



## Iran War Update: 6/18/26

**Ari Cicurel**  
*Associate Director of Foreign Policy*

**Yoni Tobin**  
*Senior Policy Analyst*

**Jonah Brody**  
*Policy Analyst*

**Sarah Havdala**  
*Policy Analyst*

**Rena Gabber**  
*Research Associate*

President Donald Trump and Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on June 17, outlining terms to end the war and reopen the Strait of Hormuz. The MOU launches a 60-day period of technical negotiations on Iran's nuclear program. JINSA continues to release regular updates about the conflict. The update below includes information since [JINSA's last update](#) as of June 18 at 10:00 am ET.

Iranian missiles and drones launched since June 14 MOU announcement: **At least 4** (0 on June 17–18)

Hezbollah attacks since June 14 MOU announcement: **At least 10** (at least 4 on June 17–18)

Ships transiting Strait of Hormuz since June 14 MOU announcement: **At least 35** (at least 14 between June 17–18)

- Note: Many ships in the area are transmitting false locations.

### 1. Overview

- On June 17, President Donald Trump [signed](#) a physical copy of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Iran in the Palace at Versailles alongside French President Emmanuel Macron. Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian also separately signed a physical copy of the document in Iran, which outlines terms to end the war, reopen the Strait of Hormuz, and start a 60-day negotiation period to reach a final deal.
- Earlier on June 17, Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif [announced](#) that President Trump and Iranian President Pezeshkian had electronically signed the “Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding” that day, which Sharif endorsed as the mediator.
  - » Sharif added that the MOU will immediately come into effect, and as an initial step, the Strait of Hormuz will be “instantly” reopened by Iran, and the U.S. naval blockade will be “immediately” lifted.
  - » The MOU was already [signed](#) electronically on June 14 by President Trump, Vice President J.D. Vance, and on the Iranian side, Iranian Parliamentary Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf.
- During a press conference on June 17, President Trump defended the MOU with Iran by [claiming](#), “if we didn’t do this deal, we could have dropped more bombs for another three weeks, two to four weeks, [but] you would never have the Hormuz Strait open. You would never have success, your market would have, instead of going up at levels that nobody’s ever seen before, would go down at levels that nobody ever saw before.”

- » He [downplayed](#) the need for Iran to export its highly enriched uranium, stating that what he has repeatedly called “nuclear dust,” is buried underground and “it’s actually not valuable, but we’d like to get it psychologically,” since “nobody’s touching it. We also have Space Force cameras” monitoring those sites.
  - Yet, President Trump also indicated that Iran will “work closely with us to turn over the so-called enriched material,” although “it’s not important that we do it quickly, but we could do it fairly quickly when we have a chance.”
- » When asked about Iran’s missile program, President Trump also [stated](#) that “they have to have some, because other people have some. You got to have some,” while also adding, “missiles aren’t the problem” and “missiles, they hurt a little location, but they don’t blow up the planet.”
  - He later [reiterated](#) this claim, telling reporters that “if other countries have them, it’s a little bit unfair for them not to have some.”
- » The president further [insisted](#) that Iran will only get the funds outlined in the MOU “if they’re doing things right,” noting “we have taken a lot of their money—it’s their own money, and we froze it at a certain point in time,” so “I guess we’re going to have to give it back” because “if we didn’t give it back, nobody would ever invest in the dollar again.”
- » President Trump also [argued](#) that the United States would “run out of reserves in about four weeks... There are reserves all over the world, and we would really run out, and there’ll be a time when you wouldn’t be able to get it.”
  - He added, “if we keep bombing... You’re talking about \$500, \$600, \$700 million a day. It’s a lot of money.”
- During the press conference on June 17, President Trump also [praised](#) Russian President Vladimir Putin and Chinese President Xi Jinping for staying out of the war with Iran, stating “I want to thank China, President Xi. I was with him, and he stayed neutral, totally neutral, and I appreciate it,” adding, “I want to thank Vladimir Putin, he was very neutral. They could have made it much more difficult for us.”
- *Axios* [reported](#) on June 17 that the United States and Iran accelerated implementation of their MOU in order to reopen the Strait of Hormuz before the previously scheduled June 20 signing ceremony.

