

DAILY BRIEFING

The Dispatch

DATE: 25 June 2026 ISSUED BY: Core Group — OSINT Unit
ANALYSIS LEVEL: Operational, Level 2 CLASSIFICATION: **Limited Distribution**

MAIN STORY: ISRAEL'S REFUSAL TO LEAVE SOUTH LEBANON STALLS THE US-IRAN PEACE DEAL

- The accord the US and Iran signed a week ago extended the fragile ceasefire and opened a 60-day window of talks meant to produce a permanent peace, closing nearly four months of war. A week on, the two capitals read the same text in opposite ways. Trump called Iran “very nice” and “agreeing to everything that I want” and claimed major progress, while Tehran cast the memorandum of understanding (MOU) as a “declaration of defeat for America,” denied discussing the nuclear file or agreeing to readmit inspectors, and presented itself as the victor. The gap between those positions and the text runs through still-unresolved disputes over passage through the Strait of Hormuz and over nuclear oversight, leaving the framework’s core terms contested even as both governments sell it at home.
- Israel’s continued campaign in south Lebanon has become the chief friction point in the memorandum. Iran insists the deal requires Israel to halt its war there and withdraw its troops, while Defense Minister Israel Katz declared the army would not leave its security zone “even if there is an American demand,” adding that no such demand exists today and calling the absence of one “a political achievement.” Katz said 200,000 displaced Lebanese will not be allowed back to their homes, citing past roadside bombs against soldiers in populated zones. The belt runs the length of the border and reaches up to 10 kilometers (six miles) inside Lebanon, in places crossing the Litani and nearing Nabatieh. Against Katz’s defiance, a separate account holds that Israel is in fact preparing to withdraw despite ongoing ceasefire violations, a contradiction that tracks the gap between the deal’s text and its implementation.
- The administration asked Congress for \$87.6 billion in supplemental funding, most of it for the Iran war. The Defense Department would take \$67 billion, including \$21 billion to replace munitions and rebuild the industrial base, \$17.3 billion for operational costs, and \$12.1 billion for classified programs, plus \$11.1 billion for farmers and \$1.4 billion for the Ebola response in central Africa. OMB Director Russ Vought pressed House Speaker Mike Johnson for quick action on the “urgent” request. Senate Appropriations Democrat Patty Murray said she would not “rubber stamp tens of billions more for this disastrous war of choice.” The ask lands a day after the Senate passed a war-powers measure directing Trump to halt military action against Iran, sharpening a fight in both parties over whether the war was ever authorized.
- The memorandum left Hezbollah’s weapons outside its guarantees. Iran’s threats against Israel throughout the talks won no clause protecting the group’s arsenal or shielding it from the Lebanese state’s year-old decision to confine all arms to state hands, a decision Beirut has begun enforcing

over Iranian objections. Tehran and Hezbollah have nonetheless marketed the deal as a victory that covers the arms, wagering on a trade of an end to the occupation, the return of the displaced, and reconstruction. With the arsenal left out of the text, the disarmament track stays live and the group's room to stall it has narrowed.

- The deal's clearest political loser may be Benjamin Netanyahu, whose decades-long brand as the one Israeli leader able to bend Washington to his will on Iran has inverted. Having cast himself as the "American whisperer" who alone kept the two governments in lockstep and insisted only sustained military pressure could contain Tehran, he now finds himself forced to accept a settlement Trump is pursuing over Israeli objections, with those objections treated as constraints rather than guidance. At home the deal is unpopular for the opposite reason: in Israeli polling 55% are worried about the emerging agreement and only 23% call it good for Israel, a rare cross-spectrum consensus spanning Religious Zionism, Yisrael Beytenu, and Yesh Atid voters, while 61% of Arab Israelis view it positively. The right and center split mainly over whether the war met its aims.

STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT

The war is ending on terms set in Washington and Tehran, not Jerusalem, and the open question is no longer whether the deal holds but whether Israel's refusal to leave south Lebanon breaks it inside the 60-day window. The structure works only while the hard provisions stay ambiguous, because the same text is being sold simultaneously as an Iranian victory and an American one. Israel's presence in Lebanon is the most likely fracture point, since it is the one obstacle Iran has publicly tied to walking away, and Katz's "even if there is an American demand" is a direct bet that Trump will not force the issue. The clearest near-term tell is whether Washington converts its silence into an actual withdrawal demand: if a US demand materializes and Israel still refuses, the implementation gap becomes a rupture, and if Trump keeps shielding Israel from one, Tehran's Hormuz and nuclear cards move back to the front. Watch the funding fight as a second indicator, since a Congress that just voted to curb the war is unlikely to write an \$87.6 billion check without extracting constraints on what comes next.

IRAN

- Secretary of State Marco Rubio, opening a Gulf tour in the United Arab Emirates, ruled out any Iranian tolls on the Strait of Hormuz under a final accord, calling it an international waterway on which no state may levy fees and predicting every regional country would agree. Lead negotiator Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf countered that the strait "will never return" to its prewar state and that Tehran may charge for services, and Iran has suspended its planned transit fees only for the 60-day talks window, signaling charges once it expires. Tehran and Oman jointly pledged to study the waterway's administration and the service costs to be charged while asserting Iranian sovereignty over it. The Revolutionary Guard warned that any passage without Iranian coordination is unacceptable and dangerous, declaring transit lawful only through Iran-approved lanes and coordination via maritime channel 16 mandatory for all ships, with violators to face Iranian action, a riposte to Oman's offer of a temporary fee-free corridor mapped with the International Maritime Organization. Qatari Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani went to Muscat to launch separate talks drawing in Iran, Iraq and the Gulf states on the strait's future management, where the Gulf states will press for no fees while Iran may seek environmental, navi-

gation and security charges, with Pakistan floated as mediator and a wider Iran-Gulf reconciliation round planned for Riyadh.

- US and Iranian technical teams moved to finalize the war-ending agreement after high-level talks in Switzerland led by Vice President JD Vance and parliamentary speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, with Pakistan's foreign ministry saying technical negotiations resume next week, probably Tuesday. Vance called the round "a very good foundation for a successful final deal" and voiced hope of turning a "new leaf", while noting work remains on the nuclear and economic tracks. President Masoud Pezeshkian flew to Islamabad for talks with mediators Asif Ali Zardari and Shehbaz Sharif, his first foreign trip since the February 28 attack. The nuclear-inspections question burst into open dispute. IAEA chief Rafael Grossi said inspections "will indeed take place", with dates, procedures and places to be set soon, citing the memorandum's explicit provision that Iran's highly enriched uranium be diluted under agency supervision, and Trump claimed Iran had agreed to inspections "into infinity", but Iranian foreign ministry spokesman Esmail Baghaei said access to the US-bombed enrichment sites would come only inside a final accord, none yet scheduled. Ghalibaf cast the agreement as "America's declaration of defeat" and the end of an "era of imposed will". Pakistan, lead broker alongside Qatar, is parlaying the role into trade, energy access and renewed regional standing.
- The US Senate passed a largely symbolic resolution, 50 to 48, directing Trump to withdraw US forces from hostilities with Iran absent congressional authorization, the 10th congressional attempt to rein in the war and the first to clear both chambers after the House adopted it 215 to 208 on June 3, with four Republicans crossing party lines. Because it is a concurrent resolution it never reaches Trump's desk and carries disputed legal force, and he dismissed it as "poorly timed and meaningless" while vowing to "get it done, one way or the other". A day later the Senate reversed in a fresh vote, rejecting the measure 50 to 47. Chief negotiator Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, answering Trump's threat to strike Iran over its support for Hezbollah, told Washington to "be careful" with its statements and said Iran's armed forces "are ready to respond". Iran's negotiating delegation walked out of the talks venue in protest at the threat.
- Trump deflected US blame for the February 28 strike on a girls' school in Minab in southern Iran on the war's opening day, a strike Iranian authorities say killed more than 175 children and teachers, as Iranians marked the first Ashura since Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei was killed in the US-Iran war. He said it may never be known who was at fault because "there were missiles flying all over the place" and that he had seen nothing to indicate it was a US missile, even as an initial internal US military investigation found American forces likely responsible and the Pentagon elevated its probe without issuing findings.

