

Iran Update Special Report, June 7, 2026



Adham Fattah, William Doran, Katherine Wells, Benjamin Schmida, Avery Borens, Brian Carter

Analyst Notes: Data Cutoff: 4:00 PM ET

The Institute for the Study of War (ISW) and The Critical Threats Project (CTP) at the American Enterprise Institute are publishing daily updates to provide analysis on the war with Iran. The updates focus on US and Israeli strikes on Iran and Iran and the Axis of Resistance's response to the strikes. The updates cover events from the past 24-hour period.

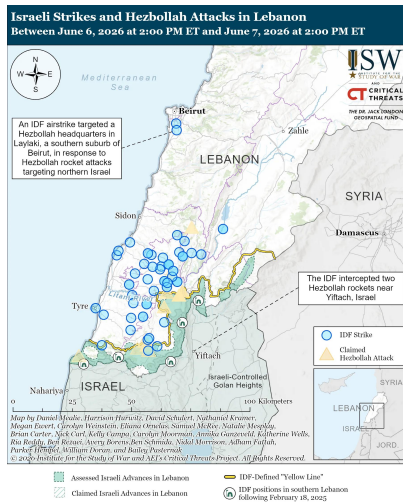
Key Takeaways

1. A Hezbollah rocket attack on northern Israel on June 7 is threatening to completely collapse the ceasefire in the Middle East. Israel responded to the Hezbollah attack by conducting an airstrike in Beirut's southern suburbs. Iran responded with a missile attack designed to deter future Israeli attacks against Hezbollah while avoiding escalation into a resumption of full-scale war.
2. Iran will likely seek to use the threat of a resumption of full-scale war to deter additional Israeli attacks. Iran is already attempting to present itself as a reasonable actor in the most recent escalation, even though its ally, Hezbollah, started the escalation on June 7.
3. Iran has continued its efforts to use force to impose its control over the Strait of Hormuz. The Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) Navy warned other states against disrupting its unrecognized and illegal transit rules, which presumably refers to US efforts to support the movement of commercial vessels through the strait.
4. Bloomberg reported on June 6 that US officials are considering using frozen Iranian funds to help Gulf allies repair damage caused by Iranian aggression, citing a Trump Administration official. The official added that the US Treasury Department "will use all tools available" to obtain estimates of the damage that Iran caused to the United States' Gulf allies and allow them to use Iranian assets for rebuilding.

Toplines

A Hezbollah rocket attack on northern Israel on June 7 is threatening to completely collapse the ceasefire in the Middle East. Israel responded to the Hezbollah attack by conducting an airstrike in Beirut's southern suburbs. Iran then retaliated against Israel's strike south of Beirut by firing about 10 missiles at an Israeli airbase.[1] Both the Israeli retaliation against Hezbollah and the Iranian retaliation against Israel were relatively restrained. Hezbollah began this round

of escalation on June 7 when it fired a salvo of rockets at northern Israel.[2] These rockets were intercepted near Yiftach.[3] The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) then struck a Hezbollah headquarters in Beirut's southern suburbs.[4] Senior Israeli officials have been extremely clear about the possible Israeli response to Hezbollah attacks on northern Israel. Netanyahu said on June 1 that the IDF would strike Hezbollah targets in Beirut if Hezbollah continued to attack northern Israel.[5] Israeli media claimed that the IDF is prepared to conduct additional airstrikes in the Beirut area if Israeli political leaders authorize the IDF to expand its operations.[6]



Iran responded with a missile attack designed to deter future Israeli attacks against Hezbollah while avoiding escalation into a resumption of full-scale war.[7] Iran targeted Ramat David Airbase in northern Israel because, according to the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC), the Israeli aircraft that struck Hezbollah sites in Beirut on June 7 flew their mission from Ramat David.[8] The IRGC fired at least ten missiles.[9] The IDF intercepted all the missiles, and there appear to be no casualties at the time of this writing.[10] The IRGC also threatened to respond with “broader” attacks if Israel continues its operations against Hezbollah.[11] The commander of Iran’s top operational headquarters, the Khatam ol Anbia Headquarters, threatened that Israel must stop attacking southern Lebanon and Beirut and that if Israel expands attacks regionally or responds to Iran’s most recent attack, Israel “will face more crushing and regrettable blows.”[12]

Iran will likely seek to use the threat of a resumption of full-scale war to deter additional Israeli attacks. Iran has almost certainly observed discussions and leaks in Western media about the increasing tension between Trump and Netanyahu over Israeli strikes in Lebanon and Trump’s fears that Israeli actions in Lebanon will cause US-Iran negotiations to collapse, for example.[13] Iran is already attempting to present itself as a reasonable actor in the most recent escalation, even though its ally, Hezbollah, started the escalation on June 7. Supreme Leader Military Adviser Mohsen Rezaei stated on X that Israel “received their response” and that “this response is a warning to stop their evil; any new action will be met with a more crushing response and heavier costs.”[14]



Israel has not yet responded to the attack. US President Donald Trump told Axios journalist Barak Ravid that he will call Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and tell him not to launch retaliatory strikes at Iran.[15]

Iran has continued its efforts to use force to impose its control over the Strait of Hormuz. US Central Command stated on June 6 that US forces shot down two Iranian attack drones that threatened international maritime traffic in the strait.[16] The IRGC Navy warned other states against disrupting its unrecognized and illegal transit rules, which presumably refers to US efforts to support the movement of commercial vessels through the strait.[17] An Iranian parliamentarian told IRGC-affiliated media on June 7 that Iran has collected an average of one and a half to two million dollars per ship attempting to transit the strait through its unrecognized traffic separation scheme.[18] The parliamentarian added that these ships have paid Iran in the form of bartered goods and cryptocurrency.[19] Iran’s Environment Department stated on June 7 that the Foreign Affairs Ministry is reviewing plans to charge ships transiting the strait for “maritime and environmental service fees.”[20]

Bloomberg reported on June 6 that US officials are considering using frozen Iranian funds to help Gulf allies repair damage caused by Iranian aggression, citing a Trump Administration official.[21] The official added that the US Treasury Department “will use all tools available” to obtain estimates of the damage that Iran caused to the United States’ Gulf allies and allow them to use Iranian assets for rebuilding.[22] Iranian Deputy Foreign Affairs Minister for Legal and International Affairs Kazem Gharibabadi stated on June 7 that Gulf states that cooperate with US forces against Iran “are not in a position to claim damages.”[23] He added that Iran’s assets are not “plunder” or a fund to pay Gulf states from.[24]

US-Iran Negotiations

See topline section.

Maritime Activity in the Strait of Hormuz and Persian Gulf

See topline section.

US and Israeli Air Campaign

Nothing significant to report.

Iranian Domestic Affairs

The IRGC announced on June 7 that it killed four anti-regime militant fighters in Saravan, Sistan and Baluchistan Province.[25] Iranian media reported on June 7 that the IRGC identified and engaged anti-regime fighters who were attempting to enter Saravan.[26] The fighters killed one IRGC member, but the IRGC killed the fighters.[27] The IRGC added that it seized weapons, ammunition, and Starlink satellite terminals from the fighters.[28] Anti-regime militia activity in southeastern Iran is relatively common.[29]

Iran's Axis of Resistance

Lebanese Hezbollah and the Israeli Campaign in Lebanon

See topline section.

Other Axis of Resistance Activity

Nothing significant to report.

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Endnotes

- [1] <https://x.com/idfonline/status/2063500781085401359?s=20> ; <https://t.me/mmirleb/17225> ; <https://x.com/idfonline/status/2063666355706929482?s=20> ; <https://x.com/acceladealer/status/2063604514209304764?s=20> ; <https://x.com/manniefabian/status/2063710017748943087?s=20> ; <https://t.me/Tasnimnews/420963>
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Iran Update Special Report, June 8, 2026



Ria Reddy, William Doran, Benjamin Schmida, Adham Fattah, Avery Borens, Annika Ganzeveld

Analyst Notes: Data Cutoff: 2:00 PM ET.

The Institute for the Study of War (ISW) and The Critical Threats Project (CTP) at the American Enterprise Institute are publishing daily updates to provide analysis on the war with Iran. The updates focus on US and Israeli strikes on Iran and Iran and the Axis of Resistance's response to the strikes. The updates cover events from the past 24-hour period.

Key Takeaways

1. The Iranian regime is attempting to use force and the threat of force to establish a strategic reality in which any Israeli or US attack on an Iranian proxy or partner would result in a large-scale conflict that would seek to impose significant economic and political costs on Israel and the United States. The recent exchange of fire comes as the Iranian regime appears to be placing renewed emphasis on the importance of the Axis of Resistance, and particularly Lebanese Hezbollah, as a central pillar of Iranian deterrence.
2. The Iranian regime likely seeks to pressure the United States to limit Israel's operations against Hezbollah in Lebanon by threatening to conduct large-scale attacks against Israel. Hezbollah likely seeks to benefit from Iranian deterrence because Iran's threat to respond to any Israeli attack against Hezbollah injects uncertainty into Israel's decision-making process for military operations against Hezbollah.
3. The recent Iranian strikes on Israel and Iran's renewed emphasis on the Axis of Resistance reflect how the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) likely continues to dominate regime decision-making. The regime's renewed emphasis on Hezbollah and the broader Axis of Resistance, coupled with its lower threshold for direct military conflict, likely reflects Vahidi's efforts to preserve and reinforce what he likely views as one of Iran's most valuable forms of deterrence.
4. The IDF responded to the Iranian strikes on northern Israel by attacking Iranian air defense and ballistic missile sites in central and western Iran. Open-source intelligence (OSINT) accounts on X and anti-regime media reported strikes against other Iranian military facilities, including drone storage and production facilities in Tehran and Esfahan provinces, respectively.
5. The Houthis announced on June 8 that they will target Israeli vessels in the Red Sea, but have not yet acted on this threat at the time of this writing. Any Houthi attack on Israeli vessels in the Red Sea would likely seek to impose costs on Israel while remaining below the threshold that would trigger a US response. Houthi attacks on Israeli vessels in the Red Sea would complement Iran's broader effort to pressure international shipping through the Strait of Hormuz and increase costs on regional and global commerce.

6. The Houthis launched at least two ballistic missiles targeting central Israel on June 8, which is consistent with the group's "limited" involvement in the current war. The Houthis claimed that they launched a ballistic missile salvo at Tel Aviv and other unspecified areas of central Israel on June 8. The IDF stated that it intercepted one missile while a second missile landed near the Yemeni-Saudi border, according to the Saudi Defense Ministry.