## 2. Diplomatic Engagement

### *Iran*

- According to a U.S. official cited by *The Wall Street Journal’s* Alex Ward on June 18, Vice President J.D. Vance, Special Envoy Steve Witkoff, and Special Envoy Jared Kushner are expected to [meet](#) with Iranian counterparts and mediators from Pakistan and Qatar in Switzerland between June 20–22 to begin the next round of negotiations on Iran’s nuclear program.
  - » The talks are expected to focus on establishing a framework for the 60-day nuclear negotiations envisioned under the U.S.-Iran MOU, with President Trump warning that military action could resume if diplomacy fails.
- Although the MOU’s signing was previously expected to take place on Friday, June 19, in Switzerland, according to *Axios* reporting on June 17, the United States and Iran [decided](#) to sign the deal earlier to more quickly reopen the Strait of Hormuz.
- Iranian chief negotiator Mohammad Baqer Ghalibaf [stated](#) on June 18 that Tehran intends to begin charging vessels transiting the Strait of Hormuz after the 60-day fee-free period established under the MOU expires.

- » Ghalibaf continued that the Strait “will not return to pre-war conditions” and asserted that “Iran has the right to sovereignty over the Strait of Hormuz.”
- During his press conference on June 17, President Trump [joked](#) that “if it works out [the deal], I’m going to take the credit. If it doesn’t work out, I’m blaming [Vice President] JD [Vance]. You better be careful, JD.”
  - » President Trump also [indicated](#) that he told Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu that Israel should be happy with the MOU because “they’re not going to be nuked.”
    - He stated that he told Netanyahu “the biggest risk was that they drop a nuclear weapon into the middle of Israel... so, I think they’re happy.”
- On June 17, an unnamed U.S. official [claimed](#) that Iran requested the United States refrain from releasing the full MOU text before the June 19 signing, stating that “The motto that we want to have with this deal is no side-deals and full transparency, so it was unfortunate we weren’t able to put it out right away.”
  - » The official continued, saying, “We were trying to accommodate their domestic messaging and their domestic politics, and we’re trying to build trust with them, and that’s what they asked us to do.”
- On June 17, an unnamed U.S. official [rejected](#) reports suggesting that the United States refused to show Israeli officials the full MOU text despite their requests, saying, “Nothing has been requested of us. We’ve always shared with them some of the concepts of what it was. We’ve had consultations with [the Israelis] along the way.”
  - » The official stated that Prime Minister Netanyahu “has not asked us for a copy of (the MOU). Maybe he hasn’t seen the final document, but he can’t say that he’s not up to speed on what’s occurring.”
  - » Continuing, the official noted that “What (Netanyahu) said to us is that if we can get all of these concessions out of Iran the way that we’re thinking about it, he thinks that would be a historic deal,” adding, “He remains skeptical that we’ll do it, but we remain skeptical as well. That’s why we’re going to go forward to the next negotiations, and see what we’re able to accomplish.”
  - » Reiterating this point, senior U.S. officials [told](#) Israel’s Channel 12 on June 17 that Prime Minister Netanyahu and the Trump administration had been in consistent communication with each other about the MOU, stating that Netanyahu believed the deal would be a “home run.”
- On June 17, *The New York Times* [released](#) the text of the U.S.-Iran MOU, which includes the following fourteen points:
  1. Iran, the United States, and their allies during the war “declare the immediate and permanent termination of military operations on all fronts, including in Lebanon,” agree to no longer engage in “any war or any military operation against each other” or threaten or employ force against each other, and agree to ensure “the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Lebanon”;
  2. Iran and the United States will “respect each other’s sovereignty and territorial integrity,” and they also agree to abstain from “interfering in each other’s internal affairs”;
  3. Iran and the United States agree within 60 days to “negotiating and achieving the final deal,” and this negotiating period can be extended by mutual agreement;
  4. Immediately following the signing of the MOU, the United States will begin to lift its naval blockade on Iranian ports and remove “any disturbances or impediments” against Iran, and the blockade will be fully lifted within 30 days; on Iran’s part, “the traffic of ships shall be proportional to the pre-war volume of traffic.” The United States agrees that U.S.

