Dispatch

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MAIN STORY: THE SENATE MOVES TO GATE THE SECOND IRAN STRIKE AS TRUMP NAMES A FRIDAY-TO-SUNDAY DEADLINE

- The US Senate advanced a War Powers Resolution out of committee on a 50-47 procedural vote, with four Republicans (Rand Paul, Susan Collins, Lisa Murkowski, Bill Cassidy) crossing the floor and Democrat John Fetterman opposed. Cassidy flipped to support after losing his primary the prior evening. The resolution would require congressional approval before any new US strike on Iran, opening the first formal congressional gate on a war Trump has prosecuted since the 28 February opening attack.
- Trump said on the White House South Lawn that Iran has “two or three days” to return to the table or face renewed strikes, naming “Friday, Saturday, Sunday, or early next week” as the window, and confirmed he had come within an hour of ordering Tuesday’s attack before standing it down. He added that Washington “may have to give them another big hit” if no deal is reached.
- Iran’s army spokesman Brig. Gen. Mohammad Akraminia said Tehran would “open new fronts” against the United States with “new equipment and new methods” if Washington restarts attacks. The Revolutionary Guards issued a parallel statement promising to take the war “beyond the region” if aggression is repeated, framing the deadline inside Iran as a launch advisory rather than a negotiating lever.
- Trump convened a national security team meeting Monday evening that included a briefing on military options against Iran, two US officials confirmed to Axios, contradicting the public framing that Tuesday’s pause followed a finished decision rather than a deliberation.
- Vice President JD Vance said the talks are making “good progress” and that the United States is “in a pretty good spot here, but there’s an option B, and the option B is that we could restart the military campaign,” reiterating that Iran cannot have a nuclear weapon and noting that he had personally led the failed April delegation to Pakistan.
- A New York Times poll showed Trump’s approval on the Iran war has collapsed inside his own coalition, with US military officials separately assessing that the five-week bombing campaign has produced “a more resilient and resistant adversary” rather than a degraded one, redrawn against earlier Pentagon framing of the February-April campaign as decisive.
- Qatar called publicly for “more time” for diplomacy beyond the fragile 8 April Iran ceasefire and the prior 17 April Lebanon ceasefire, while Pakistani Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi continued his two-day Tehran visit and Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi told the UN that Washington is using the Security Council “to publish lies and false accusations against Iran’s nuclear programme.”

- The US military released a video of warships and aircraft enforcing the southern Iran blockade, presenting CENTCOM-released footage as a visible escalation of the kinetic-pressure track alongside the diplomatic window.

STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT

Two new gates opened on the Iran-war decision on Tuesday that did not exist 72 hours ago: a Senate procedural vote that places any second strike inside a domestic-legitimacy track Trump's first attack did not face, and the NYT-reported deterioration in his own coalition's approval as US military assessments revise the February-April campaign downward rather than upward. Tehran reads the "two or three days" frame as a launch advisory and is positioning capability accordingly through the army-IRGC "new fronts" announcement, deliberately separating its deterrent posture from any signal of intent to negotiate further on enrichment. The procedural change is on Washington's side. An alternative reading, that Iran's "new fronts" claim is escalation theatre rather than fielded capability, is less consistent with the documented IRGC redeployments since 28 February and the publicly stated readiness to close Hormuz as a counter-leverage instrument. Today's structural development is institutional, not diplomatic, and the deadline now runs against a Senate clock that did not exist when Trump set Tuesday's hold.