Toplines

The Iranian regime is attempting to use force and the threat of force to establish a strategic reality in which any Israeli or US attack on an Iranian proxy or partner would result in a large-scale conflict that would seek to impose significant economic and political costs on Israel and the United States. Iran launched missiles at Israel on June 7 following Israeli strikes on a Hezbollah first-person view (FPV) drone headquarters in Beirut's southern suburbs, which Israel conducted in response to a Hezbollah attack on northern Israel.[1] The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) then struck targets in Iran (see below), after which Iranian forces again launched missiles at Israel. All of the Iranian missiles were intercepted or struck open areas.[2] The Khatam ol Anbia Central Headquarters, which is Iran's top operational headquarters, subsequently announced the "cessation of [Iranian] armed forces operations" but warned that Iranian forces would inflict "much more severe and crushing measures" if the IDF continued to conduct operations against Hezbollah across Lebanon, including in southern Lebanon.[3] The Khatam ol Anbia Central Headquarters previously threatened on June 1 to attack Israel only if the IDF struck Beirut, which suggests that the regime has since lowered its threshold for attacking Israel.[4] The IDF stated that it will continue to target Hezbollah in southern Lebanon and warned that further attacks on northern Israel would trigger additional strikes on Beirut's suburbs.[5]

The recent exchange of fire comes as the Iranian regime appears to be placing renewed emphasis on the importance of the Axis of Resistance, and particularly Lebanese Hezbollah, as a central pillar of Iranian deterrence. A newspaper affiliated with the Supreme Leader's office argued on June 7 that Iran will "not hesitate to enter the field and defend the order that it is now seeking to achieve." [6] The newspaper added that Iran's "new security equation" involves "an eye for an eye," which suggests that Iran intends to respond to any threat to the Axis of Resistance.[7] Expediency Discernment Council Chairman Amoli Larijani similarly stated on X on June 8 that Iran's missile attack against Israel was not just a military response but a "formal declaration of a strategic doctrine...in which safeguarding regional power is pursued not in anticipation of threats, but through proactive initiative and offensive threat." [8] These statements suggest that the regime seeks to deter future military action against its regional proxies and partners by increasing the costs of escalation.

The Iranian regime likely seeks to pressure the United States to limit Israel's operations against Hezbollah in Lebanon by threatening to conduct large-scale attacks against Israel. The Iranian regime is almost certainly monitoring reports that US President Donald Trump would prefer a negotiated settlement over renewed conflict with Iran.[9] Iran's threats to inflict "much more severe and crushing measures" therefore likely seek to exploit the United States' aversion to resuming the war and pressure the United States to convince Israel to halt attacks against Hezbollah.[10] This effort aligns with Iran and Hezbollah's broader objective of securing Israeli capitulation in Lebanon, particularly through a complete cessation of Israeli operations in Lebanon and the withdrawal of Israeli forces from Lebanese territory.[11]

Hezbollah likely seeks to benefit from Iranian deterrence because Iran's threat to respond to any Israeli attack against Hezbollah injects uncertainty into Israel's decision-making process for military operations against Hezbollah.[12] The Khatam ol Anbia Central Headquarters' warning

implied that any Israeli kinetic activity in Lebanon, including responses to Hezbollah attacks, may elicit an Iranian attack on Israeli territory.[13] This warning is likely designed to force Israeli leaders at almost every echelon of command to have to consider whether an operation against Hezbollah would trigger an Iranian attack. The constant need to consider a possible Iranian attack would result in a more reactive and defensive Israeli posture.

Iran and Hezbollah may also calculate that the United States could blame Israel for any Israeli strike that triggered an Iranian response and thereby try to drive a wedge between the United States and Israel. Iranian leaders are almost certainly aware of Western media reporting that US President Donald Trump has criticized Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu for advancing Israeli operations against Hezbollah, and it likely seeks to exploit these reports to stoke further tensions between the two states.[14] Iranian officials and media have sought in recent days to frame Israel as undermining US diplomatic efforts with Iran as part of its effort to sow divisions between the two countries.[15]

The recent Iranian strikes on Israel and Iran’s renewed emphasis on the Axis of Resistance reflect how the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) likely continues to dominate regime decision-making. ISW-CTP has repeatedly assessed that IRGC Commander Major General Ahmad Vahidi and his inner circle are driving regime decision-making.[16] Vahidi and his inner circle have consistently opposed compromise and prioritized securing maximalist objectives, such as recognized Iranian control over the Strait of Hormuz.[17] Vahidi served as the first commander of the IRGC Quds Force, which is the extraterritorial arm of the IRGC, between 1988 and 1997, and played a central role in establishing Lebanese Hezbollah and developing the broader Axis of Resistance.[18] The regime’s renewed emphasis on Hezbollah and the broader Axis of Resistance, coupled with its lower threshold for direct military conflict, likely reflects Vahidi’s efforts to preserve and reinforce what he views as one of Iran’s most valuable forms of deterrence.

The IDF responded to the Iranian strikes on northern Israel by attacking Iranian air defense and ballistic missile sites in central and western Iran.[19] The IDF released footage of a strike targeting an Iranian air defense system.[20] The IDF also struck sites affiliated with ballistic missile production at the Bandar Imam Petrochemical Complex in Mahshahr, Khuzestan Province.[21] The IDF previously struck the same complex during the recent war as part of a broader Israeli and US effort to target Iran’s petrochemical sector to impose economic costs on the regime and degrade its defense industrial capabilities.[22] Open-source intelligence (OSINT) accounts on X and anti-regime media reported strikes against other Iranian military facilities, including drone storage and production facilities in Tehran and Esfahan provinces, respectively.[23] Iran responded to the Israeli strikes by launching additional missiles at Israel, all of which either struck open areas or were intercepted.[24]



Iran’s “new security equation” also relies on threatening critical economic chokepoints to deter Israel and the United States from striking Iran or its partners. Iran continues to use coercive measures in and around the Strait of Hormuz to force vessels to transit through Iran’s illegal traffic separation scheme and comply with Iran’s protection racket. ISW-CTP previously assessed that the regime increasingly views control over the strait as a key component of its future deterrence strategy.[25] Iranian leaders have repeatedly threatened to disrupt maritime commerce to impose economic costs on the United States and its allies to try to extract concessions during negotiations and discourage additional US or Israeli military action against Iran. The newspaper affiliated with the Supreme Leader’s office stated that Iran intends to impose its new security equation “from [the Strait of] Hormuz to Beirut,” suggesting that control over the strait constitutes a core element of Tehran’s strategy.[26] Iranian officials have also repeatedly threatened to restrict shipping through the Bab al Mandeb (see below).[27] The regime likely calculates that threatening these economic chokepoints can generate sufficient economic pressure on the United States and its allies to secure concessions and strengthen Iran’s long-term deterrence.

The Houthis announced on June 8 that they will target Israeli vessels in the Red Sea, but have not yet acted on this threat at the time of this writing.[28] Any Houthi attack on Israeli vessels in the Red Sea would likely seek to impose costs on Israel while remaining below the threshold that would trigger a US response. The Houthis announced on June 8 a complete ban on Israeli shipping in the Red Sea, though it has not conducted any attacks on Israeli vessels at the time of writing.[29] A Houthi source told Reuters on June 8 that the Houthis’ ban on Israeli ships in the Red Sea “was a first step” and added that “further escalation could lead [the Houthis] to stop the passage of any ships bound for Israel as well as other measures.”[30] A senior Houthi official also told the *New York Times* that the group would only target Israeli-linked vessels but warned that it would attack the vessels of any state, including Saudi Arabia, that intervenes.[31] Any Houthi campaign against Israeli shipping would likely seek to impose economic costs on Israel and complicate maritime trade in the Red Sea while seeking to avoid direct US military intervention. The Houthis have conducted limited ballistic missile and drone attacks targeting Israel during the current conflict, but have thus far not conducted attacks on international shipping.[32] Houthi attacks on Israeli vessels in the Red Sea would complement Iran’s broader effort to pressure international shipping through the Strait of Hormuz and increase costs on regional and global commerce. The Houthis previously began targeting Israeli-linked vessels after October 7, 2023, and later expanded their attacks to include vessels associated with companies that used Israeli ports, which forced major shipping firms to adopt costlier routes outside the Red Sea.[33] The Houthis’ recent implementation of maritime restrictions on Israeli shipping in the Red Sea also follows a previous report that Iran pressured the Houthis to close the Bab al Mandeb Strait in April 2026.[34] It is unclear whether the Houthis’ current restriction on Israeli-linked shipping reflects Iranian pressure or independent Houthi decision-making, however.

The Houthis launched at least two ballistic missiles targeting central Israel on June 8, which is consistent with the group’s “limited” involvement in the current war. The Houthis claimed that they launched a ballistic missile salvo at Tel Aviv and other unspecified areas of central Israel on June 8.[35] The IDF stated that it intercepted one missile while a second missile landed near the Yemeni-Saudi border, according to the Saudi Defense Ministry.[36] The Houthis also published a video of the attack, which showed Houthi fighters launching several Palestine-2 medium-range ballistic missiles.[37] The Houthis previously conducted at least seven ballistic missile and drone attacks targeting Israel before the US-Iran ceasefire came into effect in early April.[38] These attacks included a drone attack on April 6 that the Houthis conducted in coordination with Iran and Lebanese Hezbollah.[39]

US-Iran Negotiations

See topline section.

Maritime Activity in the Strait of Hormuz and Persian Gulf

US Central Command (CENTCOM) announced on June 8 that US forces disabled an unladen oil tanker that violated the US naval blockade on Iranian ports.[40] CENTCOM stated that the Palau-flagged M/T *Marivex* transited international waters in the Gulf of Oman and attempted to sail to an Iranian port.[41] US forces disabled the vessel by firing a precision munition at the vessel's engineering and steering spaces after its crew failed to comply with directions.[42] US forces have disabled seven non-compliant vessels and redirected 134 vessels since the United States began its blockade on Iranian ports on April 13.[43]

US and Israeli Air Campaign

See topline section.

Iranian Domestic Affairs

Nothing significant to report.

Iran's Axis of Resistance

Lebanese Hezbollah and the Israeli Campaign in Lebanon

See topline section.

Other Axis of Resistance Activity

Two Iranian-backed Iraqi militias threatened to strike US bases and interests in Iraq and the region if the United States strikes Iran.[44] Kataib Hezbollah said on June 8 that the group would target US bases and interests in Iraq and the region if the United States "intervenes." [45] Likely Kataib Sayyid al Shuhada front group Saraya Awliya al Dam released a similar statement on June 8.[46] Neither group has acted on their threats at the time of this writing. These threats coincide with reports that Iraqi Prime Minister Ali al Zaydi is leading efforts to prevent Iraqi armed factions from joining the Iran-Israel conflict, even if the United States reenters the war.[47]

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Endnotes

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Iran Update Special Report, June 9, 2026



Adham Fattah, Benjamin Schmida, Parker Hempel, William Doran, Nidal Morrison, Katherine Wells, Ria Reddy, Brian Carter

Analyst Notes: Data Cutoff: 2:00 PM ET

The Institute for the Study of War (ISW) and The Critical Threats Project (CTP) at the American Enterprise Institute are publishing daily updates to provide analysis on the war with Iran. The updates focus on US and Israeli strikes on Iran and Iran and the Axis of Resistance's response to the strikes. The updates cover events from the past 24-hour period.