forces will withdraw from areas surrounding Iran within 30 days following the final U.S.-Iran deal;

5. Following the signing of the MOU, Iran will arrange for the safe passage of commercial ships with “no charge”; commercial ship travel through the Strait of Hormuz will immediately begin and be “instated” within 30 days; and an Iranian-Omani dialogue will determine “the future administration and maritime services” in the Strait, with nearby Gulf states joining discussions;

6. The United States and its regional partners will establish a plan for the “reconstruction and economic development” of Iran, with financing of \$300 billion or more. The plan’s implementation will be determined within 60 days;

7. The United States will suspend all sanctions on Iran, based on a timetable determined in the final agreement, to include United Nations (UN) Security Council Resolutions, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), and unilateral American sanctions;

8. Iran confirms that it “shall not procure or develop nuclear weapons.” The United States and Iran concur that the final agreement will address the disposition of Iran’s stockpile of enriched nuclear material, enrichment, and “other mutually agreed nuclear-related issues”; at minimum, Iran’s enriched nuclear material will be “down-blend[ed] on site under the supervision of the IAEA”;

9. Iran and the United States agree that until a final agreement is reached, Iran will maintain the status quo with regard to its nuclear program, and the United States will refrain from putting additional sanctions on Iran or deploying new forces to the Middle East;

10. Immediately following the MOU’s signing and until sanctions on Iran are lifted, the U.S. Department of the Treasury will grant sanctions waivers “for the export of Iranian crude oil, petroleum products and their derivatives, and all associated services”;

11. In accordance with the MOU’s implementation, Iran’s frozen or restricted funds and assets will be made “fully available”;

12. An implementation mechanism will be created to oversee the MOU’s implementation and compliance with the final deal;

13. Once the MOU is signed and assurances are received that Articles 1, 4, 5, 10, and 11 of the MOU have started to be implemented and continue to be executed, U.S.-Iran talks for a final deal will begin;

14. A binding UN Security Council will endorse the final agreement.

### 3. U.S. and Israeli Operations

- On June 17, President Trump [criticized](#) Israel’s purported decision not to participate in the 2020 U.S. operation that killed Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps-Quds Force (IRGC-QF) commander Qassem Soleimani, and publicly acknowledged disagreements with Prime Minister Netanyahu over Israeli operations in Lebanon.
  - » President Trump said Netanyahu “gets a little excited sometimes” and argued that Israel should take “a little softer touch” in Lebanon, while nevertheless describing him as an “amazing prime minister.”

#### *Iran*

- An unnamed senior U.S. official [stated](#) on a June 17 background call with reporters that sanctions on Iranian oil exports will be lifted immediately under the MOU, arguing that Tehran was already able to sell oil despite existing restrictions.

- » The official claimed Iran had been exporting oil at discounted prices regardless of sanctions and described the continued restrictions as “absurd,” while arguing that lifting them would help lower global energy prices.

## Lebanon

- On June 18, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) [released](#) an updated map of its security zone in southern Lebanon and stated that Israeli forces will continue to hold territory north of the border “due to operational requirements.”



Source: [IDF](#)

- On the morning of June 18, Lebanese media [reported](#) that Israeli forces carried out a drone strike on a vehicle close to the village of Kfar Tebnit in southern Lebanon, killing one person and injuring another.
- On June 17, the IDF [announced](#) that it had struck and destroyed a Hezbollah rocket launcher used earlier that day to target Israeli forces operating in southern Lebanon.

## 4. Strait of Hormuz Shipping and Blockade Status

- Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth [stated](#) on June 18 that the United States is prepared to resume military operations and reimpose an “ironclad blockade” on Iran if Tehran fails to fulfill its obligations under the MOU.
- A senior U.S. official told *The Times of Israel* on June 17 that the United States is working to move as much oil as possible through the Strait of Hormuz so global markets can “[restock](#)” in case Iran violates the agreement and “there has to be another round of efforts” against Tehran.