IRAN

- Iran's Supreme National Security Council formally announced the Persian Gulf Strait Authority (PGSA) to manage Strait of Hormuz transit, with the Revolutionary Guards navy promoted as the enforcement arm and ships issued "regulations" from info@pgsa.ir, a sovereign claim over the waterway Tehran has largely closed since the 28 February start of the war.
- The Israeli war plan in the early stages of the US-Israeli operation against Iran included a proposal to reinstall former president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad through a high-risk strike to free him from house arrest in Tehran, paired with Kurdish forces and bombing of energy infrastructure to force regime collapse. The plan was not executed.
- The Tehran Stock Exchange reopened on Wednesday after an 80-day closure tied to the war and parallel internet shutdown, with trading returning under restrictions. The energy minister announced a 9,000-megawatt addition to generation capacity this year against a chronic blackout regime now in its 81st day.
- Iranian authorities released Shahab Dalili, an Iranian citizen and US permanent resident, after ten years in Evin Prison, and he has returned to the United States in the first prisoner release timed inside the negotiation window.
- Iran's Industry Ministry authorized petrochemical raw-material imports through "kolbari" porter routes and small-boat "malavani" channels, formalizing the informal cross-border supply chains that have replaced sanctioned trade.
- Deputy Foreign Minister Kazem Gharibabadi told staff "either we win or we are martyred," matching the army and IRGC statements, while a parliamentary national security committee spokesman warned that the history of the Strait of Hormuz "will never return to its previous state."
- The newspaper Etemad called the recently disclosed figure of 6,500 spies "an alarm of a crisis of

confidence and a security failure," reflecting the internal-security debate now running alongside the wartime executions and asset-seizure campaign.

ISRAEL

- The International Criminal Court is expected to issue arrest warrants against Defense Minister Israel Katz, Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich, National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir, IDF Chief of Staff Eyal Zamir and Southern Command Chief Yaniv Asor over alleged Gaza war crimes. Smotrich responded in a press conference that the ICC had issued his warrant, calling it a "declaration of war" and signing an official order to evacuate the Palestinian village of Khan al-Ahmar east of Jerusalem.
- The Knesset is set for a preliminary dissolution-bill vote on Wednesday after coalition parties failed to agree on legislation formalizing military exemptions for haredi men. Opposition leader Yair Lapid declared on X that "we are starting the process of dissolving the Knesset," though the legal election deadline is already 27 October.
- IDF personnel planning chief Brig. Gen. Shai Tayeb told the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee that the army needs 12,000 additional soldiers to cover the manpower gap, with the first cohort of 30-month enlistees due for discharge in January 2027 and tens of thousands of haredi draft evaders unresolved.
- Hezbollah fired roughly 200 projectiles at Israel over the weekend, with IDF assessments rating the volume the highest since the February escalation and a notable departure from the lower tempo that had held through April.
- Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu acknowledged at Sunday's cabinet that Israel faces the challenge of neutralizing FPV drones after a Hezbollah strike on the 401st Armored Brigade commander, directing the military team to develop countermeasures for what he framed as the current and next category of threat.
- The Knesset Constitution Committee approved by 9-0, over opposition objections that the vote was unlawful, MK Simcha Rothman's bill splitting the role of the attorney general into separate civil and criminal positions, advancing it to first reading.
- The Netanyahu Case 2000 hearing was again shortened on Tuesday "for security reasons," ending at 13:30 instead of 16:30 after Monday's session was cancelled outright, with the bench citing diplomatic and security consultations the courthouse was holding alongside the trial.
- Tucker Carlson said in his first Channel 13 interview with Israeli media in years that Israel has "definitely lost its morality" through the civilian casualties of the Gaza, Lebanon and Iran campaigns, framing his objection in terms of US funding rather than Israeli self-defense.
- Public complaints to the State Comptroller rose 41 percent in 2025 to 30,366, with the sharpest increase in failures of the Labor Ministry unit responsible for daycare and subsidies, an indicator of administrative degradation alongside the wartime fiscal pressure.

