



U.S. blockades Strait of Hormuz, softens nuclear freeze demand

Jonathan Lis, Rawan Suleiman, Roey Simioni and Reuters

The United States blockaded the Strait of Hormuz on Monday, following a threat by U.S. President Donald Trump after an initial round of cease-fire talks in Islamabad, Pakistan failed to produce results.

Any Iranian ship approaching the U.S. blockade will be destroyed, Trump stated.

The U.S. blockade will worsen the crisis as well as global energy uncertainty, a spokesperson for Iran's defense minister stated. Trump has failed at every attempt to intervene militarily in the Strait of Hormuz and the Gulf of Oman, the spokesperson said.

The U.S. has deployed more than 15 warships to the region to support its blockade of Iran, including an aircraft carrier, guided-missile destroyers and an amphibious assault ship, according to a senior U.S. official.

The U.S. military began the blockade targeting vessels leaving Iranian ports, while maritime restrictions on Iranian ports and coastal areas came into force on Monday, according to the UK Maritime Trade Operations agency and a U.S. Central Command note to seafarers.

On the diplomatic front, the United States reportedly proposed a 20-year enrichment halt for Iran, softening its earlier demand. There is continued engagement between the United States and Iran and "forward motion" toward trying to reach an agreement, a U.S. official



A ship waiting in the Persian Gulf off the coast of Sharjah, United Arab Emirates, on Monday.

said on Monday.

Trump insisted Monday that the "right people" from Iran had called to say they want a deal.

U.S. Central Command said the blockade in the Gulf of Oman and the Arabian Sea east of the Strait of Hormuz would be "enforced

impartially against vessels of all nations" entering or leaving Iranian ports in the Gulf and Gulf of Oman. It warned that ships without authorization are subject to interception, diversion and capture. The note added that the blockade will not impede neutral transit through the

Strait of Hormuz to or from non-Iranian destinations.

At least two tankers reversed course according to data cited by MarineTraffic. The company said in a post on X that the ships turned back within minutes of reaching the waterway. One of the vessels was a

tanker departed the United Arab Emirates, reportedly bound for China.

The U.K. agency said restrictions on Iranian ports and coastal areas also came into force at the same time, adding that vessels may encounter a heightened military presence, including di-

rected communications and right-of-visit procedures during passage. According to the agency, the measures apply without distinction to vessels of any flag engaging with Iranian ports, oil terminals, or coastal facilities,

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IDF says over 250 Hezbollah fighters killed in major strike

Yaniv Kubovich and Reuters

The Israel Defense Forces said more than 250 Hezbollah operatives and commanders were killed in what it described as the largest strike in Lebanon last Wednesday, according to an updated assessment released on Monday.

The Lebanese Health Ministry had previously said 303 people were killed in the strikes.

According to the military, the assessment follows continued intelligence monitoring and covers strikes carried out in Beirut, the Bekaa Valley and southern Lebanon. The IDF said the operation dealt a "significant blow" to Hezbollah's command-and-control infrastructure and is releasing for the first time names of senior figures it says were killed, including the commander of Hezbollah's logistics support headquarters and senior intelligence and missile unit officials. Among those named were Hassan Mustafa Nasser, head of the logistics support headquarters; Ali Qassem, Abu Ali Abbas and Ali Hijazi, described as senior intelligence commanders; and Abu Muhammad Habib, deputy commander of Hezbollah's missile unit.

The military said the assessment of damage was ongoing and that additional operatives were being identified.

Hezbollah heads reacted by calling on the Lebanese government to cancel Tuesday's scheduled meeting with Israeli officials in Washington.

Meanwhile, Hezbollah fire continued throughout the day.

A house in Nahariya was hit by rocket fire from Hezbollah, leaving a woman in her 60s lightly wounded with blast injuries and glass shrapnel, emergency services said. Sirens sounded in the Carmel area in the mid-afternoon.

The Israel Air Force intercepted more than 10 hostile aircraft launched from Lebanon toward Israel and IDF forces operating in southern Lebanon since the morning, the military said. According to the IDF, the aircraft were launched

At least 8 more dead in Gaza

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from Lebanon toward Israeli territory and deployed forces in southern Lebanon. All were intercepted.

The International Committee of the Red Cross said it was deeply concerned by attacks on medical workers in Lebanon after a deadly strike on a Red Cross centre in the country on Monday and the death of a volunteer a day earlier. Lebanon's state news agency reported that Monday's strike, which it said was carried out by Israel, killed one person and damaged Lebanese Red Cross vehicles. The ICRC said the Lebanese Red Cross centre in the district of Tyre, a city on Lebanon's coast, was hit by the strike. It did not comment on who was responsible or give details of the victim.

The Israeli army did not immediately respond to a request for comment on Monday's incident.

Double blockade on Strait of Hormuz may again set Gulf ablaze

Amos Harel

U.S. President Donald Trump's new orders went into force on Monday afternoon. After spending most of the night on writing social media posts that were even wilder and more intense than usual, Trump ordered the naval blockade

on Iran he had threatened. In response to the closure of the Strait of Hormuz by Tehran, which has blocked most ship and tanker traffic in the Gulf, the American blockade further south will do the same to Iranian shipping.

