

CLAWS Newsletter



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by Nomita Chandola

US-IRAN WAR

Oil Markets React as US-Iran Peace Signals Grow Stronger ([Al Jazeera, 25th May 2026](#))

Global oil markets reacted with significant volatility as US President Donald Trump signalled that negotiations with Iran were proceeding in an “orderly and constructive manner,” while also cautioning officials “not to rush into a deal.” Brent crude fell sharply by over five percent on Sunday as traders priced in a possible breakthrough on the Strait of Hormuz, which has been effectively blockaded since the war began in late February. With approximately ten to eleven million barrels per day of crude oil shut in for every day the strait remains closed, markets remained on edge. Iran's Foreign Minister Araghchi described a memorandum of understanding as “never closer,” and Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, who has played a central mediating role throughout, confirmed that serious negotiations were under way. Analysts estimated that once a deal was finalised, a period of three to six months would still be required to fully restore oil flows, as stranded tankers returned and refineries came back online.

US and Iran Announce Preliminary Agreement on 60-Day Ceasefire Framework ([NPR, 15th June 2026](#))

President Donald Trump and Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian announced an initial framework agreement to end more than three months of conflict and reopen the Strait of Hormuz. The memorandum of understanding, which extended the existing ceasefire by sixty days, called for an immediate halt to all military operations on all fronts, including in Lebanon, and committed both sides to lifting their respective maritime blockades. The agreement did not yet resolve several critical outstanding issues, including the future of Iran’s nuclear programme, the status of its enriched uranium stockpile, and the lifting of US sanctions. Technical negotiations on these matters were to begin within a fifteen to twenty day window. Oil prices responded sharply to the announcement, with Brent crude falling nearly thirteen percent from mid-week levels, settling around 83 dollars per barrel, compared with a peak of over 126 dollars earlier in the conflict. Trump declared “Ships of the World, start your engines. Let the oil flow!” in a social media post heralding the deal. However, US-Israel tensions were visible, as Trump criticised an Israeli airstrike on Beirut that occurred on the same day as the announcement.

Trump and Iran’s Pezeshkian Sign MoU at Versailles ([Al Jazeera, 18th June 2026](#))

President Donald Trump physically signed the US-Iran memorandum of understanding at the Palace of Versailles in France on June 17, at a dinner hosted by French President Emmanuel

Macron following the conclusion of the G7 summit. The ceremony marked a landmark moment in the four-month conflict, with Trump telling his audience: “This was not easy. I can tell you that.” Iranian President Pezeshkian also signed electronically, with Pakistan announcing that the “Islamabad MOU” had come into effect. The fourteen-point agreement commits both sides to an immediate and permanent termination of military operations on all fronts, mutual respect for sovereignty, and negotiations toward a final agreement within sixty days, extendable with mutual consent. Iran's Supreme Leader Mojtaba Khamenei endorsed the memorandum, while noting he had a “different view” on some aspects. US Vice President JD Vance, responding to Israeli criticism of the deal, stated that “Trump is your only ally left in the world,” urging Israeli support for the diplomatic process.

US and Iran Make Progress in Switzerland on Road to Final Deal ([CNBC, 22nd June 2026](#))

The first round of formal negotiations under the memorandum of understanding took place in Bürgenstock, Switzerland, with the two sides agreeing on a roadmap toward a permanent settlement and establishing three working groups focused on oversight, sanctions, and nuclear issues. The parties additionally agreed to create a deconfliction cell involving the US, Iran, and Lebanon, facilitated by mediating countries, to ensure a complete end to hostilities in the south of the country, where Israeli and forces had continued sporadic fighting despite the broader ceasefire. Iran's Foreign Minister Araghchi described the talks as having delivered “major progress,” citing secured waivers on oil and petrochemical exports, the lifting of the US naval blockade on Iranian ports, the release of some frozen assets, and the launch of a reconstruction and development plan. However, negotiations continued against a backdrop of elevated tension, as Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps had briefly declared a reclosure of the Strait of Hormuz in response to Israeli strikes in Lebanon, a claim the US military denied.

Iran Granted Eased Travel Rules Ahead of Crucial World Cup Clash ([NBC News, 24th June 2026](#))

The US Department of Homeland Security has relaxed travel restrictions for Iran's national football team ahead of their final World Cup group match against Egypt in Seattle. Previously, Iran had only been allowed to enter the US 24 hours before matches and had to leave immediately afterwards, unlike other teams. Following complaints from Iran's football federation and criticism from the team's coach over unfair treatment, the team will now be

permitted to arrive in Seattle two days before the match. However, they must still return to their base in Tijuana, Mexico, immediately after the game. Iran has drawn its first two matches and needs a win against Egypt to progress. The issue comes amid heightened political tensions between the US and Iran following recent military conflict and ongoing diplomatic negotiations over Iran's nuclear programme.