ISRAEL

- Israeli officials assess that a full withdrawal from the zone the IDF holds in southern Lebanon is politically impossible for Benjamin Netanyahu, who would treat it as "political suicide" after presenting the hold as a strategic achievement and who cannot be seen folding under combined American and Iranian pressure. They expect him to accept limited tactical steps, local adjustments or redeployments, but not a full pullout. Defense Minister Israel Katz hardened the public line, repeating that even a hypothetical US demand would not move Israel, that without the zone 200,000 northern residents would not return, and that no American withdrawal demand currently exists, which he cast as a diplomatic success. Netanyahu convened the security cabinet's po-

litical and military members in the evening to weigh Syria and Lebanon developments, including Donald Trump's suggestion that Damascus move against Hezbollah where Israel had failed. Ambassador to Washington Yechiel Leiter warned that Hezbollah now "feels strong and emboldened" and that the track toward dismantling it and removing Iran from Lebanon risks derailing. Former ambassador Michael Herzog said US pressure since the June 17 pact has put Israeli operations in Lebanon in a "straitjacket."

- Netanyahu pressed his call for Israeli "armaments independence," telling reserve officers on June 18 that Israel must "break free from dependency" and build its own weapons-production network rather than lean on US military aid. The push lands as a congressional resolution from Representative Marlin Stutzman seeks a new memorandum of understanding to phase out the current \$3.8 billion in annual US military assistance, which runs to 2028 and covers about 15 percent of the defense budget, and as Israeli arms exports hit a record \$19 billion last year. Separately, Netanyahu pledged that Israel will be the first country to solve the threat of explosive drones, the weapon Hezbollah most often fires at Israeli forces in the south, citing the security zone he says blocks Hezbollah from the Galilee.
- Thousands of ultra-Orthodox demonstrators blocked Highways 1 and 4 and disrupted more than two dozen other major routes nationwide, with convoys converging on Military Prison 10 near Kfar Yona, where ultra-Orthodox draft resisters are held. Police declared the protests illegal after demonstrators left their vehicles and entered traffic lanes against agreed terms, with MKs Yitzhak Goldknopf (United Torah Judaism) and Michael Malkieli (Shas) joining. The unrest tracks a new Netanyahu deal with Haredi party leaders to fast-track contested draft-exemption legislation to hold the coalition together. In a parallel rift, religious-Zionist hesder yeshiva rabbis from a third of those yeshivas boycotted a meeting with IDF Chief of Staff Eyal Zamir over a pilot integrating women into the Tank Corps, even as Zamir pressed the military's acute need for more soldiers from every sector of society.
- Netanyahu concluded his testimony in his corruption trial after 98 hearing days since December 2024, the longest witness testimony in Israeli history, across the bribery, fraud and breach-of-trust cases known as 1000, 2000 and 4000. Roughly two-thirds of scheduled sessions were cancelled over the period for security, diplomatic and health reasons. The defense now continues presenting its own witnesses.
- Dozens of figures from Israel's security, political and cultural elite, including two former prime ministers, former heads of all the security services, former judges and a Nobel laureate, threatened legal action against the government in a "final warning" letter demanding it "eradicate Jewish terrorism" in the occupied West Bank. The signatories catalogued years of attacks on Palestinians carried out with near-total impunity and warned the violence breaks the law, isolates Israel internationally and fuels antisemitism. They demanded Netanyahu and his security ministers condemn and stop the violence or face the courts.
- State Comptroller Matanyahu Englman, in a package of 12 economic audits, found the government unprepared for several key risks, the most serious being natural gas, which supplies about 70 percent of Israel's electricity. Israel produces gas from three offshore fields and exported nearly half of its 2024 output to Egypt and Jordan, yet has not finalized how much to reserve for domestic use. A committee recommended holding 440 billion cubic meters for the home market, which the comptroller found was 75 bcm below the committee's own projected need through 2048.
- Lebanese reporting of contacts to return the remains of Israeli air navigator Ron Arad, captured in Lebanon in 1986, points to a possible exchange of his remains for Lebanese prisoners within the Lebanon-Israel track. A figure close to Arad dismissed the prospect as built on a long his-

tory of failed attempts, noting Lebanon could simply provide a DNA sample if it genuinely held information.