Key Takeaways

1. The Iranian regime is attempting to use calibrated force in an attempt to extract concessions from the United States without triggering a full-scale US response. Iran has likely designed this new approach based on an assessment that the United States does not want to return to war.
2. Iran is using force against US forces near the Strait of Hormuz, likely in an effort to deter US forces from operating in the Strait of Hormuz for any reason. An Iranian drone downed a US Army AH-64 Apache gunship near the coast of Oman on June 8. This use of force is designed to achieve the Iranian war aim of asserting its control over the strait.
3. US President Donald Trump emphasized that the United States must respond to the Iranian attack. ISW-CTP is monitoring reports of a "proportional" US response as of 5:50 PM ET on June 9. ISW-CTP will provide more details on the US response in its June 10 morning thread and evening update.
4. The Houthis continue to threaten to restrict commercial shipping in the Bab el Mandeb Strait and the Red Sea, but they have not yet conducted attacks to realize these threats.
5. Hezbollah and Iran appear not to have effectively deterred Israel from striking Hezbollah targets in southern Lebanon.

Toplines

The Iranian regime is attempting to use calibrated force in an attempt to extract concessions from the United States without triggering a full-scale US response. Recent statements from senior Iranian officials and regime-affiliated media suggest that Iran believes that it is at war—not in a ceasefire—and views military action as a tactic to improve its negotiating position to serve the regime's strategic objectives. Iranian Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf stated on June 8 that Iran must use military action and diplomacy in a complementary way, in which Iranian military action creates favorable conditions for the regime so that diplomacy can turn these conditions into "legal, political, and

economic achievements.”[1] Regime-affiliated outlet Nour News argued on June 9 that the recent round of strikes between Iran and Israel occurred because each side is attempting to use limited military action in order to strengthen its position in negotiations without triggering a full-scale war.[2] These statements and regime media opinions suggest that the regime views negotiations as a continuation of the war with the United States and perceives military action as a tool to secure the regime’s objectives in negotiations.

Iranian officials appear to be calibrating their response to avoid triggering a major US response. Iranian Foreign Affairs Minister Abbas Araghchi stated on June 9 that “foreign forces” are at constant risk due to their own errors and should leave the region because Iran will never be “hospitable” to their presence.[3] Araghchi’s statement is likely a reference to the Iranian attack on the US Apache helicopter (see below) and notably stops short of explicitly naming or threatening US forces. The attack is consistent with Iran’s broader effort to secure recognition of its control over the strait by deterring US intervention to protect maritime traffic, but the operation’s limited scope suggests that Iran seeks to increase pressure on the United States through limited military action to secure greater concessions in negotiations while avoiding a return to full-blown war.

Iran has likely designed this new approach based on an assessment that the United States does not want to return to war.[4] Nour News, for example, highlighted that neither side wants to trigger a full-scale conflict, which implies that Nour News—a regime-affiliated outlet—believes that the United States does not want to return to war. US President Donald Trump has attempted to avoid a return to war. He has also said explicitly that he seeks to avoid war, which would increase Iran’s confidence in its assessment.[5] Avoiding a return to large-scale operations is beneficial for Iran because it allows Iran to drag out the economic and political pressure on the United States and Israel. Iran faces its own economic pressure due to war damages and the US Navy blockade, but the Iranian regime only cares about economic damage insofar as it damages the regime’s parochial interests and threatens regime security.

The recent escalation in Lebanon is also emblematic of this Iranian approach. ISW-CTP assessed on June 8 that the recent Iranian strikes and threats of future attacks are likely an attempt to deter US or Israeli military action against Iran’s partners and proxies in the region (particularly Hezbollah), which are a central pillar of Iranian deterrence.[6] Iran has almost certainly observed discussions and leaks in Western media about the increasing tension between Trump and Netanyahu over Israeli strikes in Lebanon and Trump’s fears that Israeli actions in Lebanon will cause US-Iran negotiations to collapse, for example.[7] Pressure from Trump on Netanyahu resulted in limited Israeli strikes that were carefully calibrated to avoid war, rather than restore deterrence vis-à-vis Iran. Such reports would increase Iranian confidence that Trump wants to avoid war. Trump’s pressure on Israel increases the political risk of any strike in Beirut, thus limiting Israel’s ability to degrade Hezbollah and threaten a key pillar of Iranian deterrence.

These strikes and Iranian efforts to link a complete ceasefire in Lebanon to a US-Iran ceasefire are part of an Iranian effort to secure a key objective, the survival of Hezbollah, and simultaneously distract the United States from discussions of Iran’s nuclear program and Iranian efforts to control the strait and aim to reduce US leverage before negotiations on such issues.

Iran is using force against US forces near the Strait of Hormuz, likely in an effort to deter US forces from operating in the Strait of Hormuz for any reason. This use of force is designed to achieve the Iranian war aim of asserting its control over the strait. An Iranian drone downed a US Army AH-64 Apache gunship near the coast of Oman on June 8.[8] US President Donald Trump stated on June 9 that Iranian air defenses shot down a US Apache helicopter while the helicopter was patrolling in the Strait of Hormuz on June 8.[9] A US source told CNN on June 9 that an Iranian Shahed drone struck

the US Apache helicopter.[10] Iran possesses a jet-powered interceptor variant of the Shahed, which may have downed the US Apache helicopter, according to a drone analyst.[11] Iran has not claimed responsibility for the Apache incident at the time of this writing, and Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Majid Takht Ravanchi denied Iranian involvement to Al Jazeera on June 9.[12] CENTCOM spokesperson Captain Timothy Hawkins announced on June 9 that a US Navy Corsair unmanned surface vessel (USV) rescued the two crew members within two hours of the incident on June 8, marking the Navy's first USV search-and-rescue mission.[13] Both crew members are in stable condition.[14] Trump emphasized that the United States must respond to the Iranian attack.[15] ISW-CTP is monitoring reports of a "proportional" US response as of 5:50 PM ET on June 9.[16] ISW-CTP will provide more details on the US response in its June 10 morning thread and evening update.

Iran likely targeted the Apache due to the role Apache gunships can play in air defense against Iranian drones over the strait or in intercepting Iranian fast attack craft. Lloyd's List, a maritime intelligence firm, told CNBC on June 4 that the US Navy has coordinated the transit of nearly 40 vessels via the Strait of Hormuz over the past three weeks.[17] Lloyd's List's chief editor told CNBC on June 4 that "the assumption is that the US Navy is providing limited assurances that it will intercept incoming threats against commercial ships." [18] A US CENTCOM spokesperson denied to the *Wall Street Journal* that US forces escorted commercial vessels but confirmed that US forces continually communicate and coordinate with vessels transiting the Strait of Hormuz on May 24.[19] US Apache gunships engaged Iranian fast attack craft during Project Freedom on May 4, and Emirati Apache gunships have intercepted incoming Iranian drones.[20]

The Iranian attack on the US Apache helicopter comes amid repeated Iranian efforts to use coercive measures, including force, in and around the Strait of Hormuz to force vessels to transit through Iran's illegal traffic separation scheme and comply with Iran's protection racket.[21] Iran almost certainly perceives US efforts to facilitate the safe passage of vessels through the strait as a threat to this broader effort to assert control over the strait. Iran has previously used force to threaten US naval forces in the strait in order to try to increase the risk to US forces protecting vessels and deter such US efforts.[22]

The Iranian regime has continued to signal that it will not accept the United States' latest nuclear demands. The *New York Times*, citing US officials and diplomats who have been briefed on the confidential talks, reported on June 8 that there are four major points of discussion between the United States and Iran, including a suspension of uranium enrichment for ten to 20 years, the dilution of Iran's highly enriched uranium (HEU), the dismantling of Iran's major nuclear sites at Natanz, Fordow, and Esfahan, and the ability of International Atomic Energy Agency inspectors to be able to conduct "snap" inspections.[23] Ebrahim Azizi reiterated on June 9 that the regime is not negotiating on any nuclear issues at this time and that the two sides are not close to reaching an agreement.[24]

The Houthis continue to threaten to restrict commercial shipping in the Bab el Mandeb Strait and the Red Sea, but they have not yet conducted attacks to realize these threats. Houthi Political Bureau member Mohammed al Bukhaiti told Russia Today India on June 9 that the Houthis have imposed a "blockade" against Israel and may target "any vessel heading to Israel.[25] Bukhaiti noted that the Houthis are using the Bab el Mandeb Strait as "leverage" to pressure Israel to stop operations against Hamas and Hezbollah.[26] Bukhaiti's statement comes after the Houthis announced on June 8 that they will target Israeli vessels in the Red Sea.[27]

The Houthis launched a drone targeting Eilat Port in southern Israel on June 8, which Israel successfully intercepted.[28] The Houthis have yet to take responsibility for the drone attack at the time of this writing. The drone attack on Eilat comes after the Houthis launched two missiles reportedly targeting Tel Aviv in central Israel on June 8, one of which Israel intercepted. The other fell in Saudi

territory.[29]

US-Iran Negotiations

See topline section.

Maritime Activity in the Strait of Hormuz and Persian Gulf

See topline section.

US and Israeli Air Campaign

Nothing significant to report.

Iranian Domestic Affairs

Nothing significant to report.

Iran's Axis of Resistance

Lebanese Hezbollah and the Israeli Campaign in Lebanon

Hezbollah and Iran appear not to have effectively deterred Israel from striking Hezbollah targets in southern Lebanon. The Khatam ol Anbia Central Headquarters, which is Iran's top operational headquarters, warned on June 8 that Iranian forces would inflict "much more severe and crushing measures" if the IDF continued to conduct operations against Hezbollah across Lebanon, including in southern Lebanon.[30] The Iranian warning occurred after Iran launched missiles at Israel on June 7 following Israeli strikes on a Hezbollah first-person view (FPV) drone headquarters in Beirut's southern suburbs, which Israel conducted in response to a Hezbollah attack on northern Israel.[31] The Iranian warning implied that any Israeli kinetic activity in Lebanon, including responses to Hezbollah attacks, may elicit an Iranian attack on Israeli territory.[32] ISW-CTP assessed on June 8 that Hezbollah likely seeks to benefit from Iran's threat to respond to any Israeli attack against Hezbollah because such threats seek to inject uncertainty into Israel's decision-making process for military operations against Hezbollah.[33]

The IDF has continued strikes on Hezbollah infrastructure in southern Lebanon on June 8, however.[34] Senior Israeli officials stated on June 8 and 9 that Israel will not allow Hezbollah and Iran to deter Israel from striking Hezbollah targets in Lebanon and will respond to any Hezbollah or Iranian attacks on Israeli territory.[35] Senior Israeli cabinet officials said that any Hezbollah fire intended to cross the border into Israel will trigger strikes on Beirut, according to Israeli media on June 9.[36] Netanyahu said on June 8 that Hezbollah and Iran are attempting to limit IDF freedom of action, which is "intolerable and unacceptable." [37] Netanyahu stated that if Iran attacks Israel again, Israel will "respond forcefully." [38] Hezbollah and Iran have not conducted any attacks on Israeli territory since ISW-CTP's last data cut off on June 8 at the time of this writing, and the IDF has limited its strikes to southern Lebanon.

