

DAILY BRIEFING

The Dispatch

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MAIN STORY: US STRIKES IRAN AFTER TANKER ATTACKS IN THE STRAIT OF HORMUZ

- Iran struck three tankers within hours in the Strait of Hormuz, the first attacks in the waterway since mourning for Ali Khamenei began. The Qatari LNG carrier Al Rekayyat took a drone hit on its port side that set its engine room ablaze and left the vessel at risk of exploding, though its crew evacuated safely. The Saudi-flagged crude supertanker Wedyan and the Liberian-flagged Cyprus Prosperity were also damaged off Oman's coast. The IRGC said the ships ignored its warnings while running the Omani coastal corridor under US naval escort. No casualties were reported.
- US Central Command answered with strikes on more than 80 targets, hitting Iranian air defenses, command-and-control nodes, coastal radar, anti-ship missile sites, and over 60 IRGC small boats in and around the strait, though Trump had pledged to hold fire through Khamenei's seven-day funeral. Explosions rolled across Bandar Abbas, Sirik, Jask, and Qeshm, with roughly 10 blasts between 12:05 and 1:00 a.m. local time. Hormozgan's governor reported no civilian casualties, while Iran said the strikes hit a civilian fishing pier and set boats alight near the fish market. Trump said the US had destroyed Iran's military capabilities and blocked its path to a nuclear weapon.
- Iran's Khatam al-Anbiya Central Headquarters vowed a "crushing response," rejected any interference in managing the strait, and repeated that the only safe passage is the route Tehran designates. Top negotiator Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf accused Washington of major violations of the memorandum, citing reversed Iranian strait adjustments, threats of further strikes, reinstated oil sanctions, strikes on southern Iran, and continued backing of aggression on Lebanon. He declared, "The era of bullying and extortion is over. We don't fold."
- Qatar, which helped broker the ceasefire, condemned the "unacceptable attack" on the Al Rekayyat, summoned Iran's deputy ambassador Mohsen Ghanei for a formal protest note, and held Tehran fully legally responsible for any damage. GCC Secretary-General Jasem al-Budaiwi called the targeting a dangerous escalation and pledged the bloc's solidarity with Doha. The strikes hit the assets of Iran's own mediators, Qatar and Oman, a day after both sent delegations to Khamenei's funeral. That move has little precedent and strains the very channels keeping US-Iran talks alive.
- Trump announced a push toward a naval blockade tied to Iranian oil traffic, and CENTCOM warned that vessels entering the strait without authorization could face interception, diversion, or capture, while exempting neutral transit to non-Iranian destinations. The exchange endangers the memorandum Trump signed under three weeks ago, the fragile deal meant to reopen the strait, roll back

Iran's nuclear program, and end the war launched February 28. Iran counters that the memorandum grants it sole authority over shipping through the waterway, having notified the International Maritime Organization that it holds jurisdiction over parts of the strait.

STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT

The tit-for-tat has almost certainly outrun the memorandum's guardrails, and the fragile deal signed under three weeks ago now hangs on whether either side wants an off-ramp more than the next salvo. A renewed Iranian strike is the most likely near-term move, given Khatam al-Anbiya's vow and the IRGC's retained anti-ship missiles, drones, and fast-attack craft, though hitting Qatari and Saudi hulls spends mediator goodwill Tehran will need to climb down. Full breakdown of the talks becomes probable if Washington enforces the announced blockade, since interdicting Iranian oil traffic would hand Tehran both a *casus belli* and a domestic rallying point during the mourning period. Last cycle's read that the strait was the war's live fuse held: the waterway, not the nuclear file, again drove the escalation. The next observable is whether Iran's promised response strikes US forces directly or stays confined to commercial shipping, and whether Qatar and Oman keep their mediation channels open after being targeted.