- Defense Minister Israel Katz defended Israel's lack of direct response to roughly ten missiles and drones launched at it from Yemen over the past three months, arguing the government's record on determination is beyond question and pointing to prior preventive strikes on Iran. He said Israel had already decapitated the Houthi leadership apart from Abdul Malik al-Houthi, "hiding in tunnels," and warned that if the Houthi leader "is within reach, he will die." Katz added Israel stands ready to strike again if threatened, with or without US participation.

LEBANON

- An Israeli drone and ground troops struck two Hezbollah fighters on the Ali al-Taher ridge near Nabatiyah al-Fawqa on Wednesday morning, the army citing an immediate threat to forces inside its declared security zone. Soldiers separately fired on two cars in Nabatiyah al-Fawqa with no casualties, and a drone dropped two stun grenades on Baraashit in Bint Jbeil. A day earlier, machine-gun fire killed two men standing beside an excavator clearing a road in Nabatiyah al-Fawqa, which Hezbollah branded a blatant truce violation and a treacherous attack. Fighting has largely paused since Saturday evening after Israel's leadership ordered a halt, yet strikes continue inside the occupation zone after Friday and Saturday clashes rattled the new US-Iran deal.
- Israeli forces have cornered dozens of Hezbollah fighters in an underground complex in the village of Tebnit and sealed its entrances, with senior Israeli officials reviewing the standoff amid fears of a kidnapping attempt. Through mediators, Israel relayed an ultimatum to those inside: surrender or be killed in the tunnels. The trapped fighters are so far choosing to remain underground rather than surrender to the IDF under the ceasefire framework. Israeli officials cast Tebnit as a pilot model for clearing the area of Hezbollah fighters and infrastructure, likening it to Hamas operatives trapped earlier in Rafah.
- An Israeli drone strike at 4:30 pm killed two civilians inspecting their homes in Doha Kfar Remman, the second strike on returning residents in under 48 hours. Hezbollah called it a deliberate, direct targeting of civilians and a blatant ceasefire violation. Israel separately threatened to demolish homes in Ain Arab a day after residents had returned.
- Calm has held along the south Lebanon front for roughly 48 hours, the longest de-escalation of the latest flare-up, and President Joseph Aoun toured positions in the Nabatiyah Basin with senior army officers to underscore Beirut's reassertion of state authority. Aoun said work is underway to solidify the ceasefire, to be followed by Israeli withdrawal, Lebanese Army deployment, the return of residents, the release of captives, and reconstruction. The designation of "pilot zones" (occupied areas Israel would cede to the army, which would then bar Hezbollah and any armed group from operating there) remains under discussion pending Israeli approval. Prime Minister Nawaf Salam said Lebanon entered the Washington talks as "the least costly path" and will accept nothing short of full withdrawal, refusing to let any points stay occupied while demanding the release of captives and resolution of disputed border points. Salam received the UNIFIL commander and stressed the need for a continued UN presence in the south.
- Hezbollah chief Sheikh Naim Qassem demanded a full Israeli withdrawal on a fixed timetable, insisting Israel pull out "from all Lebanese territory, without retaining an inch," after which the Lebanese Army would deploy exclusively south of the Litani River. He declared the war had

opened a new phase, claiming Israel's "grand project" to eliminate Hezbollah militarily, politically, and demographically had been "broken," while conceding Israel could attempt to return over a long horizon.