US and Lebanese officials provided additional details on a US-Israeli-Lebanese framework to deploy the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) to “pilot zones” in southern Lebanon.[39] The United States, Israel, and Lebanon issued a joint statement on June 3 announcing that they would coordinate to establish zones south of the Litani River where the LAF would establish territorial control “to the exclusion of all non-state actors.”[40] The LAF will reportedly operate in these zones to confiscate weapons and protect civilians returning to evacuated areas.[41] Lebanese President Joseph Aoun told Western media on June 5 that these “pilot zones” will be established once a complete ceasefire takes effect.[42] Aoun proposed that Israel and Lebanon first establish a “pilot zone” near Beaufort Castle and that the LAF replace the Israeli forces that seized the area on May 31.[43] US Ambassador to Lebanon Michel Issa told Lebanese media on June 9 that Israeli forces will refrain from conducting kinetic activity in these zones.[44] Issa said that the LAF will move to new areas and conduct further disarmament operations after disarming the initial zones in an effort to eventually clear all of southern Lebanese territory of non-state weapons.[45]

Israeli forces exchanged fire with an unspecified militia fighter near the Israel-Lebanon border on June 9.[46] The IDF determined in an investigation that the gunman wore a “military uniform” and entered Israeli territory in the early afternoon of June 9, but failed to cross the Israeli border fence, which is several meters past the border within Israel.[47] Israeli soldiers in a community nearly one mile away responded to reports of gunfire near the border and killed the gunman, who acted alone and carried only a knife and a handgun.[48] The lone gunman’s light armament, conspicuous military dress, and daytime movement suggest a very amateur and uncoordinated infiltration attempt rather than a well-coordinated military operation.

Other Axis of Resistance Activity

Iraqi political sources told Iraqi media on June 9 that they “anticipate” that only parties unaffiliated with Iraqi militias’ parties will fill the nine remaining Iraqi ministerial positions.[49] The Iraqi parliament approved 14 out of 23 ministers of incumbent Prime Minister Ali al Zaydi’s government on May 14 but multiple key ministries, including the defense and interior ministries, remain unfilled.[50] The United States opposes the allocation of any ministerial portfolio to political parties tied to Iranian-backed Iraqi militias, even if the militias announced their disarmament.[51] ISW-CTP continues to assess that Iranian-backed Iraqi militias Asaib Ahl al Haq and Kataib Imam al Ali may have signaled on June 2 their willingness to disarm to reduce US opposition to their political wings participating in the next Iraqi government in non-cabinet level roles.[52]

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Iran Update Special Report, June 10, 2026



Katherine Wells, Carolyn Moorman, Parker Hempel, Annika Ganzeveld

Analyst Notes: Data Cutoff: 2:00 PM ET

The Institute for the Study of War (ISW) and The Critical Threats Project (CTP) at the American Enterprise Institute are publishing daily updates to provide analysis on the war with Iran. The updates focus on US and Israeli strikes on Iran and Iran and the Axis of Resistance's response to the strikes. The updates cover events from the past 24-hour period.

Key Takeaways

1. Iran is using force, combined with the threat to suspend US-Iran negotiations, to try to deter the United States from conducting further attacks on Iran that would likely make it more difficult for Iran to achieve its strategic objectives, which include solidifying control over the Strait of Hormuz and preserving the Axis of Resistance. US forces struck around 20 targets in southern Iran, including air defenses, ground control stations, and surveillance radar sites, on June 9 in response to Iran's drone attack that downed a US Apache helicopter off the coast of Oman on June 8.
2. Iran has repeatedly used calibrated force as part of a series of campaigns to try to achieve its strategic objectives. Iran launched missiles at Israel on June 7 to pressure US President Donald Trump to convince Israel to halt its operations against Hezbollah in Lebanon. These attacks were part of a broader Iranian effort to preserve Hezbollah, which it views as a key pillar of its deterrence strategy vis-a-vis Israel and the United States.
3. ISW-CTP is monitoring reports of additional US strikes in Iran as of 5:36 PM ET on June 10. ISW-CTP will provide more details on the US strikes in its June 11 morning thread and evening update.

Toplines

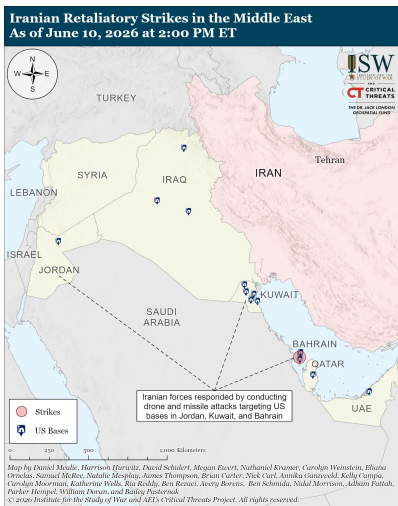
Iran is using force, combined with the threat to suspend US-Iran negotiations, to try to deter the United States from conducting further attacks on Iran that would likely make it more difficult for Iran to achieve its strategic objectives, which include solidifying control over the Strait of Hormuz and preserving the Axis of Resistance. US forces struck around 20 targets in southern Iran, including air defenses, ground control stations, and surveillance radar sites, on June 9 in response to Iran's drone attack that downed a US Apache helicopter off the coast of Oman on June 8.[1] Iranian forces responded by conducting several drone and missile attacks targeting US bases in Jordan, Kuwait, and Bahrain.[2] US forces intercepted all of the projectiles except for one that landed in the vicinity of the US Navy 5th Fleet Headquarters in Manama, Bahrain, with no reported casualties at the

time of this writing.[3] The Iranian regime likely intended for these strikes to have an informational effect by signaling to the United States that Iranian forces would be prepared to resume the war with the United States if necessary. The Iranian regime likely calculated that the United States would not resume the war in response to these strikes given recent reports that US President Donald Trump would prefer a negotiated settlement over a resumption of conflict. Iranian Foreign Affairs Ministry Spokesperson Esmail Baghaei separately stated on June 10 that Iran will “review” negotiations with the United States in light of the US self-defense strikes on Iran on June 9.[4] This comment is also part of the Iranian informational campaign aimed at deterring further US military action against Iran because Baghaei is implicitly threatening to suspend negotiations if the United States takes military action against Iran.[5] Iran is exploiting the current situation in which it has neither made concessions in negotiations nor faces continuous large-scale strikes from the United States and Israel to advance its objectives, such as normalizing Iranian control over the Strait of Hormuz. ISW-CTP previously assessed that the Iranian regime likely calculates that the status quo is favorable to achieving its objectives.

Iran has repeatedly used calibrated force in recent weeks as part of a series of campaigns to try to achieve its strategic objectives. Iran launched missiles at Israel on June 7 to pressure US President Donald Trump to convince Israel to halt its operations against Hezbollah in Lebanon.[6] These attacks were part of a broader Iranian effort to preserve Hezbollah, which it views as a key pillar of its deterrence strategy vis-a-vis Israel and the United States.[7] Iran has also used force, including attacks on US forces in the Gulf and the drone attack on the Apache helicopter, to try to deter the United States from enforcing its naval blockade and interfering with Iranian efforts to control the strait.[8] Iranian officials and media have repeatedly emphasized that Iran will not concede on control of the strait, its proxy and partner network, and its nuclear program because it views these things as central pillars to its national security strategy to deter future attacks by the United States and Israel.[9]

ISW-CTP is monitoring reports of additional US strikes in Iran as of 5:36 PM ET on June 10. CTP-ISW will provide more details on the US strikes in its June 11 morning thread and evening update. President Trump threatened earlier on June 10 to strike Iranian power plants and bridges if Iran did not make progress in negotiations.[10]





US-Iran Negotiations

See topline section.

Maritime Activity in the Strait of Hormuz and Persian Gulf

See topline section.

US and Israeli Air Campaign

See topline section.

Iranian Domestic Affairs

Nothing significant to report.

Iran's Axis of Resistance

Lebanese Hezbollah and the Israeli Campaign in Lebanon

The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) is continuing to strike Hezbollah targets and conduct ground operations in southern Lebanon, despite Hezbollah and Iranian efforts to deter Israel from continuing its campaign in Lebanon. ISW-CTP assessed on June 8 that Hezbollah likely seeks to benefit from Iran's threat to respond to any Israeli attack against Hezbollah because such threats seek to inject uncertainty into Israel's decision-making process for military operations against Hezbollah.[11] Senior Israeli officials stated on June 8 and 9 that Israel will not allow Hezbollah and Iran to deter Israel from striking Hezbollah targets in Lebanon and will respond to any Hezbollah or Iranian attacks on Israeli territory.[12] The IDF continued to strike Hezbollah targets, including rocket and drone launch sites, in southern Lebanon on June 9 and 10.[13] IDF units, including the 869th Brigade Reconnaissance Unit (91st Division) and the 84th (Givati) Infantry Brigade (91st Division), have continued to seize and destroy Hezbollah weapons caches and infrastructure and kill the group's fighters in southern Lebanon in recent

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Iran Update Special Report, June 11, 2026



Ben Rezaei, Benjamin Schmida, William Doran, Nidal Morrison, Katherine Wells, Brian Carter

Analyst Notes: Data Cutoff: 2:00 PM ET

The Institute for the Study of War (ISW) and The Critical Threats Project (CTP) at the American Enterprise Institute are publishing daily updates to provide analysis on the war with Iran. The updates focus on US and Israeli strikes on Iran and Iran and the Axis of Resistance's response to the strikes. The updates cover events from the past 24-hour period.