IRAN

- Iran's Supreme National Security Council Secretary Mohammad Baqer Zolqadr branded Trump "the deluded American president who threatened 91 million Iranians," warning that the leader of a 250-year-old country cannot destroy Iran's ancient civilization. Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, invoking article 13 of the Islamabad memorandum, said final-deal talks will not begin if threats continue and that Iranians and their armed forces are "not moved by any threats." Washington signaled negotiations will continue, while adviser Mohsen Rezaee assessed the US will steer the talks to failure.
- Khamenei's flag-draped coffin arrived in Iraq's Najaf late Tuesday after days of mass mourning in Tehran and Qom. Iraqi Prime Minister Ali al-Zaidi, President Masoud Pezeshkian, Nouri al-Maliki, Quds Force commander Esmail Qaani, and Khamenei's son Mostafa received it at the airport, alongside Hezbollah and Hamas envoys and a Houthi delegation. Hardline crowds chanted "Ghalibaf, Araghchi, what about my Leader's blood?" against the officials pursuing US talks. The procession moves through Karbala to burial in Mashhad.
- Robert Malley, US special envoy for Iran under Biden, assessed that the ceasefire deal now being negotiated favors Tehran, casting the multi-city funeral as a deliberate show of defiance after the war that killed Khamenei on the first day of the February airstrikes. Turnout estimates for the Tehran leg ranged from 350,000 to the tens of millions. Routing the body through Najaf and Karbala put the spiritual center of Shiite Islam behind a geopolitical statement, and large crowds lined the procession route in Iraq, a display of Iran's continued reach there.
- A lawsuit filed in Los Angeles alleges the Trump administration illegally shared confidential immigration files on Iranian asylum seekers with Tehran, many of them pro-democracy protesters and religious minorities, to pressure roughly 600 detained Iranians to return. The Department of Homeland Security denies the charge.

- Hejar Berenji, the PDKI's US representative, said the June 17 memorandum will not decide the future of Iranian Kurds and does not address Tehran's repression or its wartime strikes that killed at least 10 exiled Kurdish fighters in Iraqi Kurdistan. He vowed the struggle will continue.

ISRAEL

Washington, Ankara, and the Alliance

- Vice President JD Vance warned Israeli leaders against alienating their only remaining major ally. Four months after launching the Iran war alongside Netanyahu, Trump now presses Israel to scale back Lebanon operations to secure the deal, while Israeli leaders argue the war should continue. Netanyahu said he doubts Trump can halt Iran's nuclear program. He insisted the two agree on the big things and remain true allies. An Israel Democracy Institute survey of 754 Israelis found just 28% believe Trump prioritizes Israel's security, down from 44% in May, and only 38% of Jewish Israelis judge national security better than before the war.
- Netanyahu urged Trump in a Friday phone call not to sell Turkey advanced US weaponry, arguing F-35 jets or engines for its indigenous KAAN fighter would upset a regional power balance underwritten by Israeli air superiority. He said Turkey does not deserve the aircraft and branded Erdogan's government a regime infected with the Muslim Brotherhood that hates the United States and openly threatens to destroy Israel. The lobbying ran against Trump's Ankara visit for the NATO summit, where the F-35 question and a \$700 million General Electric F110 engine deal sit on the agenda. Any readmission of Turkey to the program would require congressional approval.
- Israel refused to renew the expanded agreement supplying Jordan an extra 50 million cubic meters of water a year, conditioning it on Amman softening its rhetoric and restoring full diplomatic ties. In Israel the refusal read as a stab in the back after Jordan's support during the Iran war. The 1994 treaty baseline of 50 million cubic meters, doubled in 2021, lapsed in late 2025, though Israel still delivers the baseline. The UAE proposed a trilateral summit in Abu Dhabi on a new water-energy deal, floating a Prosperity initiative pairing an Israeli desalination plant with a Jordanian solar plant.
- Former US ambassador Rahm Emanuel met President Isaac Herzog in Jerusalem and argued Israel's security, Arab regional stability, and Palestinian self-determination could be combined in a "historic agreement."