- The Health Ministry put the toll from the Israeli campaign since March 2 at 4,211 dead and 12,173 injured.
- Along the edge of the Israeli-occupied zone, mainly Shiite villages such as Dibbine have been depopulated and demolished, the military having pushed out residents it accuses of harboring Hezbollah, while neighboring Christian, Sunni, and Druze communities have been allowed to remain amid rising fear and uncertainty over any return.
- More than two-thirds of Tyre's residents have returned and reconstruction is beginning, after strikes the municipality counts as killing around 60 people, destroying 26 buildings, and damaging about 1,000 homes since the war began on March 2.
- Vice President JD Vance and Secretary of State Marco Rubio phoned Aoun on Tuesday, affirming US support for extending state authority through the Lebanese army and security forces alone, and reaffirming commitment to the Switzerland understandings, including a joint US-Lebanese-Iranian cell to solidify the ceasefire and monitor its implementation. The cell's composition stays under review, floated as a US-Lebanon-Iran trio, a quartet adding Qatar, or a quintet adding Pakistan, with Lebanon not yet formally notified of its members and Baabda saying the Washington sessions did not take it up. Aoun and Rubio both framed the Lebanon-Israel track as distinct from the US-Iran file, Rubio stressing Washington deals directly with Lebanon's sovereign elected government and that Iran's relevance to Lebanon is its sponsorship of Hezbollah.
- A US-backed proposal would route Lebanese army units deploying into the pilot zones through American training and vetting to certify they carry no Hezbollah links, while Israel keeps a presence in what it calls a buffer zone. Baabda sources rejected any vetting that touches the army's work or the institution's sovereignty, even as negotiators reported progress toward a "declaration of intent" between Lebanon and Israel. A "model districts" formula floated by Speaker Nabih Berri was rejected by the US and Israeli sides, and the first day of talks produced little movement.
- Lebanon handed Damascus a second batch of 128 Syrian convicts on Wednesday under a bilateral agreement signed in February, following about 130 transferred in March. The deal covers nearly 300 prisoners who have served 10 or more years, who will finish their sentences in Syria, with those convicted of rape or murder excluded. At least 260 of 356 eligible convicts at Roumieh prison have now moved to Syria's Adra prison, easing a friction point with Damascus. Lebanese prisons hold roughly 2,000 Syrian nationals, near a third of the inmate population.
- Aoun welcomed recent statements by Syrian President Ahmad al-Shara, saying they drew a wide positive echo and put to rest periodic talk of a Syrian military role in Lebanon, and affirmed continued coordination between the two states. Shara had outlined a new approach prioritizing an immediate halt to fighting and a comprehensive political, economic, and social track for Lebanon, raised in contacts with Washington and other parties.
- The UN Security Council unanimously adopted a resolution, sponsored by Pakistan and Denmark and cosponsored by more than 150 countries, authorizing new steps to ensure perpetrators of crimes against peacekeepers face justice, citing a very low prosecution rate despite nearly 1,100 peacekeeper deaths since 1948. It tasks Secretary-General Antonio Guterres with collecting facts after attacks and supporting investigations and prosecutions, sending a deterrent message to forces serving from Lebanon to South Sudan.

SYRIA

- A US airstrike killed Ali Husayn al-Ulaywi, a senior Islamic State (ISIS) figure, in northwest Syria on June 19, US Central Command (CENTCOM) announced Wednesday. CENTCOM commander Admiral Brad Cooper said al-Ulaywi was planning attacks in Syria and Iraq and held broad connections across the group's regional network, making him a direct threat to US forces, coalition troops, and President Ahmad al-Shara's government. The killing follows ISIS's declaration of a new operational phase against the Shara government, which joined the US-led anti-ISIS coalition in December, and a string of attacks since February, including a claimed strike near Manbij in Aleppo last Saturday and repeated hits on internal-security checkpoints in Raqqa and Deir ez-Zor. It tracks the December shooting near Palmyra that killed two US soldiers and a US translator and triggered intensive US strikes on ISIS hideouts.
- Syria has mobilized no new troops along its border with Lebanon as President Ahmad al-Shara declines Washington's push to turn Damascus against Hezbollah. Trump, who casts himself as the patron of Syria's post-Assad leadership and has claimed credit for al-Shara's rise, recently floated that Syria could "finish the job" against Hezbollah where Israel has been slow to move on the group's remaining pockets in south Lebanon. Al-Shara distanced himself from the prospect. Damascus came through the recent war untouched, with Tehran and its proxies steering clear after the US drew down most of its bases, and the post-Assad government read the Hormuz disruption as an opening, with Saudi Arabia and Turkey backing alternative overland trade routes through Syria.