Key Takeaways

1. The Iranian regime is using information operations to magnify the informational effect of its strikes as part of an effort to compel the United States to accept an agreement that is relatively advantageous to Iran.
2. Iran does not view the current phase in the conflict as negotiations in pursuit of a deal; it believes it is at war and that war will end with a deal.
3. The Iranian regime likely assesses that the United States does not seek a return to the conflict. Iran's campaign seeks to leverage US fears about a return to conflict. The regime has almost certainly observed and reacted to US statements in the Western press.
4. Iran is attempting to reinforce what it appears to believe is a US reticence to resume the war by claiming that it is unwilling to yield to US military pressure.
5. Iran's strikes on US bases and assets are also designed to have primarily informational and economic effects, rather than military effects. Iran continues to demonstrate that it is unwilling to yield to US military pressure and come to an agreement. Iran also knows that not conceding and amplifying its denial imposes political and economic cost on the United States as well.
6. Iran's announcement that it has "closed" the Strait of Hormuz is an extension of Iran's information operation to heighten political and economic pressure on the United States by amplifying its military operations in the region. It remains unclear whether Iran's statement will translate into changes to its existing coercive maritime behavior.
7. The United States attempted to degrade Iran's ability to sense, target, and strike vessels moving through the Strait of Hormuz and US air assets protecting their transit in its second round of airstrikes in two days on June 10.
8. The United States continued to enforce its blockade on Iranian ports as part of its economic pressure campaign on Iran. US forces disabled the Guinea-Bissau-flagged oil tanker M/V *Jaiveer* on June 10 after the vessel attempted to violate the US blockade and transport Iranian oil outside of Iran.

Toplines

The Iranian regime is using information operations to magnify the informational effect of its strikes as part of an effort to compel the United States to accept an agreement that is relatively advantageous to Iran. Iran does not view the current phase in the conflict as negotiations in pursuit of a deal; it believes it is at war and that war will end with a deal. The Supreme Leader’s website argued on June 10 that Iran is “not afraid” of a ceasefire collapse, which aims to suggest to the United States that Iran does not fear a return to conflict.[1] These messages magnify the informational effect of Iranian strikes across the region. These regional strikes are not militarily effective, but they create an informational effect by demonstrating that Iran is not concerned about going to war. This improves Iran’s position in negotiations by demonstrating to the United States that Iran is willing to resume the conflict if it does not get what it seeks in a deal—namely, control of the Strait of Hormuz, and the release of frozen funds, among other issues.

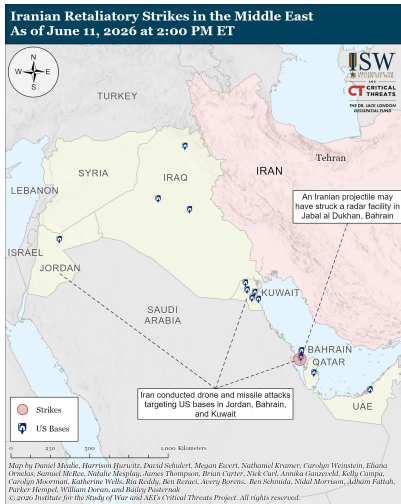
The Iranian regime likely assesses that the United States does not seek a return to the conflict. The campaign described above seeks to leverage US fears about a return to conflict. The regime has almost certainly observed and reacted to US statements in the Western press.[2] Iranian regime-affiliated Nour News, for example, highlighted that neither side wants to trigger a full-scale conflict, which implies that Nour News believes that the United States does not want to return to war.[3] US President Donald Trump has said explicitly that he seeks to avoid war, which would presumably increase Iran’s confidence in its assessment.[4] US Vice President JD Vance similarly said that he believes the United States and Iran can reach a deal, which implies he continues to support a diplomatic track, which also would increase Iran’s confidence that the United States does not want to return to war at this time.[5]

Iran’s strikes on US bases and assets are also designed to have primarily informational and economic effects, rather than military effects. Iran responded to US airstrikes targeting Iranian military capabilities on June 11 (see below for report on US airstrikes and timeline of events) with drone and missile attacks on US bases in Bahrain, Kuwait, and Jordan, as Iran had previously done on June 10.[6] These strikes had little military effect. But the strikes appeared designed to upset markets—thereby increasing economic pressure on the United States—and trigger fears that Iran may be willing to resume the war.

Iran continues to demonstrate that it is unwilling to yield to US military pressure and come to an agreement. Axios also reported on June 11, citing unspecified sources, that Qatari and Iranian officials believed they had reached an “agreed-upon text” that the United States would also accept.[7] The IRGC outlet’s source also claimed that the United States will eventually have to accept the main frameworks of Iran’s text.[8] Iran’s denial and the narrative spread by the IRGC outlet suggest that Iran is trying to preserve its negotiating position and avoid creating the impression that US military pressure forced Iran to accept US terms as well.

Iran also knows that not conceding and amplifying its denial imposes political and economic cost on the United States as well. Supreme Leader Military Adviser Mohsen Rezaei warned on June 11 that the United States must choose between accepting Iran’s terms and losing “the last shred of its credibility.”[9] Parliamentary National Security and Foreign Policy Committee member Esmail Kowsari similarly claimed on June 11 that the war has imposed pressure on the US economy and that Trump is pressuring Iran to achieve his goals.[10] Iran’s announcement that it has “closed” the Strait of Hormuz is an extension of Iran’s information operation to heighten political and economic pressure on the United States by amplifying its military operations in the region. The Persian Gulf Strait Authority separately announced on June 11 that the strait is closed and told vessels that previously received transit permits to remain “patient” and await further guidance.[11] It remains unclear whether Iran’s statement will translate into

changes to its existing coercive maritime behavior.



US President Donald Trump's announced on June 11 that he canceled scheduled strikes against Iran on the night of June 11 after discussions with Iran reached the "highest level" of Iranian leadership.[12] IRGC-linked Fars News Agency later denied that Iranian leaders had approved the deal, but later clarified that it would "likely" be approved because the United States approved Iran's text.[13] It is unclear what precisely is in the text. ISW-CTP will provide further analysis on June 12.

The United States is attempting to degrade Iran's ability to sense, target, and strike vessels moving through the Strait of Hormuz and US air assets protecting their transit. US Central Command (CENTCOM) announced on June 10 that US forces struck Iranian air defenses, surveillance assets, radar systems, and drone command units in southern Iran to degrade Iran's ability to track, coerce, and attack US forces and commercial vessels in the Strait of Hormuz.[14] Satellite imagery confirmed that US forces struck Bandar Abbas International Airport on June 10, and open-source social media users and Iranian media reported explosions across southern Iran, including Qeshm Island, Kish Island, and Minab City in Hormozgan Province near the Strait of Hormuz on June 10.[15] The June 10 strikes followed an exchange of fire between the United States and Iran on June 9. Iran initiated the most recent escalation when an Iranian drone downed a US Apache helicopter off Oman on June 8 while it was operating over the strait.[16] US forces also struck multiple targets on the outskirts of Tehran City, but ISW-CTP is unable to verify what these strikes targeted at this time.[17]

Iranian Escalation in the Conflict with the United States and Israel
As of June 11, 2026 at 2:00 PM ET



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The United States has also continued to enforce its blockade on Iranian ports as part of its economic pressure campaign on Iran. CENTCOM announced that US forces disabled the Guinea-Bissau-flagged oil tanker M/V *Jalveer* on June 10 after the vessel attempted to violate the US blockade and transport Iranian oil outside of Iran.[18] The strike that disabled the vessel injured some crew members.[19] This is the third Iranian-linked vessel that US forces have disabled this week for failing to comply with the US blockade.[20] CENTCOM forces also disabled the Palau-flagged oil tanker M/T *Settebello* as it transited the Gulf of Oman on June 9 and disabled the Palau-flagged oil tanker M/T *Marivex* as it transited international waters in the Gulf of Oman toward Iran on June 8.[21] CENTCOM also announced on June 11 that US forces have disabled "nine non-compliant vessels," redirected 135 ships that attempted to run the US blockade, and allowed 42 vessels with humanitarian aid to transit since the United States initiated the blockade on April 13.[22]

US-Iran Negotiations

Senior Emirati and Iranian national security officials held an in-person meeting for the first time since the start of the US-Israeli war against Iran, according to Bloomberg on June 11, citing people familiar with the matter.[23] The United Arab Emirates (UAE)'s motivation to meet with Iran was to reportedly ease tensions with Iran, according to the sources.[24] Emirati officials have reportedly become more disillusioned with the prospect of Iranian regime change and the United States and Iran achieving a political settlement.[25] Emirati officials also reportedly remain concerned about the fragility of the US-Iran ceasefire and threats to shipping through the Strait of Hormuz — both of which

have damaged the UAE's economy and security.[26] Iranian officials pushed for a high-level meeting with the UAE, but the Emiratis waited until their Iranian point of contacts could prove they had a direct line to Supreme Leader Mojtaba Khamenei and the IRGC, according to Bloomberg's sources.[27] Bloomberg assessed that the talks had positive results for the Emiratis and noted that Iran has not fired at the UAE since Iran targeted the Barakah Nuclear Power Plant on May 17.[28] Iran has targeted Kuwait, Bahrain, and Jordan on June 9 and 10, however.[29]

Maritime Activity in the Strait of Hormuz and Persian Gulf

See *Topline Section*.

US and Israeli Air Campaign

Nothing significant to report.

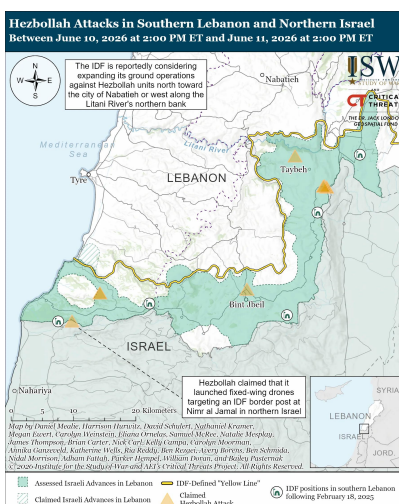
Iranian Domestic Affairs

Nothing significant to report.