## 5. Iranian and Proxy Operations

### Israel

- On June 17, the IDF reported multiple Hezbollah-related incidents targeting Israeli forces operating in southern Lebanon.
  - » A suspected Hezbollah device [exploded](#) near Israeli troops operating along the Litani River in southern Lebanon, killing Master Sgt. (res.) Alexander Filin and injuring seven other Israeli soldiers.
    - In response to the attack, the IDF shelled nearby Hezbollah sites.
  - » The military stated that an interceptor was [launched](#) at a suspected Hezbollah drone and that several rockets were later [fired](#) at troops in the area, with some intercepted and others landing nearby. No injuries were reported in either incident.

## 6. Estimated Casualties of Iranian Operations

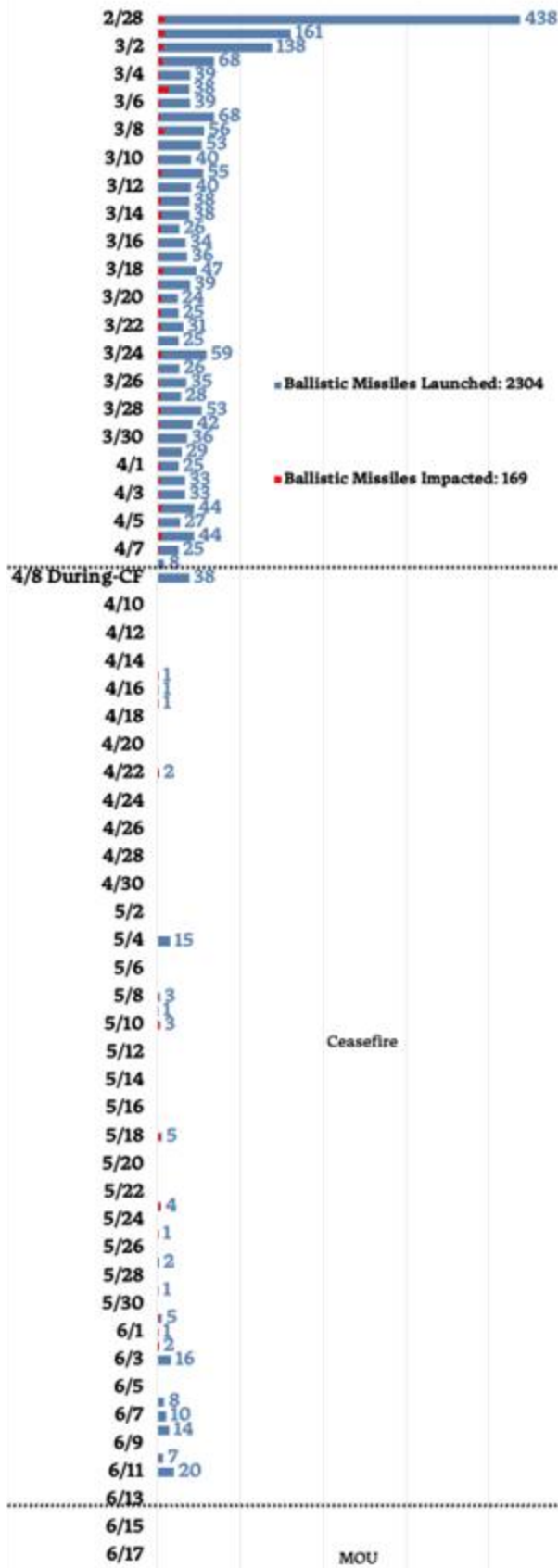
- Thirteen U.S. service members have died during Operation Epic Fury.
  - » An Iranian drone attack [killed](#) six U.S. servicemembers at Port Shuaiba in Kuwait on March 1: Maj. Jeffrey O'Brien, 45; Chief Warrant Officer 3 Robert Marzan, 54; Capt. Cody Khork, 35; Sgt. 1st Class Nicole Amor, 39; Sgt. 1st Class Noah Tietjens, 42; and Sgt. Declan Coady (posthumously promoted from specialist), 20.
  - » A U.S. servicemember, Sgt. Benjamin Pennington, 26, was [killed](#) in a March 8 Iranian attack targeting U.S. troops at the Prince Sultan Air Base in Saudi Arabia.
  - » Six U.S. servicemembers were [killed](#) when a KC-135 aerial refueling aircraft crashed over western Iraq on March 12: Major John A. Klinner, 33; Captain Ariana G. Savino, 31; Technical Sergeant Ashley B. Pruitt, 34; Captain Seth R. Koval, 38; Captain Curtis J. Angst, 30; and Technical Sergeant Tyler H. Simmons, 28.
- At least 400 members of the U.S. military have been [injured](#) thus far in the war.
  - » Ten have been seriously [wounded](#), and at least 354 of the injured have reportedly returned to duty.
  - » At least 15 Americans were [hurt](#) in an Iranian drone strike on Ali Al Salem Air Base in Kuwait on April 6, most of whom were lightly injured.
  - » In the March 27 Iranian attack on a U.S. base in Saudi Arabia, at least 15 U.S. servicemembers were [injured](#), including two who were seriously wounded.
- Since the war began, [at least 59 people have been killed in Israel](#), while over 7,795 have been [injured](#). At least 29 of these [casualties](#) include Israeli soldiers and one defense contractor killed while fighting Hezbollah.
  - » On June 17, Master Sgt. (res.) Alexander Filin was [killed](#) by a Hezbollah explosive device in southern Lebanon.
- Since the war's outbreak, numerous other casualties have been reported:
  - » Iran: At least 3,636 people, including at least 1,221 military personnel, have been [killed](#), with at least 26,500 [wounded](#). *Iran International* reports that over 4,700 security personnel have been [killed](#), including members of the Basij, IRGC, and police forces.
  - » Azerbaijan: Four civilians have been [injured](#).
  - » Bahrain: Three people have [been killed](#), including a [Moroccan contractor](#), and at least 46 people [have been injured](#), including five [Emirati soldiers](#).
  - » Iraq: At least 119 people have been [killed](#), including 20 [people](#) in Iraqi Kurdistan.
  - » Jordan: At least 31 people have [been injured](#).