PALESTINE

- Israeli forces kept up operations across Gaza despite the October 2025 ceasefire. Naval gunboats raked the sea off Khan Yunis with machine-gun fire Thursday and artillery shelled the city's eastern districts under continuous drone overflight. The military struck four rocket-firing positions Hamas had built inside Gaza since the truce, and defense officials now put Israeli operational control at 70 percent of the Strip. A drone strike Wednesday on al-Mawasi, west of Khan Yunis, killed a 12-year-old and wounded several others. Two men working for the military died in demolition accidents: civilian contractor Raed Abu Al-Qian, crushed by a building collapse, and a bulldozer operator killed when a mosque minaret fell. Both deaths mark Israel's growing use of private crews to raze Gaza's buildings. The health ministry counts at least 1,027 Palestinians killed and 3,280 wounded since the ceasefire, and 73,041 killed since October 2023, with the Gaza government media office logging 3,338 ceasefire violations by day 251.
- Israeli companies have opened negotiations to carry out large-scale demolition and rubble clearance across Gaza, an effort officials describe as unprecedented in scope. The plan would convert vast quantities of rubble into recycled construction material, ship much of it out, and level whole areas for new housing, all before Hamas is disarmed or the Strip demilitarized. A security official warned the pace could force a return to fighting to dismantle Hamas's underground infrastructure. Separately, Israeli forces destroyed a Gaza cemetery holding the remains of Canadian soldiers.
- Pro-Palestinian flotilla activists detained by Israel recounted cracked bones, humiliation, and sexual assault in custody. Four activists held about a month in Libya were freed and reached Tu-

nis, Achraf Khoja of Tunisia, Matias Rodriguez of Uruguay, and Italians Domenico Centrone and Leonarda Alberizia, with six others expected out within a day. They belonged to a land group trying to reach Gaza, separate from the more than 400 activists arrested at sea last month. A Palestinian activist collapsed upon his release from an Israeli prison.

- A United Nations commission of inquiry documented the scale of child deaths in Gaza since October 2023, cataloguing mass killings, destroyed hospitals, and blocked aid, and accusing Israel of war crimes and possible genocidal acts in its deliberate targeting of children. Palestinian factions demanded urgent international action and accountability for those responsible. On the relief side, the UAE opened the Emirates Medical Center in northern Gaza to ease pressure on the enclave's depleted health facilities, and Jordan's Red Crescent is providing treatment and prosthetic limbs to wounded Gazan children brought to Amman.
- An Israeli Cabinet minister boasted of demolishing 5,700 Palestinian homes over the past year and vowed to raze more. Authorities declared 115 acres in the West Bank "state land" to expand a settlement. A separate plan to annex Areas A and B, the open spaces under nominal Palestinian control, would gut what remains of the Oslo Accords by extending Israeli control over the territory those accords assigned to the Palestinian Authority.
- Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi told Hamas that Gaza is central to Tehran's talks with Washington. In a phone call with Basem Naim, deputy head of Hamas's Arab and Islamic relations office, Araghchi committed that Iran's team will raise the Palestinian file and Israel's continued assault in the negotiations and across international forums. It was the second Hamas-Iran call this month, after Araghchi spoke with Khalil al-Hayya on June 4, as Hamas leans on Tehran to insert Gaza into the US-Iran track.

KEY REGIONAL EVENTS

Gulf

- US Secretary of State Marco Rubio opened a three-nation Gulf tour through the UAE, Kuwait and Bahrain to reassure allies uneasy over the US-Iran memorandum, telling reporters Washington is "completely aligned" with them and pledging not to undermine their security. He held a working lunch in Abu Dhabi with UAE President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan and senior figures including National Security Advisor Sheikh Tahnoun bin Zayed, then met Kuwaiti Emir Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, with Gulf Cooperation Council officials to follow in Bahrain. The allies, hit hard by Iran during the war, remain skeptical of a proposed \$300 billion reconstruction fund for Iran and want their security and economic concerns, including over the Strait of Hormuz, built into any final accord.