Iran's Axis of Resistance

Lebanese Hezbollah and the Israeli Campaign in Lebanon

The Israeli Foreign Ministry claimed on June 11 that Hezbollah launched drones targeting three locations within Israeli territory on June 10 and 11.[30] Hezbollah claimed that it launched fixed-wing drones targeting an Israel Defense Forces (IDF) border post at Nimr al Jamal, northern Israel, on June 11.[31] The IDF did not report any attacks targeting Israeli territory on June 10 or 11. The IDF did report Hezbollah drone attacks on Israeli forces in southern Lebanon, which triggered air raid sirens in near-border Israeli communities, however.[32] Israeli political leaders and the IDF have repeatedly warned since June 1 that the IDF would conduct airstrikes on Hezbollah targets in the Beirut area if Hezbollah attacks northern Israel.[33]



The IDF reportedly developed plans to expand its ground operations against Hezbollah north of the Litani River.[34] Israeli military correspondents reported on June 11 that the IDF has developed plans to begin a new ground offensive toward the city of Nabatieh, which is four miles north of the IDF's current furthest assessed advance into Lebanon.[35] One correspondent said that the IDF has identified ongoing Hezbollah preparations to defend and hold Nabatieh in anticipation of an IDF offensive north of the Litani River.[36] An unnamed IDF official also told the correspondent that the IDF may launch a new offensive westward along the northern bank of the Litani River to destroy Hezbollah units in the vicinity instead.[37] The official said that Israeli political leaders have not yet decided whether to authorize either of these efforts, however.[38]

An Israeli military correspondent reported on June 11 that Hezbollah has extended the range of its first-person view (FPV) drone attacks targeting Israeli forces in Lebanon.[39] The correspondent reported that Hezbollah has recently conducted attacks from deeper within Lebanese territory using fiber-optic FPV drones, which are impervious to radiofrequency jamming.[40] The correspondent said that Hezbollah has used fiber-optic FPV drones with ranges of up to 20 kilometers in recent attacks targeting Israeli forces in Lebanon.[41] A greater range provides Hezbollah with the ability to strike targets further from launch zones and maintain its attacks on much of Israel's operational area in southern Lebanon, even as the IDF conducts further advances north of the Litani River. Combatants in Ukraine have developed FPV drones with ranges far exceeding that of Hezbollah's drones, however. Ukrainian manufacturers have developed and tested fiber-optic FPV drones capable of ranges of up to 50 kilometers as of December 2025.[42]

Other Axis of Resistance Activity

Nothing significant to report.

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Iran Update Special Report, June 12, 2026



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Analyst Notes: Data Cutoff: 2:00 PM ET

The Institute for the Study of War (ISW) and The Critical Threats Project (CTP) at the American Enterprise Institute are publishing daily updates to provide analysis on the war with Iran. The updates focus on US and Israeli strikes on Iran and Iran and the Axis of Resistance's response to the strikes. The updates cover events from the past 24-hour period.

Key Takeaways

1. Persistent internal disagreements remain among Iranian regime leaders over the concessions that the regime should accept in negotiations with the United States. Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) Commander Major General Ahmad Vahidi and his inner circle appear to continue to seek an agreement that meets Iranian maximalist demands and would be tantamount to a US surrender. Other Iranian officials appear to have disputed a draft memorandum leaked by IRGC-linked and state media.
2. Conflicting US and Iranian accounts of the MoU suggest that the United States and Iran remain far apart on several core issues, however. It remains unclear whether these public statements accurately reflect each side's negotiating position or the contents of the agreement, given competition between the IRGC and the formal negotiating team.
3. Iranian statements and Iran's continued use of force and coercion in the Strait of Hormuz indicate that the regime remains unwilling to relinquish its claims to control over the waterway. Any US-Iran agreement must require Iran to abandon efforts to establish long-term authority over the strait. Iranian forces continue to employ coercive measures to force vessels to transit through Iran's illegal traffic separation scheme and comply with its protection racket.
4. Hezbollah's efforts to decentralize its military structure may be enabling the group to conduct more effective defenses of specific areas in southern Lebanon than it was able to muster in Fall 2024. The IRGC reportedly reorganized Hezbollah's C2 system starting in late 2024, and the shift towards unit independence and mobility would theoretically enable Hezbollah fighters to execute more effective defenses against Israeli advances in several sectors across southern Lebanon.
5. "IRGC-linked" figures acting on Iran's behalf reportedly warned unspecified Iranian-backed Iraqi militia leaders to resist surrendering militia weapons to the Iraqi state in the days after Iraqi Prime Minister Ali al Zaydi's successful formation of a new government in May 2026. Iran's reported opposition to Iraqi militia disarmament at this time conflicts with several other reports that Iran has encouraged some Iraqi militias to end their kinetic operations in exchange for solidifying Iranian-

backed Iraqi control over the Iraqi state, however.

Toplines

Persistent internal disagreements remain among Iranian regime leaders over the concessions that the regime should accept in negotiations with the United States. Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) Commander Major General Ahmad Vahidi and his inner circle, whom ISW-CTP currently assesses are driving regime decision-making, appear to continue to seek an agreement that meets Iranian maximalist demands and would be tantamount to a US surrender. Islamic Development Organization (IDO)-affiliated outlet Mehr News Agency published a version of the draft US-Iran memorandum of understanding (MoU) on June 12 that includes all key Iranian demands, including Iran's retention of "management" of the Strait of Hormuz, the release of frozen Iranian assets, and a US-funded reconstruction plan for Iran.[1] Multiple Iranian outlets, including IRGC-affiliated outlets and state media, recirculated this report or similar readouts of the draft MoU.[2] That IRGC-affiliated outlets are circulating this maximalist draft of the MOU suggests that this purported draft reflects the views of IRGC leaders. ISW-CTP continues to assess that the IRGC, particularly Vahidi and his inner circle, currently dominates regime decision-making and has repeatedly pushed for uncompromising, maximalist negotiating positions, suggesting that the regime is likely to adopt a similar approach.[3] Some outlets that are not affiliated with the IRGC also circulated this "draft" and expressed hardline and maximalist demands, however.[4]

Other Iranian officials appear to have disputed the MOU leaked by IRGC-linked and state media, which suggests that Iranian officials continue to disagree about which concessions the regime should accept, if any. Iranian Foreign Affairs Minister and lead negotiator Abbas Araghchi called on media outlets on June 12 to avoid publishing speculation about the MoU's content.[5] US President Donald Trump later reposted Araghchi's statement on TruthSocial.[6] Araghchi may have issued his statement in response to the circulating "draft" MOU readouts in Iranian media, Western media reports that are discussing the MoU's details, or both. Iranian Parliamentarian and Paydari Front member Mahmoud Nabavian published a statement criticizing the details of the deal and described terms of the deal that are notably different from those reported by IRGC- and IDO-affiliated outlets.[7] The Paydari Front is a separate faction that is more hardline than the faction of Vahidi and the IRGC traditionally are. Nabavian stated that the agreement would end the IRGC's current control over the strait immediately after the agreement is signed and that it does not explicitly address US sanctions on Iran.[8] Iranian state media outlet IRNA's readout explicitly notes that the agreement does not require Iran to relinquish management over the strait and lifts sanctions on Iranian oil exports.[9] These competing accounts suggest either that the publicly circulated reports do not accurately reflect the current draft under discussion or that multiple drafts are circulating among rival factions within the regime.

The opposing viewpoints in Iran should not be surprising, considering the fractured nature of Iranian leadership and politics at present. Iran is in the middle of a transition period from Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei to his son, Mojtaba. Various power centers are jockeying for power and attempting to influence negotiations. ISW-CTP continues to assess that IRGC commander Major General Ahmad Vahidi's circle retains the most relative power based on its closeness to Supreme Leader Mojtaba Khamenei.[10] Vahidi, according to reports in April, is serving as an interlocutor between Mojtaba and the government.[11] This suggests Vahidi has assumed a chief of staff-esque position, which is relatively unprecedented for an IRGC commander.

Conflicting reporting about the MOU's contents and progress likely reflects not only the persistent divisions between the IRGC and the formal Iranian negotiating team but also the way in which both

parties are engaging with mediators separately from one another. Araghchi posted on X on June 12 that an agreement has “never been closer.”[12] The *Wall Street Journal*, citing unspecified mediators, reported that neither Supreme Leader Mojtaba Khamenei nor the IRGC has approved the latest MoU, however.[13] The IRGC in this context presumably refers to Vahidi, who is the IRGC commander. The report added that different mediators are separately engaging the “diplomatic channel” and the IRGC.[14] That mediators are engaging the formal Iranian negotiating team and IRGC separately is likely indicative of the fissures between the two camps and suggests that the two camps have been unable to reach any internal consensus. The two camps could even be competing to influence the final agreement. US officials told Axios in April that the IRGC effectively told the Iranian negotiating delegation upon their return to Tehran that the negotiating team “[does not] speak for” the IRGC.[15]

Conflicting US and Iranian accounts of the MoU suggest that the United States and Iran remain far apart on several core issues, however. It remains unclear whether these public statements accurately reflect each side’s negotiating position or the contents of the agreement, given competition between the two camps. A senior Trump administration official told CNN that the agreement includes provisions requiring Iran to dismantle its nuclear program and end support for the Axis of Resistance.[16] A senior US official echoed those Iranian commitments to ABC and added that Iran also agreed to dismantle its nuclear program.[17] Several Iranian media outlets, however, stated on June 12 that neither Iran’s missile program nor its support for the Axis of Resistance is part of the MoU and emphasized that those issues would not be discussed in future negotiations either.[18] These outlets further claimed that the current agreement does not discuss the nuclear issue and imposes no new nuclear commitments on Iran.[19]

Iranian media reporting on the MoU also presents a sequence of events that aims to frontload US concessions and strip the United States of leverage in future nuclear negotiations. Mehr News reported that final negotiations could not begin until Iran receives half of its frozen assets and the United States lifts oil sanctions and its naval blockade.[20] US Vice President JD Vance, in contrast, stated that Iran will receive economic relief only after fulfilling its obligations and that frozen assets will not be released immediately upon signing.[21] These reports, if accurate, reflect deep and serious disagreements over both the sequencing of concessions and the substance of a final agreement.

Iranian statements and Iran’s continued use of force and coercion in the Strait of Hormuz indicate that the regime remains unwilling to relinquish its claims to control over the waterway. Any US-Iran agreement must require Iran to abandon efforts to establish long-term authority over the strait. An unspecified diplomat from a mediating country told Axios that Iran would “reopen” the strait by eliminating tolls and restoring pre-war shipping volumes within 30 days under the MoU.[22] Iranian media reporting describes similar provisions.[23] Iranian state media emphasized that Iran would retain management of the strait under the MoU and that Iran and Oman would jointly determine the future of the strait’s administration, however.[24] The MoU’s terms on reopening the strait, as rendered by various reports, do not appear to constrain Iran’s broader efforts and capabilities to institutionalize its control over the strait. ISW-CTP previously assessed that Iran’s lack of ability to charge tolls does not constitute a failure of Iran’s broader scheme to control the strait.[25]

Iranian forces continue to employ coercive measures to force vessels to transit through Iran’s illegal traffic separation scheme and comply with its protection racket. Iran fired several drones at commercial vessels attempting to transit the strait on June 11, and US forces reportedly intercepted two Iranian one-way attack drones targeting commercial shipping.[26] An agreement that permits Iran to retain any form of authority over the strait would allow Iran to retain the ability to reimpose restrictions on maritime traffic whenever it chooses, threatening both US interests and global commerce.

US-Iran Negotiations

See the topline section.

Maritime Activity in the Strait of Hormuz and Persian Gulf

See the topline section.

