



CHINA

## Iran war looms over every deal for Trump, Xi

### Leaders set to meet in Beijing with much to gain — and lose

By **JEFF MORDOCK**  
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

President Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping have a lot on their plate when they meet this week in Beijing.

The leaders of the world's reigning superpowers will spend two days hammering out details of a new trade pact, extending a critical minerals deal, and discussing artificial intelligence risks, nuclear weapons and a potential \$14 billion U.S. weapons package for Taiwan.

Looming over all those discussions is the Iran war, which has caused the Trump-Xi summit to be postponed once. The leaders have much to gain from each other when it comes to the Iran war, which has left both men in much weaker positions than they were before it started roughly 10 weeks ago.

Mr. Trump appears eager to end the fighting as U.S. voters' dismay with soaring oil and gasoline prices has battered his approval ratings. He had hoped to head into the summit with control over the oil produced in Venezuela and Iran, two of the largest suppliers to Beijing.

Mr. Xi also needs the war to end. China relies on Iran for low-cost oil and counts Middle Eastern nations among its largest trading partners. Any disruption in the region affects the Chinese economy, which is already facing challenges.

Beijing has weathered the reduction in oil shipments by drawing on oil and gas reserves it had set aside for a potential conflict over Taiwan, raising questions about Mr. Xi's ability to handle that situation.

The war has led to the closure of the Strait of Hormuz, causing a spike in fuel prices that has rippled through other sectors and beyond the Middle East. It has left hundreds of ships stranded in the Persian Gulf and throttled global supplies of fertilizer, of which Iran is one of the largest exporters.

"The Iran war adds a volatile external pressure to an already fragile summit," said Craig Singleton, China program senior director at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies. "Even if [Beijing] is better positioned than most countries to absorb short-term shocks,

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**HEADING INTO SUMMIT:** President Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping will meet in Beijing this week to discuss a new trade pact, an extension of a minerals deal, artificial intelligence risks and nuclear weapons, among other issues.



**UP IN THE AIR:** Military equipment will be on the agenda, with a potential \$14 billion U.S. weapons package for Taiwan.

## Taiwan war plan's hidden enemy: Insurance spreadsheets

By **ANDREW SALMON**  
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

**SEOUL, SOUTH KOREA** | War, for all its death and destruction, imparts instruction for those willing to learn. The ongoing conflict in the Middle East shows how easily a regional economy dependent on seaborne shipping can be taken hostage — a lesson with worldwide applications but particularly sobering for China, the world's biggest exporter.

The war between the U.S. and Iran

underscores the massive economic risks for trade-dependent China of undertaking an invasion of Taiwan.

In addition to the extreme peril inherent in any assault across the Taiwan Strait, as narrow as 100 miles wide, Chinese officers planning such an operation must confront a dilemma strikingly similar to that in the Persian Gulf.

On the one hand, Beijing must consider the likely closure of the Malacca Strait, which connects the Indian and Pacific oceans and is the world's

second-busiest shipping lane after the English Channel.

About 80% of China's energy imports and almost 60% of its seaborne commerce pass through the strait.

On the other hand, China must consider the same stark fact confronting the Americans in the Middle East. A powerful navy does not ensure that shipping lanes remain open, nor does it guarantee that the maritime insurance sector is

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MIDDLE EAST

## Ceasefire teeters as Trump eyes next move

### President gathers military leaders

By **VAUGHN COCKAYNE AND TOM HOWELL JR.**  
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

The ceasefire between the U.S. and Iran hung by a thread Monday after President Trump panned Tehran's latest proposal as a "piece of garbage" and met with military leaders to plot his next move.

Mr. Trump was typically blunt in his assessment of the truce, which, despite skirmishes in the Strait of Hormuz, has held since April to allow diplomatic talks.

"I would say the ceasefire is on massive life support," Mr. Trump said in the Oval Office.

He said he planned to meet with a "large group of generals" concerning "the absolutely lovely country of Iran."

Mr. Trump's scathing review of Iran's weekend peace offer raised the specter of renewed fighting in the war, which began with joint strikes by the U.S. and Israel on Feb. 28.

He said there is still the opportunity for diplomacy but complained that Iran's leadership constantly changes its mind.

"They're very dishonorable people, the leadership," Mr. Trump said.

The president was not explicit about the next step for the U.S. forces massed in the region, though he repeated his central demand.

"The plan is they cannot have a nuclear weapon," Mr. Trump said.

Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, speaker of Iran's Islamic Consultative Assembly, was defiant on social media after Mr. Trump's remarks in the Oval Office.

"Our armed forces are ready to deliver a well-deserved response to any aggression; mistaken strategy and mistaken decisions will always lead to mistaken results — the whole world has already figured this out," he said. "We are prepared for all options; they will

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VIRGINIA

## Democrats make long-shot bid, ask high court to revive congressional map

By **STEPHEN DINAN**  
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Virginia Democrats made a Hail Mary attempt to the U.S. Supreme Court on Monday, asking the justices to revive the state's Democratic-friendly congressional map.

State Attorney General Jay Jones sought to set aside the Virginia Supreme Court ruling last week that struck down the Democrats' map, finding that the legislature broke procedural rules in rushing it to voters.

Mr. Jones said the state court

misinterpreted the meaning of "Election Day" in its ruling. He said the federal justices must correct that.

"By forcing the commonwealth to conduct its congressional elections using districts different from those adopted by the General Assembly pursuant to a constitutional amendment the people just ratified, the Supreme Court of Virginia has deprived voters, candidates and the commonwealth of their right to the lawfully enacted congressional districts," he said in his brief.

His filing asked the justices to keep the Democrats' map in place and to

give the high court a chance to decide whether to take up the case. Chief Justice John G. Roberts Jr. gave Mr. Jones' opponents until Thursday to file a response to the petition.

The U.S. Supreme Court also weighed in with a ruling Monday that boosted Alabama Republicans in their push to redraw their state lines to erase a Democratic-held district.

The justices, in a brief order, erased a lower court decision that had forced the state to use a map with two

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## HEALTH ASSESSMENTS



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Among the passengers being flown home Monday after disembarking from the cruise ship MV Hondius, two tested positive for hantavirus infection. Story, A8.

MEDICINE

## Foul 'Ozempic breath' is real, and it is driving a boom in gum and mint sales

By **SEAN SALAI**  
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

A growing number of users of popular GLP-1 drugs for weight loss are experiencing foul-smelling breath as an unexpected side effect, driving up gum and mint sales as they seek relief.

Online influencers have dubbed it "Ozempic breath" in reference to the anti-diabetes medication that made GLP-1s a household name.

Experts describe the odor as a mix of dry mouth, rotten-egg burps and "a funky smell" that arises as the appetite-suppressing drugs slow digestion,

leaving food to ferment in the stomach as the gastrointestinal equivalent of cabbage turning into sauerkraut.

"Some users describe it as fishy smelling, while others say sulfuric or metallic," said Dr. James J. Chao, who prescribes GLP-1s at VedaNu Wellness in San Diego.

He noted that the roughly two hours

it takes for the average stomach to empty half a solid meal increases to nearly three hours in someone using Ozempic or Wegovy, a version prescribed for weight loss.

"If you are a waitress, server, bartender, performer, public speaker, or interact with people as part of your

daily job, Ozempic breath should probably be thoroughly discussed with your medical provider before starting," Dr. Chao added.

The trend is already appearing in retail sales. Hershey CEO Kirk Tanner

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POLITICS

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NATION

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REGION

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COMMENTARY

**Will the new ownership at CNN ever restore Ted Turner's vision? B1**

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