- » Kuwait: Two [Kuwaiti navy sailors](#), two [Kuwaiti interior ministry officers](#), two [Kuwaiti civilians](#), and two [Indian nationals](#) have been [killed](#); over 90 Kuwaiti military [personnel have been injured](#), and [over 70 civilians](#), including two [medical staff](#), have been wounded.
- » Lebanon: At least 3,884 people have been [killed](#), and nearly 11,856 have been wounded—figures that do not distinguish between Hezbollah operatives and civilians.
- » Oman: At least [three people](#) have been killed, and at least 17 have [been wounded](#).
- » Qatar: Around 20 people have been [wounded](#), and seven were [killed](#) on March 22 in a helicopter crash in Qatari territorial waters due to a technical issue.
- » Saudi Arabia: Three people have been killed, including a Saudi [national](#) and two [foreign nationals](#), and at least 23 others [have been injured](#).
- » Syria: At least four people have been [killed](#) in Syria, and several others have been [injured](#).
- » United Arab Emirates (U.A.E.): 13 people have been [killed](#), and at least 230 have been injured.

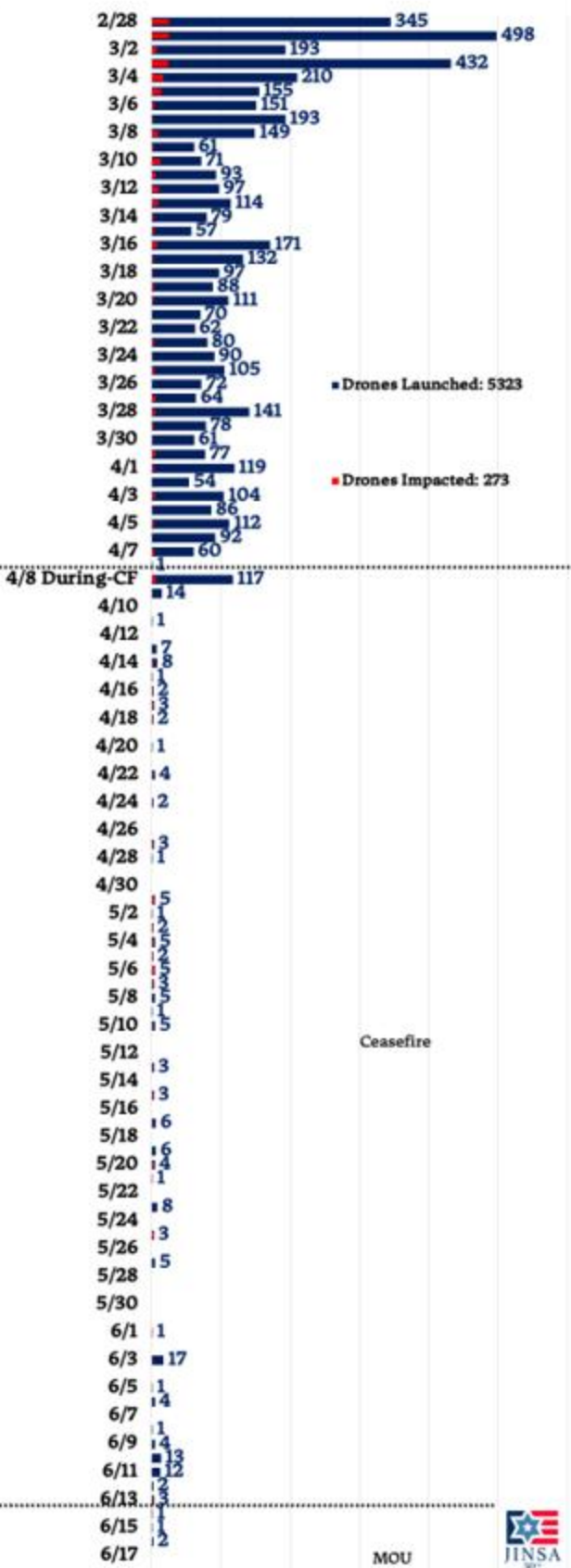
## 7. International Response

- Qatar's Foreign Ministry [stated](#) on June 18 that the U.S.-Iran agreement “represents a solid foundation for advancing to the next stage of negotiations” ahead of technical talks scheduled to begin in Switzerland.

### Iranian Missiles Launched Per Day



### Iranian Drones Launched Per Day



## 8. JINSA Resources

- Blaise Misztal, [Uncertifiable and Illegal, but Probably Unstoppable: Congress Must Review the Iran MOU](#), June 17, 2026