The Fronts and the Army

- Netanyahu repeated that some southern Lebanese Christian villages had asked to be annexed to Israel for protection from Hezbollah, naming none. Rmeish mayor Hanna al-Amil countered that no southern village made such a request, and Saint Joseph University international-relations professor Karim Emile Bitar branded Netanyahu a pathological liar, casting the claim as an effort to sow sectarian strife.
- IDF Northern Command officials set no deadline for evacuating positions north and south of the Yellow Line, tying any withdrawal to the Lebanese Army first launching its pilot clearance program. The officers doubt the LAF will thoroughly execute the framework, citing the reluctance of its Shiite soldiers to confront Hezbollah. That framework tasks the army with removing explosives,

collecting weapons, and destroying the positions, bunkers, and tunnels Hezbollah and Iran built over roughly 20 years. Beirut is expected to name a start date in the coming weeks, and until the pilot begins the IDF will hold every point it occupies while continuing to locate and destroy infrastructure.

- Israel advanced a cross-border push into the occupied Syrian Golan, launching a “cow company” project that drives roughly 140 head of cattle onto about 10,000 dunums west of Wadi al-Raqqad, behind the separation fence. The aim is to plant a permanent civilian and agricultural presence and bar Syrian herders who long grazed there. Around 100 activists of the Ruwad al-Bashan settlement movement attempted to cross the 1974 disengagement line to establish an outpost. The pattern extends earlier tactics of harassing Syrian civilians and pushing settler incursions to seed fear and force residents off their land in the south.
- UN Special Coordinator for Lebanon Jean Arnault began an official visit to Israel to press senior officials on consolidating the cessation of hostilities and implementing Security Council Resolution 1701.
- A reserve officer commanding a unit in Gaza warned in a published letter of moral deterioration among soldiers amid pervasive fear, saying the mission’s objective is no longer clear or defined.

Coalition and Courts

- Netanyahu’s coalition accelerated its right-wing agenda days before the Knesset dissolves next week for elections due by end October. It advanced a bill to permit gender-segregation of master’s and doctoral students and won a vote to split legislation weakening the attorney general’s powers. The Supreme Court warned that a government decision to ignore its rulings jeopardizes social order and risks anarchy. Former prime minister Ehud Barak called the defiance a sign of what is to come and the last nail in the coffin of Israeli democracy, urging opposition leaders into a common front. Opposition members brandished mock segregation signs during the education vote.
- The Knesset passed the first reading of a politically appointed October 7 inquiry 59-0, the opposition boycotting, sending it to the Constitution Committee before second and third readings ahead of July 17 dissolution. The commission would seat six members chosen by a two-thirds majority, or three coalition and three opposition appointees if that fails. Netanyahu rejected a compromise handing the inquiry to Deputy Chief Justice Noam Sohlberg rather than Chief Justice Isaac Amit, wanting findings the government could steer. Separately, Chief of Staff Eyal Zamir moved to dismiss Gaza Division intelligence officer Lieutenant Colonel A. over October 7, though the officer delayed removal after the Supreme Court rejected his petition.
- Ultra-Orthodox protesters blocked the entrance to the IDF’s Central Command headquarters in Jerusalem over mandatory conscription, as Likud MK Ariel Kallner rejected arresting yeshiva students and backed economic sanctions instead.
- Outgoing State Comptroller Matanyahu Englman found Israel still has no national policy or body to counter foreign online influence nine years after the threat surfaced, leaving it exposed to Iranian meddling entering an election year.