LEBANON

- Israeli strikes Tuesday across the south killed at least 19 people, with a single strike on a house in Deir Qanoun al-Nahr in the Tyre district killing 10 including three children and three women, the highest single-day toll since the May escalation in southern Lebanon resumed.
- Overnight Wednesday strikes hit Tebnine, Dweir, Mayfadoun, Majdal Selem, Qana, Deir Ntar, Sid-diqine, Maarakeh, Hanaway, Harouf, Kfar Remman, Zawtar, Deir Ames, Deir al-Zahrani, Jebshit, Habboush, Kherbet Selem, Kafra and Toura, with the IDF claiming 25 sites of Hezbollah infrastructure hit between Monday afternoon and Tuesday afternoon.
- A midnight strike on a Baalbek apartment killed an Islamic Jihad commander and his 17-year-old daughter, with two others wounded inside the building.
- Hezbollah carried out 26 attacks against Israeli forces inside southern Lebanon over 24 hours, including clashes near Haddatha where its fighters engaged a unit advancing on the town square. A fiber-optic FPV drone operated from 15 to 20 kilometres away penetrated a building in a southern village seized by an Israeli force, wounding the 401st Armored Brigade commander and several soldiers and prompting helicopter medevacs. The IDF rated the penetration as exceeding the existing FPV countermeasure stack.
- Major (Res.) Itamar Sapir, deputy company commander in Battalion 7008 of the 551st "Arrows of Fire" Brigade, was killed in combat in southern Lebanon, the first IDF fatality acknowledged since the 2 March resumption of operations.
- A senior IDF Northern Command officer said the military has destroyed 60 percent of Hezbollah infrastructure in Lebanese villages where the IDF holds operational control, with weapons used including precision-guided munitions, shoulder-fired and anti-tank missiles, accurate mortars and fighter-jet and drone airstrikes.
- The Lebanese Health Ministry condemned the destruction of a primary healthcare centre in al-Maashouq in the Tyre district, raising to 31 the number of medical facilities hit since the war began.
- President Joseph Aoun, who has anchored Lebanese diplomacy on the same five-point framework for six consecutive cycles, said he would do "the impossible" to stop the war and restated Lebanon's requirement of Israeli withdrawal, ceasefire, Lebanese Army deployment to the border, return of the displaced and economic aid.
- Prime Minister Nawaf Salam said the reciprocity formula (withdrawal followed by army deployment) is on the table but not yet finalized and that Washington is now the only party able to pressure Israel, with the Salam government separately ordering the transfer of displaced families from tents on the Beirut waterfront to a municipal site as winter approaches.
- Druze leader Walid Jumblat, who on 17 May warned of civil war risk absent Hezbollah disarmament, on Wednesday called the ceasefire "an illusion and a mirage" and pressed the Social Affairs and Education ministries to build "civilized shelters" for the displaced rather than issue empty daily statements. The 72-hour position-hardening tracks the kinetic pace rather than any new political signal.
- Hezbollah MP Hassan Fadlallah warned that any US-Israeli "collaborator army" formed to counter the resistance "will be fought like we fight Israel," invoking the Antoine Lahad precedent and

rejecting “free gifts” to Washington ahead of the 29 May Pentagon security track.

- Speaker Nabih Berri postponed Thursday’s parliamentary session on the general amnesty bill citing “sectarian and confessional incitement,” after protesters in Akkar cut the Halba road near Majdala with burning tyres and similar closures hit the Palma highway in Tripoli and the Mhammra bridge. Sunni political and street voices read the current draft as targeting Sunni prisoners while exempting those who used the military court system as a political tool, with the Bekaa flagged for similar action.
- Banque du Liban Governor Karim Saad attended the G7 “No Money for Terror” conference in Paris alongside US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent, the IMF managing director, the World Bank Group president and the Saudi central bank governor, signalling Beirut’s effort to re-enter the international financial-compliance track during the war.
- The EU, France and Denmark released 32 million euros over four years (2026-2029) to support recovery in the conflict-affected areas of southern Lebanon and the Bekaa, the largest single donor disbursement of the May cycle.

SYRIA

- A car bomb exploded outside a Defence Ministry building in Damascus’s Bab Sharqi district, killing one Syrian soldier and wounding several others, after an army unit had discovered a bomb near the building and was attempting to dismantle it when the device went off nearby.
- The European Union lifted sanctions on seven Syrian government entities including the interior and defense ministries while renewing sanctions on individuals tied to the former Assad government for another year. Foreign Minister Asaad al-Shibani welcomed both the delisting and the continued asset freezes on former regime figures.
- The Brussels political dialogue of 11 May produced the full reactivation of the EU-Syria cooperation agreement that had been partly suspended since 2011, with Damascus framing the package as a reopening of European engagement built on the post-Assad foreign ministry’s diplomacy.
- President Ahmed al-Shara publicly thanked Trump on X for his “generosity” in their recent meeting and pledged to deepen the US-Syria relationship, marking the first acknowledged personal-channel exchange between the two leaders since the post-Assad transition.