- Michael Makovsky, PhD, [The Origins of the Iran Deal](#), June 16, 2026
- Sarah Havdala, [While the War Raged On: Repression in Iran](#), June 16, 2026
- [Infographic: What's the Deal with the Deal?](#) June 12, 2026
- John Hannah, "[Trump Is Stuck and His Iran Leverage Is Spent](#)," *The Washington Examiner*, June 12, 2026
- Jonathan Ruhe, "[We Need a Long-Term Strategy to Deal With Iran](#)," *The Dispatch*, June 11, 2026
- Maj Gen Charles Corcoran, USAF (ret.) and Yoni Tobin, "[What the Iran War Shows About the Future of Warfighting](#)," *RealClearDefense*, June 8, 2026
- Michael Makovsky, PhD, and Blaise Misztal, [Trump Is Lost on Iran](#), June 5, 2026
- IDF MG (ret.) Yaakov Amidror, Stephen Rademaker, and Blaise Misztal, [Webinar: Bad Deal Rising?](#), May 26, 2026
- LTG Charles Hooper, USA (ret.) and Yoni Tobin, [Abraham's Fortress: Strengthening Middle East Defenses Against Iran](#), May 19, 2026
- Yoni Tobin, [Blockade Evasion Update – 5/19/26](#), May 19, 2026
- Rena Gabber and Jonah Brody, [Holding China Accountable for Iran](#), May 13, 2026
- Gen Charles Wald, USAF (ret.), VADM Mark Fox, USN (ret.), VADM Robert Harward, USN (ret.), LTG Karen Gibson, USA (ret.), VADM John Miller, USN (ret.), VADM John Bird, USN (ret.), Blaise Misztal, Jonathan Ruhe, and Ari Cicurel, [Epic Fury II: Securing U.S. Objectives in Iran](#), May 8, 2026
- Michael Makovsky, PhD, and Blaise Misztal, "[The U.S. Blockade of Iran Is a Means, Not an End](#)," *The National Interest*, May 8, 2026
- Yoni Tobin, [Blockade Evasion Update - 5/8](#), May 8, 2026