LEBANON

The Framework Track

- The sixth round of indirect Lebanon-Israel negotiations will convene in Rome on July 15 and 16, shifting from Washington at US request as the two sides work to release the first pilot zones under the framework. The White House invited President Joseph Aoun to Washington on July 21 to meet Trump, who floated a trilateral that Aoun rejected, affirming he will not sit with Netanyahu while Israeli attacks continue. On the ground, Hezbollah tracked army chief Eyal Zamir's free movement through Beaufort Castle without opening fire, on Iranian directive, and is expected to obstruct the pilot-zone handover by using residents as cover, which preserves Tehran's Lebanese card.
- Free Patriotic Movement chief Gebran Bassil blasted the framework agreement as having exposed Lebanon and handed Israel cover to attack and occupy, while praising southern Christians for clinging to the "10,452 square kilometers." Druze leader Walid Jumblatt called the accord a unilateral "dictation" imposed by officials with limited experience in law and diplomacy, noted it makes no mention of an Israeli withdrawal, and declared peace with Israel impossible. Lebanese Forces leader Samir Geagea, feuding with Jumblatt over the 1949 Armistice, countered that history does not move backward. Aoun defended the deal as imperfect but a product of the battlefield balance of power.
- Berri, Fadlallah, and Druze leader Abi al-Mona rebuffed Netanyahu's annexation claim, casting the border towns' Muslim and Christian residents as one national fabric and warning against letting the fight with Israel turn inward.

The Southern Front

- Israeli forces shelled five border towns including Houla and Qabrikha overnight, detonated houses in Haddatha, Beit Yahoun, and al-Qantaa, and struck Kfartebnit and Baraashit with drones and artillery. President Joseph Aoun condemned the attacks and pressed Washington and friendly states to force Israel to honor the ceasefire. He mourned the four killed Monday in the Nabatieh al-Fawqa car strike, among them school principal Esperanza Ghandour. The Health Ministry put the toll since March at 4,320 killed and 12,203 wounded. Southern schools face a threatened academic year, the National Evangelical School's closure under study.
- Israeli forces raised their flag Tuesday over Ali al-Taher Hill, the strategic height over Nabatieh that pairs with occupied Beaufort Castle, though no maneuvers accompanied it and reaching one point is not control of the ridge. Hezbollah denied losing the position, insisting its fighters still hold it. Army chief Eyal Zamir, calling Hezbollah "exhausted" and dependent on Iran, vowed to act decisively, as forces reported RPG and anti-tank launchers in a civilian home in Tallousa and over 150 weapons in Hadatha this month. Aoun warned the occupation undermines state legitimacy and blocks the army's deployment.
- Hezbollah has pulled the bulk of its elite Radwan force and sensitive command and weapons depots north of the Litani and into the Bekaa, ceding the south to a lightly held observation belt. The northern "Badr" sector is now the command hub, Zahrani a logistics corridor, and the Bekaa its strategic depth. Formed in 2006 with IRGC backing, the Radwan force was built to infiltrate Israel and seize Galilee towns and counted roughly 3,000 fighters before the March war. The repositioning tracks Israeli claims of tunnel complexes, drone-making sites, and launch positions

built over decades to survive air strikes.

Regional Realignment

- An emerging Washington bet to have al-Sharaa's Syria, rather than Israel, "handle Hezbollah" carries sharp risks for Lebanon. The design traces to Trump's June 16 proposal to Qatar's emir at the G7 to pull Lebanon from Iran's orbit. But Damascus has yet to stabilize Syria itself after Assad's fall, and setting Sunni Syria against a Shiite Hezbollah threatens to convert a geopolitical contest into a sectarian one concentrated in Lebanon. Diplomatic readings now place Lebanon inside a wider Iranian-Turkish-Syrian-Israeli struggle, with Washington absorbed in the Iran file over Lebanese detail even as it presses the framework forward.

The Home Front

- The UN humanitarian office published a conflict-intensity snapshot mapping the war from March 2 to July 6. UNDP's tension monitoring recorded shelters running near capacity, displacement warnings widening beyond previously affected villages, and a hardening state-citizen strain over the ceasefire's uneven protection. The monitoring flagged the education file as a growing pressure point, as disrupted learning, protracted displacement, and contested school reopenings compound. Repeated strikes on residential areas and first responders keep returns uncertain.
- Parliament took up the bank restructuring law, a sitting cast as a test of whether it drives genuine reform or turns into a contest over institutional powers.