Kuwait

C O R E G R O U P

- The US embassy in Kuwait City resumed operations during Rubio's visit, months after Iranian drones fired on the mission in March and forced a suspension of services following US-Israeli strikes on Iran. Emergency services for American citizens restart immediately, with other functions phased back in. Washington had shut its embassies in both Kuwait and Saudi Arabia during the March attacks.

United Arab Emirates

- Emirates Global Aluminium inaugurated the UAE's largest aluminium recycling plant at Al Taweelah, three months after Iranian missile and drone strikes on Abu Dhabi's Khalifa Economic Zone halted its commissioning. The March 28 attack caused significant damage and injured workers at the site. Production resumed in April and full output is expected within roughly six months.

Qatar

- An explosion and fire ripped through the Barzan gas facility at Qatar's Ras Laffan export terminal on Sunday night as crews worked to restart operations Iran had bombed during the war, injuring at least 54 people and leaving 18 missing hours later. QatarEnergy had shut the terminal after Iran's chokehold on the Strait of Hormuz cut off shipments to clients, and began the restart as that pressure eased. Barzan supplied nearly 1.4 billion standard cubic feet of gas per day, feeding Qatar's domestic power generation and the desalination plants that supply much of its water.

Yemen

- Saudi Arabia delivered power-station equipment to Yemen through the Al-Wadiah crossing, supplying two plants with a combined 300 MW, 100 MW for Aden and 200 MW for Hadramout. The transfer followed a 224 million riyal Saudi payment to cover Yemeni government salaries days earlier, and signals a turn toward longer-term infrastructure support rather than stopgap aid ahead of peak summer demand.

Turkey

- President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said Turkey is drafting a legal framework to accelerate the disbandment of the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) and will put it before parliament without much delay. The move points to a possible breakthrough after the peace process stalled in recent months under the strain of the Iran war and the regional instability it raised, and follows the PKK's own move to disarm.
- Security forces detained 209 people in sweeping raids across Ankara ahead of the July 7-8 NATO summit, among them 56 alleged Islamic State militants and 35 members of the far-left DHKP/C (Revolutionary People's Liberation Party/Front), against detention orders issued for 241 suspects. With Trump expected to join the 32-member alliance's leaders, Turkey is banning demonstrations, restricting access to roads leading to airports, and sealing off the summit venue and delegation hotels.

Egypt

- Israeli commentary intensified over Egypt's expanding military strength, with some voices raising the prospect of an eventual war despite the decades-old peace. Amiad Cohen, who heads the Herut center, told a Jerusalem conference on US-Israeli relations that a military confrontation with Egypt is possible within 15 years and warned of the Egyptian army's growing power, while Israeli security assessments singled out Cairo's reinforcement of its forces in Sinai. Former Israeli officers read the rhetoric less as a sign of imminent war than as political conditioning for a possible future confrontation, consistent with the Netanyahu government's expansionist posture.

