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STARS AND STRIPES®

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Volume 85 Edition 80 ©SS 2026

FRIDAY, AUGUST 7, 2026

平成12年4月5日 第三種郵便物認可 日刊(土日除く)
発行所 星条旗新聞社 〒106-0032 東京都港区六本木7丁目23番17号 定価 ¥100

\$1.00



AMIRHOSEIN KHORGOOI, ISNA/AP

People spend time at a beach as commercial vessels are anchored in the Strait of Hormuz off Bandar Abbas, Iran, on Wednesday. Iran says it is nearing an agreement with Oman to manage commercial traffic through the strait, according to Iranian state media.

Iran and Oman near deal

Talks entering 'final stage' over Strait of Hormuz ship management

BY JENNIFER H. SVAN
Stars and Stripes

Iran is nearing an agreement with Oman to manage commercial traffic through the Strait of Hormuz, Iranian state media reported Thursday while stressing that the arrangement would not amount to a full reopening of the strategic waterway.

Kazem Gharibabadi, the Iranian deputy foreign minister, said the countries are in the "final stage" of bilateral talks aimed at establishing new commercial shipping routes, accord-

ing to the state-run Islamic Republic News Agency, or IRNA.

"This understanding ... represents a new model distinct from the practice of the past 60 years, under which a significant portion of the shipping route will pass through Iran's territorial waters," Gharibabadi was quoted as saying.

President Donald Trump has said a deal could be announced as soon as Thursday. On Tuesday, he said the United States was negotiating with Iran, a claim that Tehran has re-

peatedly denied.

Iranian officials have said they will not hold talks with the U.S. until it lifts its naval blockade on Iranian ports, among other conditions.

Gharibabadi confirmed that Iran had recently received messages indicating Washington "was prepared to return to its commitments" under a June ceasefire but offered no other details, according to IRNA.

Trump has been under mounting pressure to

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CBO: Cost of Trump fleet could be \$275B

BY MATTHEW ADAMS
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump's fleet of nuclear-powered battleships for the Navy could cost as much as \$275 billion to develop and acquire through 2056, according to a new report.

The first Trump-class battleship is expected to cost \$23.4 billion, with each subsequent ship costing around \$18 billion, the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office said in a report released Wednesday.

Trump announced plans for the ship in late December, saying it will revive the American shipbuilding industry, "inspire fear" in adversaries and anchor a new Navy "Golden Fleet" of surface combatants, auxiliary ships and unmanned vessels.

"They'll be the fastest, the biggest, and by far 100 times more powerful than any battleship ever built," Trump said at the time alongside renderings of the proposed ship.

The CBO estimates that building 15 ships will cost taxpayers more than \$275 billion, but Trump noted in his announcement that the Navy aims to have a fleet of 20 to 25 ships eventually.

A fleet of 25 ships could cost \$455 billion, according to an estimate by the Senate Budget Committee.

The only Navy ships whose costs are comparable to CBO's estimate for the BBGN are the Ford class aircraft carriers. CBO estimates that new carriers under the Navy's 2027 shipbuilding plan would cost about \$22 billion each. The plan is to build at total of 10 of the carriers.

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