SYRIA

- Al-Sharaa and Macron oversaw the signing of memoranda and investment agreements during Macron's Damascus visit and agreed to exchange resident ambassadors after the embassy's 2012 closure. France launched the return of €51 million (\$58 million) seized from Rifaat al-Assad. The two framed Syria as a would-be transit and energy hub after the Hormuz closure, and al-Sharaa named France his "primary partner."
- Two bombs exploded Tuesday near Damascus's Four Seasons Hotel, where Macron stayed, wounding 18 including 4 police officers minutes after his motorcade left for the presidential palace. Interior Ministry spokesman Nouredine al-Baba said one device was in a parked car, the other in a garbage container, both detonating at the cordon's edge without breaching it, and assessed it sought political effect over a breach. CCTV showed a bomb-laden van approaching the site afterward. Damascus health director Wael Daghmash later raised the toll to 32 injured and one civilian killed, Deputy Tourism Minister Faraj al-Qashqoush hit by leg shrapnel. Jordan, Egypt, Iraq, and the UAE condemned it. Macron continued his program.

PALESTINE

- Gaza's Government Media Office marked 1,000 days since Israel's war began, saying more than 90 percent of the Strip has been destroyed. Israeli strikes and gunfire killed at least six Palestinians on

Tuesday, among them Mohammed Emad Abu Tuaima near the al-Sumud camp in al-Mawasi Khan Younis and Omran Abu Jarad in a tent strike west of Gaza City. The toll since the October truce reached 1,076 killed. The Israeli military said it killed two Qassam commanders, Ahmed Battash and Hamouda Abu Daqqa. A poll found one-third of Americans, and nearly half of Democrats, believe Israel has committed genocide in Gaza, against 20 percent who disagree and half unsure.

- A prisoners' group warned detained Gaza physician Marwan al-Hams, denied heart medication since February and 20 kilograms lighter, faces death, as UN experts demanded Israel free hospital director Hussam Abu Safiya, badly beaten in custody.
- Israel's Defence Ministry completed its Eastern Region Directorate and unveiled plans for about 40 new settlement outposts along the Jordan border, the country's longest land frontier, which director general Amir Baram called a security vulnerability. Settlers from the year-old Maoz Tzur outpost near Ein Arik uprooted 70 young olive trees and cut grape vines and irrigation lines on the Karajeh family's farm in a night raid. The raid is part of a widening campaign that has blocked villagers from their groves and springs for over a year. Coalition settler figures are moving to cement West Bank gains before the coming Israeli election.
- Israeli police probed a border officer filmed throwing a stun grenade into a car of Palestinians at Qalandiya camp, while prosecutors indicted commander Eyal Haimov for beating a man at a Jerusalem-area checkpoint.
- Palestinian Authority foreign minister Varsen Aghabekian Shahin met UK foreign secretary Yvette Cooper in London. She praised Britain's recognition of Palestine, its sanctions on Israeli settlers, and resumed UNRWA funding, and warned against an Israeli plan to tax churches and church-owned land in Jerusalem. The two discussed PA reforms and planned November elections for the Palestinian National and Legislative Councils, with a presidential vote in 2027. German foreign minister Johann Wadephul, in Jerusalem, warned that weakening the PA would not serve Israel's security and could open a vacuum for more radical forces, and again pressed for release of the PA's withheld tax revenues.
- Egypt football coach Hossam Hassan called the suffering of Palestinians a shame on the entire world before his team faced Argentina, urging athletes and media to do more.

KEY REGIONAL EVENTS

Gulf

- The IRGC launched a joint missile and drone strike on US military sites at Bahrain's Fifth Naval District and Bandar Salman and at Kuwait's Ali al-Salem Air Base, retaliating for the US wave of strikes on Iran. It also claimed to have downed a US MQ-9 drone. Kuwait's army said its air defenses were confronting the hostile missile and drone attacks. Bahrain's Interior Ministry sounded air-raid sirens and urged residents to seek shelter, then lifted the alert. Power failed briefly in scattered areas of both states, Kuwait attributing the outage to transmission lines going out of service, before supply was restored.
- France and Britain outlined plans for a multinational maritime mission in the Strait of Hormuz at talks between NATO and Gulf Arab foreign ministers in Ankara, which drew in ministers from Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, and the UAE after weeks of tension over the waterway. The initiative looks unlikely to break the deadlock, since Iran rejects it and any durable arrangement would require

Tehran's consent. The interim accord has not restored normal passage through the strait.