KEY INTERNATIONAL EVENTS

- Three International Criminal Court judges sanctioned by Washington filed suit Wednesday in New York against Donald Trump, Secretary of State Marco Rubio, and Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent, calling the measures a “financial death sentence” and an unprecedented assault on judicial independence and demanding they be lifted. The sanctions bar Canada’s Kimberly Prost, Uganda’s Solomy Balungi Bossa, and Benin’s Reine Alapini-Gansou from US entry and freeze their financial dealings, answering the court’s Israel investigations and its 2024 arrest warrant for Benjamin Netanyahu. In a separate blow to the institution, the executive bureau of its governing body concluded that prosecutor Karim Khan engaged in an inappropriate sexual relationship with a junior staffer and should be dismissed, sending the matter to the 125-member Assembly of States Parties for a July 24 vote. Khan denies the charge and calls the June 8 decision unlawful and unsupported by evidence.
- Chinese satellite-tracking firm MizarVision continues to publicly post the movements of US Fifth Fleet warships operating in the Gulf of Oman and the Arabian Sea around the Strait of Hormuz, placing commercial Chinese imagery on the location of US naval assets at the chokepoint.
- Italy rebuked NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte after he said in a television interview that 500 US aircraft flew from American bases in Italy to support the operation against Iran, part of 4,000 to 5,000 sorties across Europe. Defense Minister Guido Crosetto said Rutte confused the nature of the permitted flights and offered a reconstruction that does not reflect reality, stressing that Italy authorized only flights allowed under existing agreements that exclude any offensive military activity. A NATO spokesman walked the remarks back, saying the support Rutte described was logistical or technical. The dispute handed Italy’s left opposition an opening against Giorgia Meloni’s governing coalition.
- Trump said Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky is doing well and holding firm in the war against Russia. Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, addressing a Moscow forum, said the crisis can be resolved by political and diplomatic means, insisted the ball is not in Moscow’s court after understandings reached at the 2025 Trump-Putin Anchorage summit, and said Russia is ready to negotiate but will not be deceived.
- Two earthquakes of magnitude 7.2 and 7.5 struck off Venezuela’s northern coast near Caracas within a minute of each other, followed by about 20 aftershocks, collapsing dozens of buildings and closing the capital’s international airport. Acting President Delcy Rodriguez declared a state of emergency and put the preliminary toll at 32 dead and more than 700 injured (the US Geological Survey warned it could rise far higher). Trump said Washington is in contact with Caracas and ready to help.
- A UN report verified 38,558 grave violations against children across conflict zones in 2025, affecting 24,174 children, the highest count since the monitoring mechanism began three decades ago. Briefing the Security Council, Special Representative Vanessa Frazier said state forces became the leading global perpetrator for the first time, a shift she called deeply troubling, with the highest levels recorded in the occupied Palestinian territories, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Nigeria, Myanmar, and Somalia. Israeli forces alone accounted for 12,445 violations against more than 5,000 Palestinian children, over a quarter of the global total, with roughly 5,000 more cases still under verification.

MARKETS

- Three stranded supertankers carrying a combined 5 million barrels of crude cleared the Strait of Hormuz on Wednesday, two of them bound for Asia, as the interim US-Iran deal released barrels trapped in the Gulf since the war. The VLCC VL Breeze (2 million barrels of Qatari condensate and Abu Dhabi crude, chartered by Hyundai Oilbank) sailed for Daesan, the Indian Oil-chartered Plata Carrier left with 2 million barrels of Saudi crude, and the Suezmax Prudent Warrior carried 1 million barrels of Iraqi Basrah crude toward Sohar, Oman. A temporary Omani transit corridor, coordinated with the UN's IMO and charging no fees, began clearing the 500 to 600 vessels and more than 11,000 seafarers stranded since the conflict, assigning phased departure slots and publishing daily exit tallies. South Korea moved five state-run ships out, one of them homeward bound, though 87 sailors remained aboard 13 still-stuck vessels. Despite Iran's Saturday declaration that it had reclosed the strait over Israel's strikes in Lebanon, dozens of ships transited across the weekend, still well below the pre-war daily average but enough to keep barrels returning to market.
- Brent and WTI extended losses to near pre-war levels, with prompt-month August Brent down \$1.22 (1.65%) at \$72.52 and WTI off \$1.02 (1.45%) at \$69.32, both the lowest since February 27 and capping a near-\$3 single-day drop the prior session. Front-month Brent slipped below the September contract (\$73.59), a contango structure signaling ample short-term supply, and prices fell even as total US crude stocks hit their lowest since 1984. Physical cargoes were selling at their steepest discounts in years as a wave of prompt offers from ADNOC, Kuwait Petroleum Corp, and Iraq's SOMO, plus Iran ramping exports beyond China under the temporary sanctions reprieve, pushed the Dubai, Oman, and Murban benchmarks into discount, with Asian refiners already booked through August. Trump ordered an investigation into major oil companies for not lowering pump prices in step with falling crude, alleging customers were being "gouged", though gasoline remains above pre-war levels and economists expect months before it normalizes. Dallas Fed research found the supply shock trimmed US GDP growth by just 0.3 percentage point, against the 5.6-point hit a comparable disruption would have inflicted in 1980 and the 1.7-point drag now borne by the rest of the world, a resilience it attributed to the US shift from net oil importer to domestic producer.

ISSUED BY: Core Group — OSINT Unit

LIMITED DISTRIBUTION

C O R E G R O U P