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Strait of Hormuz reopens amid two-week ceasefire



Iran announced on April 17 that the Strait of Hormuz is opened to commercial vessels following a ceasefire agreement between Israel and Lebanon. REUTERS FILE

Trump says naval blockade to continue

Zac Anderson, Christopher Cann, Andrea Riquier and Michael Loria
USA TODAY

Iran declared the Strait of Hormuz “completely open” to commercial vessels April 17 – then threatened to again close the global shipping lane if the United States did not end its blockade on Iranian ports and ships.

It was the latest back-and-forth between the warring countries as the clock wound down on a delicate two-week ceasefire.

Iran’s foreign minister, Seyed Abbas Araghchi, declared the waterway open after a separate 10-day ceasefire between Lebanon and Israel went into effect April 16.

The United Nations’ maritime transport agency said it was verifying wheth-

er the strait was open. U.N. Secretary-General António Guterres described the reopening as “a step in the right direction,” writing on X, “I also hope that, together with the ceasefire, this measure will contribute to creating confidence between the parties and strengthen the ongoing dialogue.”

President Donald Trump thanked Araghchi but said the blockade would remain in “full force” until Tehran makes a deal to end the war.

“THIS PROCESS SHOULD GO VERY QUICKLY IN THAT MOST OF THE POINTS ARE ALREADY NEGOTIATED,” he said on social media.

He also claimed that Iran had “agreed to never close the Strait of Hormuz again” and with the help of the United States, “has removed, or is removing, all sea mines!”

However, in a statement published by Iranian state media, Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmaeil Baqaei then threatened to take “reciprocal mea-

sures” if the blockade continued, saying it would be considered a violation of the ceasefire.

“Closing the Strait again would be easy for Iran,” Baqaei said, according to Iranian state television.

After the war began, Iran effectively closed the strait to all vessels tied to the United States, Israel or their allies, spurring a worldwide energy crisis. Reopening the trade route has remained among the Trump administration’s top priorities as Washington and Tehran teased another round of negotiations, which Trump said could take place in Islamabad as soon as the weekend.

In a phone call with USA TODAY, Trump said the fight with Iran over the Strait of Hormuz was “over.”

He was upbeat about the prospects of making headway in the Iran war that has divided his party, saying, “We’ve

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Study examines fluoride’s cognitive impact

Mary Walrath-Holdridge
USA TODAY

People who drink fluoridated community water long-term are just as smart as those who don’t, a first-of-its-kind study found.

Published in the journal Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences on April 13, the study is the first to test the impact of fluoridated water on cognition into late adulthood – long beyond childhood and adolescence, the usual targets of fluoride research. It expands upon research published in November, also unique for being the first to analyze population-representative data from the United States up to the age of 60.

Community water fluoridation, or the act of adding the mineral to community water supplies to enhance dental health, has historically been considered a revolutionary accomplishment in public health, as noted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The practice has become a battleground in recent years, however, with Secretary of Health and Human Services Robert F. Kennedy Jr. saying in 2025, without evidence, that fluoride exposure makes children “stupid-er.” Oft-cited studies to this point have been questioned for their validity, especially those using data from outside the United States.

“Like everybody else, I was intrigued by claims that there was a relationship between fluoride and IQ,” said study co-author Rob Warren, professor at the University of Minnesota. “And upon looking at the evidence, I was not impressed. The evidence used to support that claim was not great. And so I got to thinking, ‘Well, what could we do with existing data on the U.S. that is population representative and actually considers fluoride at the levels that we care about?’”

Because of this, the study’s authors looked toward data from the Wisconsin Longitudinal Study, which followed 10,317 people from the state starting from when they graduated high school in 1957 throughout the rest of life. The authors reviewed results of standardized testing to measure the intelligence and mental function of these adults up to the age of 80, categorizing them by when they were first believed to have been regularly exposed to fluoridated water (from birth, age 8 or age 14) based on historical community records.

To take these measurements, researchers reviewed IQ tests administered to the participants in schools at the age of 16 and similar, standardized cognition examinations performed at ages 53, 64, 72 and 80.

Like the previous analysis it built upon, the study found no evidence that community water fluoridation is associated with lower adolescent IQ or cognition later in life.

“With [that information], I could answer the question, ‘Is it true that kids exposed to fluoride have lower IQ?’ And the answer is no, not at all,” said Warren. “And because those same

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Trump says war with Iran going ‘swimmingly’

Vegas speech touts tax tip policy, attacks media

James Powel
USA TODAY

LAS VEGAS – Touting his “No Tax on Tips” policy, President Donald Trump claimed April 16 that the war with Iran is going “swimmingly” and won’t last much longer.

“It should be ending pretty soon,” Trump said in a ballroom speech at the AC Hotel Las Vegas Symphony Park.

The roundtable discussion and rally came one day after the tax filing deadline – and as delivery drivers, who often subsist on tips, face increasing gas prices in the wake of the energy disruption that followed the start of the war.

The president said that sometimes

his words can send markets into turmoil.

“When I speak, the market gets a little jittery. I say, ‘Scott, go out there, clean it up for me,’” Trump said, referring to Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent.

He also called a recent event where a DoorDash driver delivered McDonald’s to the White House “a little tacky.”

John Facey, a Trump supporter who attended the event, told USA TODAY that gas prices were a worthwhile “short-term sacrifice” for weakening Iran, but he did not approve of an extended period of conflict resulting in higher prices at the pump.

“Anything longer than six months, I don’t know that I agree with that,” Facey said.

The president is underwater in Nevada, one of the key swing states that



During a roundtable discussion in Las Vegas on April 16, President Donald Trump claimed the war with Iran is going “swimmingly” and won’t last much longer. EVAN VUCCI/REUTERS

brought him back to the White House. Fifty-one percent of Nevadans disapprove of Trump, according to the most recent Morning Consult survey of the state.

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