Turkey

- US President Donald Trump, on his first visit to Turkey, told Erdogan that Washington would lift the CAATSA sanctions imposed over Ankara's 2019 purchase of the Russian S-400 system. He said Washington would also weigh returning Turkey to the F-35 program it was expelled from that year. Trump called Turkey a more loyal ally than most and said he attended the Ankara NATO summit out of respect for Erdogan. Erdogan said Trump gave him a personal promise on the jets and that he would press for engines for Turkey's indigenous Kaan fighter. The overtures elevate Ankara's standing even as Israel lobbies Trump against the sale.
- Turkish Justice Minister Akın G rlek rejected the European Parliament's Turkey rapporteur's criticism of the judiciary, insisting no foreign actor could interfere in or pressure the independent courts of a sovereign state governed by the rule of law.

Yemen

- Houthi authorities pushed their nationwide mobilization into its 78th day, drawing tribes from Al Bayda, Al Jawf, and Marib plus schools, universities, hospitals, and government offices into readiness declarations behind Abdulmalik al-Houthi's call. The rival anti-Houthi tribal gathering let its deadline lapse without deciding, though figurehead Sheikh Hamad al-Hazmi promised an irreversible decision once all delegations arrived. Prime Minister Shaya Zindani accused the Houthis of undermining every peace initiative, citing 18 months of Saudi and Omani mediation the government accepted. Commentary cast Yemen as a sovereign state seized by an Iran-backed movement, calling the recent Iranian flight to Sana'a a test of the world's respect for its sovereignty.
- Yemen's Southern Transitional Council launched a peaceful-escalation campaign against Saudi-backed authorities in the south, spokesman Anwar Tamim accusing the "Saudi tutelage authorities" of targeting the council's leadership and the southern cause since January.
- A Houthi television program blamed Yemen's economic collapse on the Saudi-led coalition and the US, claiming over \$57 billion in oil-sector losses while omitting the group's own 2022 drone strikes that halted crude exports.
- Houthi loyalists celebrated an aircraft landing at Sana'a International Airport as another break in the Saudi-led coalition's airspace blockade. The flight was a routine International Committee of the Red Cross operation flown by ALS, one of the humanitarian arrivals that reach Sana'a on a roughly weekly basis, not a new breach of the airspace restrictions.

Egypt

- Egypt's Court of Cassation upheld a final plagiarism verdict against Culture Minister Gihan Zaki, ordering her to withdraw her book from sale and pay author Soheir Abdel Hamid 100,000 Egyptian pounds (\$2,050), with no further appeal.