US and Israeli Air Campaign

Qatar reportedly approached Iran early in the war with a deal to keep the Ras Laffan gas complex off Iran's target list if Qatar shut down gas production, according to regional officials and Western officials briefed on the intelligence.[27] The officials said Qatar did not secure any commitment from Iran, and Iran later struck Ras Laffan at least two times in March 2026.[28] The *Washington Post* report suggested that Qatar shutting down gas production would raise energy prices and "put economic pressure on the United States and Israel to shorten the war." [29] Qatar denied pursuing any secret arrangement with Iran.[30] The *Washington Post* added that Qatari officials said halted production at Ras Laffan only because of security risks to workers and infrastructure.[31]

Iranian Domestic Affairs

Nothing significant to report.

Iran's Axis of Resistance

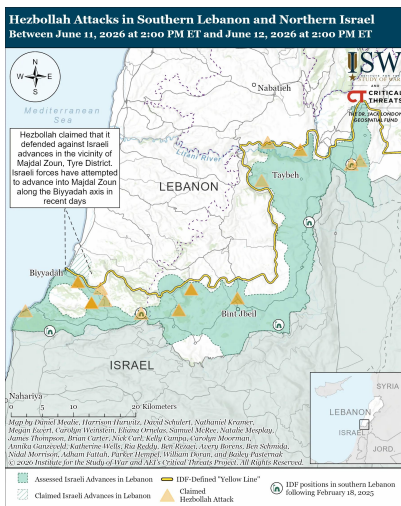
Lebanese Hezbollah and the Israeli Campaign in Lebanon

Hezbollah defended against Israeli advances in the vicinity of Majdal Zoun, Tyre District, on June 11 and 12.[32] Hezbollah defended against advancing Israeli forces using a variety of weapons, including anti-tank guided missiles (ATGM), improvised explosive devices (IED), mortars, rockets, and rocket-propelled grenades (RPG).[33] Hezbollah also deliberately defended against Israeli ground forces in recent weeks in response to IDF advances past the "yellow line" in several areas across southern Lebanon.[34] Hezbollah's defensive activities and claims about IDF movement are consistent with regional media reporting about Israeli efforts to advance into Majdal Zoun in southwestern Lebanon.[35] The IDF has also conducted frequent airstrikes and shelled areas in the vicinity of Majdal Zoun in recent days.[36] IDF sources reported recent Hezbollah attempts to prepare defenses around logistically and symbolically significant cities, such as Nabatieh in southeastern Lebanon, according to an Israeli military correspondent on June 11.[37]

Hezbollah's efforts to decentralize its military structure may be enabling the group to conduct more effective defenses of specific areas in southern Lebanon than it was able to muster in Fall 2024.[38] The IRGC reportedly reorganized Hezbollah's command and control (C2) system starting in late 2024 after extensive Israeli decapitation strikes that killed former Hezbollah Secretary General Hassan Nasrallah and other senior leaders, according to reports in Western and Israeli media.[39] The IRGC prioritized combat units' independent decision-making and tactical mobility over

Hezbollah’s previous structure of an extensive hierarchical network that connected militant activity to high-level command decisions, according to an IDF officer on June 11.[40] This represents a shift from a more conventional structure to a decentralized insurgent structure reminiscent of Hezbollah’s structure during the Israeli presence in the 1990s and the 2006 war.[41] This shift towards unit independence and mobility would theoretically enable Hezbollah fighters to execute more effective defenses against Israeli advances in several sectors across southern Lebanon without necessarily requiring coordination and orders from senior Hezbollah military officials.

Hezbollah’s decentralized command network may also hinder the effects of IDF decapitation strikes that aim to meaningfully disrupt the group’s C2 and combat effectiveness.[42] An Israeli military correspondent reported on May 11 that the IDF had encountered difficulties in disrupting Hezbollah’s first-person view (FPV) drone attacks because of the group’s decentralized C2 network and decision to disperse drone operators across various combat units, for example.[43] The IDF has continued to target field commanders, but it is unclear if these killings are disrupting Hezbollah’s ability to execute organized defenses of southern Lebanese towns. The IDF reported on June 12 that it had killed at least ten Hezbollah field commanders responsible for units active in areas across southern Lebanon since March 2026.[44]



Other Axis of Resistance Activity

“IRGC-linked” figures acting on Iran’s behalf reportedly warned unspecified Iranian-backed Iraqi militia leaders to resist surrendering militia weapons to the Iraqi state in the days after Iraqi Prime Minister Ali al Zaydi’s successful formation of a new government in May 2026.[45]

Unspecified political and security sources familiar with the matter told US-funded, Arabic-language media on June 10 that Iran views the Iraqi militias’ possible disarmament as an issue related to the Axis of Resistance issue rather than a merely an internal Iraqi matter.[46] The IRGC told the militia leaders that Iran would do “everything in its power” to keep the militias armed, according to an Iraqi federal government source that is responsible for communicating with the militias.[47] The IRGC reportedly warned Iraqi leaders that their weapons do not belong to them but to Iran and thus that the militias do not have the right to surrender their weapons to the Iraqi federal government.[48] Iran has supplied its Iraqi partners with weapons for years, including missiles and drones.[49] The report added that some unspecified Iraqi militia leaders face “significant” Iranian pressure discouraging them from making a firm transition from military activities into politics.[50]

Reported Iranian opposition to Iraqi militia disarmament comes amid the Iraqi federal government’s efforts to restrict arms to the state. The Iraqi federal government has taken initial steps to disarm the

militias in recent days, including receiving files and data on Kataib al Imam Ali’s assets and forming a joint disarmament committee with representation from the Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF), Kataib al Imam Ali, and Asaib Ahl al Haq.[51] The PMF is an Iraqi state security service that includes multiple Iranian-backed Iraqi militias, such as Kataib al Imam Ali and Asaib Ahl al Haq, that answer to Iran instead of the Iraqi prime minister.[52] At least two militias—Kataib al Imam Ali and Asaib Ahl al Haq—have recently indicated their interest in disarming, possibly in order to lessen US opposition to their participation in the next Iraqi government. It is also possible that these militias seek to receive some of the 35,000 jobs that jobs in Iraqi security institutions that Iraqi Prime Minister Ali al Zaydi has reportedly proposed to be allocated to militia members who disarm.[53] ISW-CTP continues to assess that any Iraqi federal government attempt to disarm the militias and integrate them into the Iraqi security establishment that does not address the militias’ networks and allegiance to Iran will likely further embed Iranian influence within the Iraqi state.[54] Baghdad’s efforts to restrict arms to the state follow increased US pressure on the Iraqi federal government to lessen Iran’s influence in Iraq. Targeting Iranian influence by disarming the militias is a particularly salient issue at this time due to militia attacks against US and foreign targets in Iraq and the region during the war.[55]

Iran’s reported opposition to Iraqi militia disarmament at this time conflicts with several other reports that Iran has encouraged some unspecified Iraqi militias to end their kinetic operations in exchange for solidifying Iranian-backed Iraqi control over the Iraqi state, however. UK-based Amwaj media reported in November 2025 that Iran wants unspecified militias to shift their focus from armed engagement to politics.[56] Iraqi media similarly reported that IRGC Quds Force Commander Brigadier General Esmail Ghaani met with the Shia Coordination Framework and militia leaders in May 2026 and warned about “real dangers” that could result in the loss of unspecified Iraqi militia military privileges and discussed the need for an “alternative plan” to address militia disarmament.[57] Ghaani reportedly proposed a plan in which Iraqi militias—specifically Kataib Hezbollah, Harakat Hezbollah al Nujaba, and Kataib Sayyid al Shuhada—would end their kinetic activities in exchange for maintaining the PMF’s role within the Iraqi state.[58] Ghaani also outlined a possible second phase in which the PMF would integrate into the Iraqi Security Forces if the first phase failed to reduce tensions with the United States.[59] Kataib Hezbollah, Harakat Hezbollah al Nujaba, and Kataib Sayyid al Shuhada have notably continued to publicly reject disarmament. These three militias are more subordinate to Iran than other Iraqi militias and are the most kinetically active militias, both historically and during the most recent war.[60]

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Iran Update Special Report, June 13, 2026



Ben Rezaei, Parker Hempel, Ria Reddy, Kelly Campa, Carolyn Moorman, Brian Carter

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The Institute for the Study of War (ISW) and The Critical Threats Project (CTP) at the American Enterprise Institute are publishing daily updates to provide analysis on the war with Iran. The updates focus on US and Israeli strikes on Iran and Iran and the Axis of Resistance's response to the strikes. The updates cover events from the past 24-hour period.

Key Takeaways

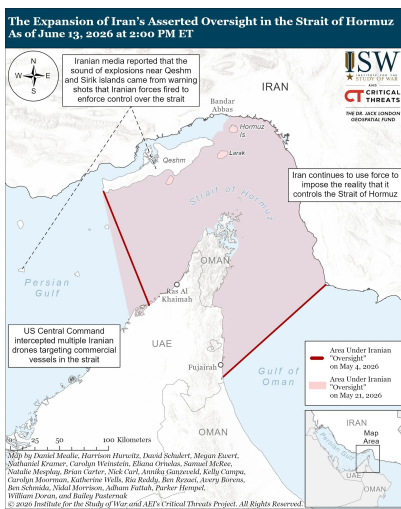
1. Iranian statements regarding the contents of the US-Iran memorandum of understanding (MoU) indicate that some terms of the agreement are at odds with stated US positions on the Strait of Hormuz in recent months. The agreement has two parts: a first stage that deals with an “end to the war” on all fronts, a resumption of traffic in the Strait of Hormuz, and economic benefits for Iran, including reconstruction funds, sanctions relief, release of frozen funds, and an end to the US blockade. The second stage would deal with the nuclear issue and “one or two other [unspecified] issues.”
2. Iran is likely attempting to structure the MoU and the phasing of a final agreement to reduce US leverage before later negotiations over the nuclear program. Iran is attempting to access at least some of its frozen assets early in the MoU process, for example, which would give it some economic relief before nuclear talks begin.
3. Iranian media appears to be portraying a possible MoU as a tactical pause in the war rather than a final settlement. The Ghalibaf-affiliated Khorasan outlet argued on June 13 that the emerging agreement only aims to end the current war and does not resolve the underlying issues between Iran and the United States.
4. Iranian Foreign Affairs Minister Abbas Araghchi’s readout of the MoU is largely consistent with IRGC-affiliated media’s readout of the latest possible agreement, which may indicate a growing consensus among Iranian regime leaders on Iran’s red lines for negotiations. That Araghchi’s June 12 readout and IRGC media’s account of the latest US-Iran MoU are very similar suggests that Vahidi or elements close to him may have successfully driven consensus on their preferred policy outcomes.