US-CHINA

US Pauses \$14 Billion Taiwan Arms Sale Amid Post-Summit Diplomacy ([The Washington Post, 23rd May 2026](#))

The Trump administration placed the long-pending fourteen-billion-dollar arms sale to Taiwan on hold in the weeks following President Trump's Beijing summit with Chinese President Xi Jinping. The sale, which had already been approved by the US Congress and was widely expected to include medium-range missiles, drones, and howitzers, still required Trump's final approval. Beijing had made Taiwan the first agenda item on the first day of the summit, with Xi explicitly warning that mishandling the issue could push the entire China-US relationship into "a very dangerous situation." Trump had earlier floated the idea of treating the arms sale as a "negotiating chip" with China. Taiwanese officials expressed concern over the delay and reaffirmed that the island's future must be decided only by its own people. Meanwhile, defence analysts noted that Taiwan's President Lai Ching-te had pushed for a massive forty-billion-dollar defence spending plan, which had been blocked domestically by opposition parties ten times and remained unresolved.

Quad Foreign Ministers Convene in New Delhi, Launch Maritime Surveillance Initiative ([US Embassy New Delhi, 26th May 2026](#))

The foreign ministers of Australia, India, Japan, and US Secretary of State Marco Rubio met in New Delhi for the eleventh Quad Foreign Ministers' Meeting, reaffirming their commitment to a free and open Indo-Pacific and announcing a series of new cooperative initiatives. The ministers launched the Indo-Pacific Maritime Surveillance Collaboration, designed to enhance maritime domain awareness and information sharing across the region, with an initial focus on the Indian Ocean. They also announced a new Quad Critical Minerals Initiative Framework to strengthen supply chains in mining, processing, and recycling, as well as a Quad Initiative on Indo-Pacific Energy Security. The meeting took place at a time of significant strain on global supply chains and energy routes, with the ongoing Strait of Hormuz crisis uppermost in

discussions. The joint statement reaffirmed the four nations' commitment to international law, the peaceful resolution of disputes, and the protection of undersea cable infrastructure as a backbone of the digital economy. Both ministers and analysts highlighted the meeting as a signal of enduring Quad momentum ahead of a planned leaders' summit in New Delhi later in the year.

US Lifts Some Tariffs on Taiwan in Follow-Up to February Trade Framework ([Seoul Economic Daily / Bloomberg, 29th May 2026](#))

In a working-level adjustment following the February US-Taiwan trade agreement, the Trump administration exempted Taiwan-made aircraft parts from tariffs on aluminium, steel, and copper derivatives, and set a fifteen-percent product-specific tariff cap on Taiwanese auto parts and certain wood products. The move came shortly after Xi Jinping's explicit Taiwan warning at the Beijing summit and drew close attention from analysts who viewed it as a careful balancing act — pursuing economic engagement with Taipei while deferring on higher-stakes security decisions. The February framework had already included mutual tariff reductions, market-opening commitments, and expanded investment flows, and represented a significant thaw after months of tariff escalation that had seen duties rise above one hundred percent on some goods before a pause was negotiated. The US remained under pressure from both China and Taiwan hawks in the US Senate to clarify its strategic posture on the island amid China's sustained military activity in the Taiwan Strait.

US-INDIA

India-US Trade Deal Enters Final Stage Ahead of G7 Meeting ([WION / Business Today, 27th May 2026](#))

Following Secretary of State Marco Rubio's visit to New Delhi in late May, the next round of India-US trade talks was announced for June 1 to 4 in India, with both sides expressing optimism that the interim Bilateral Trade Agreement was in its "final stages." Rubio stated that the two countries were working through the "very final details" of the deal and expressed confidence it could be wrapped up within weeks. The February framework had already established a mutual agreement on tariff reductions and market access, but a broader trade agreement remained unsigned. US Ambassador to India Sergio Gor said that India had joined the Pax Silica initiative and that commercial diplomacy had reached a record level, with the US Embassy in India topping US missions worldwide by attracting over twenty billion dollars

in new investment into the United States. Analysts described the proposed agreement as going beyond tariffs to encompass conditions for broader economic cooperation, investment promotion, and economic security alignment.

Modi and Trump Meet at G7 in France, Push Trade Deal Toward Conclusion [\(WION News, 17th June 2026\)](#)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Donald Trump held their first face-to-face meeting in sixteen months on the sidelines of the G7 summit in Évian-les-Bains, France. The meeting focused heavily on advancing the interim trade agreement, which Indian officials described as being in its “last mile,” with US Trade Representative Jamieson Greer announced to visit India the following week to finalise details. Energy security also featured prominently, with both sides reaffirming their interest in a long-term energy partnership as India sought to diversify supplies amid Middle East disruptions. Trump, in characteristically warm terms, called Modi a “tough negotiator” and pledged to visit India soon for the anticipated Quad leaders’ summit. He also stated that the US would “help” India if it were “attacked.” Modi, for his part, delivered a pointed message on international cooperation at the G7 outreach session, saying, “Trust and verify. Trust is a rare commodity.” The meeting was seen as an important step in repairing bilateral ties strained by tariffs, Trump’s engagement with Pakistan, and uncertainty over US China diplomacy.