PALESTINE

- The Board of Peace, the international body Trump set up to oversee the Gaza ceasefire, will ask the UN Security Council on Thursday to press Hamas to disarm, calling the group’s retention of weapons “the principal obstacle” to the next phase of the roadmap that has stalled over Hamas’s empowerment and aid funding shortfalls.
- Muhammad Awda has taken command of the Qassam Brigades, the first acknowledged succession in the military wing since the killings of prior commanders during the war.
- Israeli naval forces intercepted Monday off the coast of Cyprus the latest wave of the Global Sumud Flotilla, more than 50 vessels that departed Marmaris last week, with the organization’s

livestream showing activists raising their hands before troops boarded and then cutting out. The interception is the second wave the IDF has blocked from reaching Gaza inside the May ceasefire window.

- Three more Palestinians were killed in Gaza on Tuesday and the UN's chief Gaza coordinator cited indicators of ethnic cleansing as humanitarian conditions worsened, with an Israeli air strike on a home in the Nassr neighbourhood of Gaza City before dawn triggering large fires that civil defense crews fought through the morning.
- The UN independent expert on torture urged Israel to overhaul its detention laws, policies and practices after documenting widespread allegations of torture, sexual violence and other serious abuses against Palestinian detainees since October 2023, citing emergency measures introduced after the October 2023 Hamas attack as the basis for prolonged incommunicado detention and potentially unlawful deaths in custody.
- UAE aid convoys ("The Gallant Knight 3") carried 540 tonnes of Eid clothing for Gaza children into the strip, the largest single Emirati humanitarian shipment of the ceasefire period.
- Jordanian Armed Forces evacuated 20 sick children from Gaza accompanied by 40 family members for treatment in Jordanian hospitals, continuing the medical-evacuation track that has run alongside the ceasefire.
- Internal Fatah dissent intensified after the eighth movement conference, with critics calling Mahmoud Abbas's reform promises "empty talk" and the central committee election "fake," reflecting the institutional drift inside the PA as the Board of Peace pursues its disarmament push.

KEY REGIONAL EVENTS

- **UAE:** The Ministry of Defence announced that UAE air defense systems detected and intercepted six hostile UAVs over a 48-hour window around the Barakah nuclear plant attack, with no casualties or impact on vital facilities. Technical tracking confirmed that all three drones that struck Barakah on 17 May "originated from Iraqi territory," with Iranian-backed Iraqi militias identified as the launch network. UAE Ambassador Mohamed Abushahab told the UN Security Council that attacks on nuclear plants are "a red line" and that the Emirates reserves the right of self-defense under international law. IAEA chief Rafael Grossi warned that a direct hit on Barakah could have had "dangerous consequences."
- **Iraq:** Prime Minister Ali Al-Zaidi's week-old partial cabinet is already split by parliamentary fractures. The Shiite Coordination Framework that brought him in is fragmenting around the Maliki-versus-Sudani power struggle, the flatlined oil-export budget and the Barakah-attribution fallout. Saudi Arabia is running a Royal Saudi Air Force King Air 350ER signals-intelligence aircraft out of Riyadh along the Saudi-Iraq border to track Iraq-launched drones.
- **Saudi Arabia:** A US State Department letter to Senator Edward Markey confirmed that the proposed US-Saudi civilian nuclear cooperation agreement lacks the strict "gold standard" non-proliferation guardrails written into comparable pacts, raising congressional questions about enrichment limits as the Kingdom moves to operationalize its programme. Congress has 90 days to oppose the pact after Trump signs.
- **United States / Iraq:** US federal prosecutors charged Mohammad Baqer Saad Dawood Al-Saadi, 32, a senior figure in Kataeb Hezbollah, with directing plots to attack Jewish, US and Israeli sites

across Europe, Canada and the United States in retaliation for the war against Iran.