KEY INTERNATIONAL EVENTS

- European and Canadian core defense spending rose 11 percent in 2026 to \$634 billion from \$571 billion, as the 32-nation alliance convened at Ankara and Trump pressed allies toward the 5-percent-of-GDP pledge set at last year's Hague summit for 2035. Poland, the Baltic states, Norway, and Denmark posted the sharpest decade increases, while Slovenia trailed at 1.61 percent. After calls with both, Trump said Vladimir Putin and Volodymyr Zelensky both want the war settled and a deal, and he will meet Zelensky and Syria's Ahmad al-Sharaa Wednesday and Erdogan Tuesday. The US remains the biggest absolute spender, though its share slipped to about 3.2 percent of GDP.
- The Sudanese army shot down a Chinese-made FH-95 strategic drone north of Andaraba on the El-Obeid-to-Omdurman export road, its third FH-95 downed in about two weeks after kills near al-Tuwaisha (June 23) and over Tandalti (July 2). Two drone strikes on civilian vehicles in RSF-held North Kordofan killed 15 people, 13 of them, including 5 women, in a car carrying wedding guests at al-Shaatout on Monday, and two more near a water source at Hamra al-Sheikh on Tuesday. The strikes extend the RSF campaign that razed villages near the Chad border and displaced thousands, part of the war fought since April 2023.
- The European Court of Justice rejected appeals by Ghada Mhanna, Kinda Makhoul, and Sara Makhoul to lift EU asset freezes imposed in February 2022, ruling their ties to the economic network that backed the former Syrian government still justify the sanctions.
- Satellite imagery indicates the UAE is building a military base at Berbera in Somaliland near the Bab el-Mandeb Strait, intended to serve US and Israeli interests, with airport expansion visible since October 2025.
- Pakistan opened two overland trade corridors through Iran's Gabd-Rimdan crossing and China's Sost Dry Port, moving over 14,000 metric tons of cargo to give Central Asian states an alternative to its Afghan crossings, closed since October 2025 over cross-border militancy.
- Britain committed £190 million (\$254 million) to the Precision Strike Missile program, buying the Lockheed Martin weapon that hits targets up to 500 kilometers away, with first deliveries possible in 2027.
- A landslide in a village near Longnan in China's northwestern Gansu province killed five people and left 12 missing, after rescuers located 21 of 33 initially reported trapped.
- Britain sanctioned seven Russian scientists and two research labs tied to the Novichok used in the 2018 Salisbury poisoning of Sergei Skripal and the chemical that fatally poisoned Alexei Navalny. The move brought its wartime total past 3,400 designations.
- UN experts warned the world has entered "water bankruptcy," an era of irreversible groundwater depletion and river-basin decline, and urged governments to open negotiations on a first global freshwater-governance framework at December's UN Water Conference in Abu Dhabi.
- The body of Anastasiia Berezovska, 39, the Interpol-flagged chief suspect in last week's Monaco bomb attack that wounded Ukrainian-born businessman Vadym Yermolaiev, was found shot dead near Kyiv, with two suspects, including a Ukrainian military-intelligence officer, detained.
- Taiwanese security official Lii Wen warned that China's "authoritarian expansionism" and "incremental salami slicing" in the East China Sea, Taiwan Strait, and South China Sea will persist with-

out global action, as Minister Kuan Bi-ling said Taiwan, Japan, and the Philippines face the same below-threshold pattern.

MARKETS

- Brent crude gained \$1.92, or 2.6%, to \$76.08 a barrel and West Texas Intermediate climbed 2.6% to \$72.26 on Wednesday after the US airstrikes on Iran and the reimposed oil sanctions. The gains extended an earlier roughly 3% rise and reversed a slide that had carried both benchmarks back to pre-war levels. Damage to a Saudi-flagged tanker near Hormuz added supply risk. Gulf equities had closed higher Tuesday, Saudi Arabia's index up 0.4% on a 3.1% jump in Acwa Power, with Abu Dhabi, Dubai, and Egypt also gaining. Saudi Arabia cut its August Arab Light price to Asia by \$11 a barrel.
- The US Treasury revoked the general license authorizing sales of Iranian oil, ending a waiver issued less than three weeks earlier under the memorandum, after the Hormuz vessel attacks. The Treasury called the memorandum "entirely performance-based" and said Iran "will only reap benefits if they exhibit good behavior," warning its strait actions would be met with consequences. The move strips the sanctions relief that had let Tehran resume crude exports, cutting Iranian barrels back out of the market. Negotiators continue working toward a final deal. Tehran's Foreign Ministry said it was "diligently fulfilling its commitments."
- Iran signaled it will charge service fees on Strait of Hormuz transits once the 60-day free-passage window set under the initial US-Iran deal expires. Ambassador Abdolreza Rahmani Fazli said at the World Peace Forum in Beijing that Tehran is working with Oman on new arrangements and will give "special treatment" on charges to friendly nations, terms Washington rejects. The strait normally carries one-fifth of the world's crude oil and liquefied natural gas, which leaves a fifth of seaborne energy flows exposed to any new fee regime. Iran had lifted its Hormuz blockade after striking the initial deal.
- Lebanon's petrol prices are not tracking the recent decline in global oil, with local pump costs slow to reflect the drop.

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