The regime in Tehran has much to lose and has few alternatives. Its economy was in deep distress before the war, and the fighting has made things worse. The problem, which has frustrated Trump throughout the war, is that Tehran's new leadership

(which he vainly insists on describing as an entirely new regime) does not seem particularly concerned about the plight of ordinary Iranians, and is showing no signs of surrender.

Iran could attack the U.S. fleet with drones, speed boats and, if its ships approach

the Gulf itself, with mines. Trump declared on Monday that the United States had all but destroyed the Iranian navy. The few ships that are left present no real threat, and he won't hesitate to sink those, too, if needed.

Alongside the mutual threats lies a more funda-

mental question: Will one side try to break through the other's blockade, with the Americans advancing north and the Iranians moving south? Such a naval battle could easily escalate into renewed airstrikes and missile fire, including Iranian strikes on Israel and

the Gulf states.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who made sure to inform the public on Monday that the White House is keeping him abreast of all developments in negotiations with Tehran and the fighting, believes that full-scale war will resume soon. From the U.S.

perspective looms the danger of mission creep, one that expands beyond the original parameters planned (in this case, a big regional war) as a result of local constraints and escalation on the ground.

Meanwhile, the second front in Lebanon remains volatile. Under U.S. pressure, Israel has in recent

Hungary's Magyar signals shift on Israel David Issacharoff, Budapest Page 3

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Péter Magyar's landslide victory in Hungary is vote for normalcy

Liam Hoare

VIENNA - "Live by highly disproportional electoral systems, die by highly disproportional electoral systems," wrote Stanford professor of international studies Anna Grzymala-Busse, summarizing Hungarian Prime Minis-

ter Viktor Orbán's landslide election defeat on Sunday. Orbán's crooked and soft-manipulated electoral system became his undoing in the end. Opposition Leader Péter Magyar's conservative Tisza Party did win 53.69 percent of the vote, but crucially, they were able to sweep through Hungary's 109 electoral districts, win-

ning 93 of them. As such, Tisza looks set to win 138 seats total in the next Hungarian parliament, granting them a supermajority.

Extraordinary turnout of 77.45 percent - the highest in Hungary's post-communist

strategy, including his endorsements from right-wing populist leaders, from U.S. Vice President JD Vance to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, failed. With Orbán's defeat, Netanyahu has lost his closest ally in Europe, who, as an Israeli source told Haaretz, did Israel's "dirty work."

While Magyar won't bring about a major shift in Israel policy, Netanyahu will be especially interested to see if he changes Hungary's stance toward the International Criminal Court, given the outstanding arrest warrants the court issued against him and former Defense Minister Yoav Gallant in 2024. Orbán's disregard for the ICC allowed Netanyahu to make his first and only official visit to Europe since the warrants were issued.

Such was the overwhelming nature of Magyar's victory that even Orbán couldn't deny it. It was arguably in his immediate interest to concede defeat. Orbán has maintained, going back to his Bálványos speech in 2014, that even if a "state is not liberal, it can still be a democracy." Conceding allowed Orbán to wear the suit

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Marton Monus/Reuters



Peter Magyar celebrating on election night. Shira Shechter

ter Viktor Orbán's landslide election defeat on Sunday.

Orbán's crooked and soft-manipulated electoral system became his undoing in the end. Opposition Leader Péter Magyar's conservative Tisza Party did win 53.69 percent of the vote, but crucially, they were able to sweep through Hungary's 109 electoral districts, win-

history - propelled Magyar to victory. Turnout was highest in Budapest - over 80 percent - and lower in non-urban localities where Orbán once found his power base. Opposition voters dutifully lined up for and behind Magyar and support for third parties like the Hungarian Two-Tailed Dog Party barely registered.

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Holocaust Memorial Day

Declassified files expose Lehi contacts with Nazi Germany

Ofer Aderet

In May 1941, Eliyahu Golomb, founder and de facto commander of the Haganah, the pre-independence army of the Jews in then-British Mandatory Palestine, spoke in a small forum:

"I have information ... about suspicion regarding a group of Jews who have connections with the enemy," he said. At the time, during World War II, the enemy he referred to was the Germans. "According to the information, there is a man who contacted the Germans. This man is known; his name is S," he added. "S" was Avraham "Yair" Stern, leader of Lehi, the pre-state underground militia also known as the Stern Gang. He had split from the Irgun underground militia because he believed the struggle against the British should continue even during the war.

"The police are already talking about a Jewish 'fifth column,'" Golomb added, referring to the British police.

Golomb's remarks were



Haganah fighters patrolling in the Balfour Forest, 1948. Zoltan Kluger/GPO

recorded in real time in a Haganah intelligence document filed under "Contacts with the Axis." The file was kept in the Israel Defense Forces archives and later transferred to the Israel State Archives. About three years ago, Haaretz requested that

it be declassified. It was recently scanned and uploaded.

Reviewing the file provides insight into material collected by the Haganah, and later by the Shin Bet security service and the IDF, regarding Lehi's attempts to establish ties with the Axis

powers, Italy and Germany. The idea of recruiting Nazi Germany to help liberate Palestine from British rule was conceived by Stern, who advocated uncompromising violent resistance to

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