- **Yemen / Houthis:** The internationally recognized Yemeni government under Prime Minister Salem Saleh bin Buraik approved a package of economic, financial and administrative reforms including a 20 percent cost-of-living allowance, customs-rate liberalization for non-essential imports, and confirmation that basic goods remain exempt. Houthi mass marches across Sanaa, Marib, Hajjah, Taiz, Hodeidah and Lahj continued to assert wartime mobilization in parallel.

KEY INTERNATIONAL EVENTS

- President Xi Jinping hosted Vladimir Putin in Beijing for a two-day visit timed to the 25th anniversary of the Sino-Russian Treaty of Friendship. Both leaders condemned the US and Israeli attacks on Iran, Xi called for the Middle East war to “immediately stop,” and Putin described Russia-China cooperation as “one of the key stabilizing factors on the international stage.” The agenda covered energy, weapons and regional security against the US-China competition Beijing has signalled it intends to keep stable.
- Russian forces fired 524 attack drones and 22 ballistic and cruise missiles in an overnight barrage on eight Ukrainian regions, with Dnipro the worst-hit and more than two dozen civilians wounded including three children, continuing the escalation that has run through and past the 9-11 May ceasefire window Washington tried to broker. Ukrainian drone strikes hit central Russia overnight in response.
- G7 finance ministers meeting in Paris stressed the urgency of reopening the Strait of Hormuz and pledged closer coordination on war-linked economic risks, with US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent telling European counterparts they should “target Tehran’s financial networks more aggressively.”
- The UN Security Council condemned the 17 May drone attack on the Barakah nuclear plant, the first explicit UNSC censure of an Iranian-backed strike on civilian Gulf nuclear infrastructure during the war.
- A Romanian F-16 belonging to NATO air-policing forces in the Baltics shot down what appeared to be a Ukrainian drone over southern Estonia, with NATO authorities saying the trajectory and pattern suggested a Ukrainian origin and no immediate Russian provocation.
- Trump confirmed he will attend the G7 leaders’ summit in Évian-les-Bains, France, on 15-17 June despite his stated frustration with G7 members for not aligning with the US war effort in Iran, with the published agenda focused on AI, trade and counter-crime.
- A gunman opened fire at the Islamic Centre of San Diego, killing three and prompting a lockdown of the attached Islamic day school, with a nine-year-old survivor describing the assault to AP in the first eyewitness account from the children’s classrooms.

MARKETS

- Brent crude fell 88 cents to 110.40 dollars a barrel and US WTI was down 67 cents to 103.48 in early Wednesday trading after Trump’s “very quickly” remark, with both benchmarks already off

about a dollar on Tuesday following Vance's progress signal.

- Two Chinese supertankers, the Chinese-flagged Yuan Gui Yang and Hong Kong-flagged Ocean Lily, exited the Strait of Hormuz on Wednesday with about 4 million barrels of crude on board after waiting in the Gulf for more than two months. A third tanker is en route out, and the three together carry a combined 6 million barrels along the transit route Iran has ordered ships to use.
- Iran began loading oil at the Jask terminal on the Sea of Oman to bypass Hormuz entirely, while the US identified at least 10 Iranian naval mines in the Strait and CENTCOM said the southern Iran cordon has forced 88 ships to reroute.
- The Adani Group was fined 275 million dollars by US authorities for breaches of Iran sanctions tied to oil-trade routing, the largest single sanctions penalty against a third-country buyer of the war period.
- British Airways extended the suspension of its Tel Aviv flights, the latest carrier to push the resumption date past the ceasefire.
- A London-based money-laundering network tied to the IRGC channels oil-trade proceeds through a structure now under expanding US and UK financial-track scrutiny.
- NATO Supreme Allied Commander Europe confirmed the alliance is not drawing up plans for a potential Hormuz mission, with any decision requiring approval of all 32 members and several already signalling opposition.

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