Quad Foreign Ministers Reaffirm Indo-Pacific Commitment at New Delhi Meeting [\(US Embassy New Delhi, 26th May 2026\)](#)

Alongside the broader Quad meeting, the US and India used the New Delhi forum to reinforce the strategic dimensions of their bilateral relationship, launching cooperative initiatives in critical minerals, energy security, and maritime surveillance. Secretary Rubio’s participation in New Delhi — his second visit to India in a month — underscored Washington’s effort to reassure New Delhi about its commitment to the Indo-Pacific partnership following concerns raised by Trump’s rapprochement with China. The Quad initiatives announced included the Indo-Pacific Energy Security programme, which directly aligned with India’s concerns about energy supply disruptions from the Strait of Hormuz crisis. Officials noted that the planned Quad leaders’ summit, to be hosted by India in New Delhi, would depend in part on concluding the bilateral trade deal, making the trade negotiations an indirect prerequisite for summit-level engagement. India’s role as a “global diplomatic bridge between East and West” was highlighted by multiple participants as a central theme of the meeting.

US-EUROPE

G7 Summit in Évian Reflects Mixed Progress on Ukraine and Iran ([NPR, 16th June 2026](#))

The 52nd G7 Summit, held from June 15 to 17 in Évian-les-Bains, France, placed the wars in Ukraine and Iran at the top of its agenda. Host President Emmanuel Macron worked to bring Trump's attention back to the Russia-Ukraine conflict, which had been largely overshadowed by the Iran crisis. European leaders expressed cautious optimism after Trump agreed to a joint communiqué supporting Ukraine and suggested he might consider renewing American sanctions on Russia — a significant gesture after months of hesitancy. Trump had sharp disagreements with Macron, UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer, German Chancellor Friedrich Merz, and Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni over his decision to go to war with Iran without consulting them, and had previously threatened to draw down US troops in all four NATO member states. On the Iran front, the G7 became the backdrop against which the US-Iran memorandum of understanding was finalised, with Trump signing the deal at a dinner in Versailles on June 17. Hours before the summit began, Russia launched a massive drone and missile barrage against Ukrainian cities, killing eleven people, underscoring that the Ukraine conflict remained far from resolution.

Europe Reassesses US Partnership as Trump Signs Iran MoU at Versailles ([Christian Science Monitor, 17th June 2026](#))

The G7 summit highlighted a fundamental shift in how European leaders are approaching the United States under President Trump. Rather than banking on any single deal to reset the relationship, European governments have adopted a posture of continuous engagement and pragmatic flexibility. Analysts noted that the EU had previously struck a trade deal with the US in 2025, expecting it to unlock goodwill, but that it had produced few lasting results. The signing of the US-Iran memorandum of understanding at the Palace of Versailles on June 17 provided a diplomatic spectacle that Trump clearly appreciated. Macron's decision to invite Trump to the dinner and extend a gesture tied to the 250th anniversary of American independence was viewed as a calculated move by France to maintain influence. European officials nonetheless stressed that the case for continued US engagement would need to be made again at the NATO summit the following month, as doubts persisted over American long-term commitment to the continent's security.

Ukraine Begins EU Membership Negotiations as G7 Debates Support [\(NPR, 16th June 2026\)](#)

Ukraine officially launched European Union membership negotiations on the sidelines of the G7 summit, a milestone that requires the country to commit to years of political and governance reforms even while fighting the Russian invasion. Macron stated that France would seek to persuade Trump to continue supporting Ukraine and increase pressure on Russia. As the Trump administration has curtailed direct military aid to Kyiv, France and European allies have become the primary providers of military and financial support. Ukraine's best security guarantee, NATO membership, remained off the table as the Trump administration insisted it could not happen while the war continued. Separately, Trump expressed frustration over Israel's ongoing military operations in Lebanon, saying he was "not happy with the way Israel has handled themselves," adding that Israeli operations against Hezbollah "just go on forever." The Ukraine and Iran conflicts thus intersected at the summit, defining the global security agenda and testing the durability of the transatlantic alliance under sustained American unpredictability.

About the Author

Nomita Chandola is a budding researcher in International Relations, with a strong academic foundation and a passion for understanding complex global issues. She completed her master's degree in International Relations from the University of Leeds, where she focused on modules such as global governance and climate security. Prior to this, she completed her bachelor's degree in Political Science with a minor in Economics from Kamla Nehru College, University of Delhi. Currently, Nomita is a Research Assistant at the Centre for Land Warfare Studies, where she delves into critical issues of strategic affairs and geopolitical dynamics.

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