Toplines

Iranian statements regarding the contents of the US-Iran memorandum of understanding

(MoU) indicate that some terms of the agreement are at odds with stated US positions on the Strait of Hormuz in recent months. Iranian Foreign Affairs Minister Abbas Araghchi discussed the contents of the MoU in an interview on Iranian state media on June 12.[1] Araghchi said that the MoU could change until the agreement is signed. The agreement has two parts: a first stage that deals with an “end to the war” on all fronts, a resumption of traffic in the Strait of Hormuz, and economic benefits for Iran, including reconstruction funds, sanctions relief, release of frozen funds, and an end to the US blockade.[2] The second stage would deal with the nuclear issue and “one or two other [unspecified] issues.” Araghchi discussed the strait at length and noted that it is under Iranian and Omani sovereignty and that both countries will collect fees after the MoU. Iran will also manage the strait. Araghchi rejected the term “tolls” but defended Iran charging “service” fees for passage through the strait, which is effectively an attempt to rebrand Iran’s protection racket as legal administration.[3] Araghchi added that Iran would provide safe passage through the strait for civilian vessels but create separate arrangements for military vessels.[4] This system of management is at odds with both US policy and long-established maritime legal precedence. US President Donald Trump has repeatedly said, for example, that the strait must be open with no fees or Iranian management.[5] A US official told Reuters that the agreement would “open” the strait, but an “open” strait under Iranian management would be very detrimental to US interests, as ISW-CTP has previously argued.[6] An “open” strait under Iranian management is not a return to the pre-war status quo and would mean that Iran has accomplished a key war aim.

Iran also continues to use force in an attempt to impose the reality that it controls the Strait of Hormuz. US Central Command (CENTCOM) reported on June 12 that US forces intercepted multiple Iranian drones targeting commercial vessels in the strait.[7] Iranian media separately reported explosions near Qeshm and Sirik islands and said the sounds came from warning shots that Iranian forces fired to enforce control over the strait.[8]



Other issues—like when Iran can access frozen funds and how much it will be able to access—remain an issue in negotiations as well. Iranian media reported on June 13 that Iran proposed releasing half of its frozen assets early and the rest in a final agreement, but the United States rejected this offer.[9] Qatar then reportedly proposed a \$12 billion USD package, including \$6 billion USD in Iranian assets in Qatar for humanitarian use and a separate \$6 billion USD credit line that Iran would direct.[10] Iran and Qatar reportedly initiated two MoUs during Araghchi and Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf’s visit to Doha on May 25, but the MoUs remain unsigned and depend on a final US-Iran agreement.[11] Trump separately stated on June 13 that “no money will exchange hands,” which conflicts with Iranian demands for the release of its frozen assets.[12]

There appear to be some disagreements between Iran and the United States over the Iranian

nuclear program, but it is unclear what specific disagreements exist. Araghchi said that some US nuclear demands are “unacceptable.”[13] Trump said on June 13 that the agreement will prevent Iran from seeking a nuclear weapon by preventing Iran from enriching or procuring nuclear material.[14] The agreement, according to Trump, will also allow the United States to either “go in and get” Iran’s HEU to down-blend or destroy the material in Iran or the United States.[15] This rendering of the agreement appears consistent with Araghchi’s articulation of the Iranian position, which is that Iran will only resolve the issue of highly enriched uranium (HEU) by down-blending the HEU within Iran.[16]

There are presumably other issues related to the nuclear program on which Iran and the United States do not agree. The two sides were at odds in April over the length of an enrichment moratorium, for example, with Iran accepting only a moratorium of five years and the United States pushing for a 20-year moratorium.[17]

Iran’s reported attempts to safeguard regarding its HEU stockpile further suggest that the regime is preserving its leverage before any second-stage nuclear talks. CNN reported on June 13, citing five sources familiar with US intelligence that Iran has “dramatically escalated” its efforts to seal off its HEU in recent weeks, including by collapsing tunnels and booby-trapping entrances to HEU storage areas with explosive mines.[18] These actions are most likely designed to make any military effort to seize the HEU more difficult.

Iran is likely attempting to structure the MoU and the phasing of a final agreement to reduce US leverage before later negotiations over the nuclear program. Iran is attempting to access at least some of its frozen assets early in the MoU process, for example, which would give it some economic relief before nuclear talks begin. This would decrease US leverage in the nuclear negotiations and enable Iran to more easily walk away. The release of these funds would also enable Iran to access more funds to reconstitute its military forces, which would improve its position if the United States or Israel decides to initiate military operations in the near future if negotiations fail.

Iranian media appears to be portraying a possible MoU as a tactical pause in the war rather than a final settlement. The Ghalibaf-affiliated Khorasan outlet argued on June 13 that the emerging agreement only aims to end the current war and does not resolve the underlying issues between Iran and the United States.[19] Khorasan claimed that the agreement would delay the “final battle” and give both sides time to rebuild offensive and defensive military capabilities and prepare for a larger war.[20] Islamic Development Organization (IDO)-affiliated outlet Mehr News Agency similarly argued that the main challenge will begin after the initial MoU is signed because the United States and Iran would still need to reach understandings on technical details, commitments, and implementation mechanisms.[21] An Iranian expert close to the regime stated that it is difficult to imagine that an initial MoU can lead to a final agreement given the technical, legal, and political complexities.[22] IRGC-affiliated newspaper Javan separately argued on June 12 that negotiation is not a means of repelling the enemy, it is a means of managing the enemy. The newspaper added that even if the probability of success with negotiations is low, the cost of not trying to negotiate may be greater than the cost of negotiating.[23] These statements suggest that regime actors are framing the possible MoU as a tactical wartime tool to manage expectations, extract early economic benefits, and postpone difficult issues to the second phase of the negotiations.

Araghchi’s readout of the MoU (see above) is largely consistent with IRGC-affiliated media’s readout of the latest possible agreement, which may indicate a growing consensus among Iranian regime leaders on Iran’s red lines for negotiations. The possible MoU, as outlined by Araghchi, includes several core Iranian red lines, including maintaining Iranian “management” over the strait and a complete end to the war in Lebanon—provisions that also appear in recent reporting from

IRGC- and Islamic Development Organization-affiliated media.[24] This alignment is notable because the IRGC, particularly Vahidi and his inner circle, has consistently pushed for uncompromising, maximalist negotiating positions.[25] ISW-CTP continues to assess that Vahidi has an extremely strong position in the policy formation process and is winning the fight over war and negotiation policy in Tehran.[26] The Iranian negotiating team led by Araghchi previously clashed with this hardline faction in April after reportedly exceeding its mandate by discussing Iran's nuclear program and signaling flexibility on Iran's support for the Axis of Resistance.[27] Senior leaders in Iran ultimately recalled the delegation.[28] The US delegation has repeatedly emphasized that internal divisions within Iran have complicated negotiations, arguing that the Iranian negotiating team lacked the authority necessary to approve a final agreement, which is further indication of the previous disagreements within the regime about its negotiating position.[29] That Araghchi's June 12 readout and IRGC media's account of the latest US-Iran MoU are very similar suggests that Vahidi or elements close to him may have successfully driven consensus on their preferred policy outcomes.

US-Iran Negotiations

See topline section.

Maritime Activity in the Strait of Hormuz and Persian Gulf

See topline section.

US and Israeli Air Campaign

Nothing significant to report.

Iranian Domestic Affairs

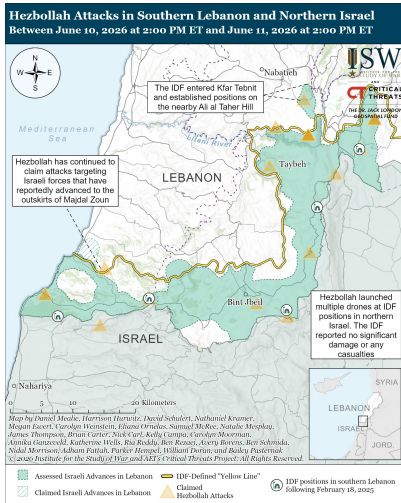
Nothing significant to report.

Iran's Axis of Resistance

Lebanese Hezbollah and the Israeli Campaign in Lebanon

Hezbollah launched multiple drones at Israel Defense Forces (IDF) positions in northern Israel on June 12 and 13.[30] The IDF reported on June 12 that a Hezbollah drone struck a military zone between Adamit and Aramshe, northern Israel.[31] Hezbollah then launched another drone that crossed into Israeli territory between Metula and Misgav Am, northern Israel, according to the IDF on June 13.[32] The IDF reported no significant damage or any casualties in either attack.[33] Hezbollah also claimed that it launched two fixed wing drones targeting the IDF Jal al Deir position in northern Israel on June 12.[34] Israeli political leaders and the IDF have repeatedly warned since June 1 that the IDF would strike Hezbollah targets in Beirut's vicinity if Hezbollah attacks northern Israel.[35] US President Donald Trump has warned Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu not to follow through on plans to strike targets in Beirut, however.[36] Iran previously launched missiles at Israel on June 7 following Israeli strikes on a

Hezbollah first-person view (FPV) drone headquarters in Beirut’s southern suburbs, which Israel conducted in response to a Hezbollah attack on northern Israel. Iran had threatened to target Israel if Israel struck Beirut’s southern suburbs prior to Iran’s attack on June 7.[37] Iran’s Khatam ol Anbia Central Headquarters similarly stated on June 8 that Iranian forces would inflict “much more severe and crushing measures” if the IDF continued to conduct operations against Hezbollah across Lebanon.[38]



The IDF is continuing to advance along two axes to seize key positions in southeastern and southwestern Lebanon. A senior Lebanese military official told the Associated Press on June 13 that Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) units withdrew from a barracks in Kfar Tebnit, southeastern Lebanon, after the IDF issued evacuation warnings for the area and Israeli forces began operating there.[39] Israeli military correspondents and open-source intelligence accounts reported on June 13 that the IDF entered Kfar Tebnit and established positions on the nearby Ali al Taher Hill.[40] Kfar Tebnit and Ali al Taher are both located on high ground, which is favorable for observing Hezbollah ground force movements.[41] The IDF has identified ongoing Hezbollah preparations to defend and hold Nabatieh, according to an Israeli military correspondent on June 11.[42]

Hezbollah has continued to claim attacks with rockets and FPV drones targeting advancing Israeli forces around Majdal Zoun, southwestern Lebanon.[43] Local sources told Saudi media on June 13 that Israeli forces have advanced to the outskirts of Majdal Zoun.[44] The IDF has continued to strike Hezbollah targets in Majdal Zoun with airstrikes and artillery over the past day to support the IDF’s reported advance on the town.[45]

Other Axis of Resistance Activity

Nothing significant to report.



Endnotes

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