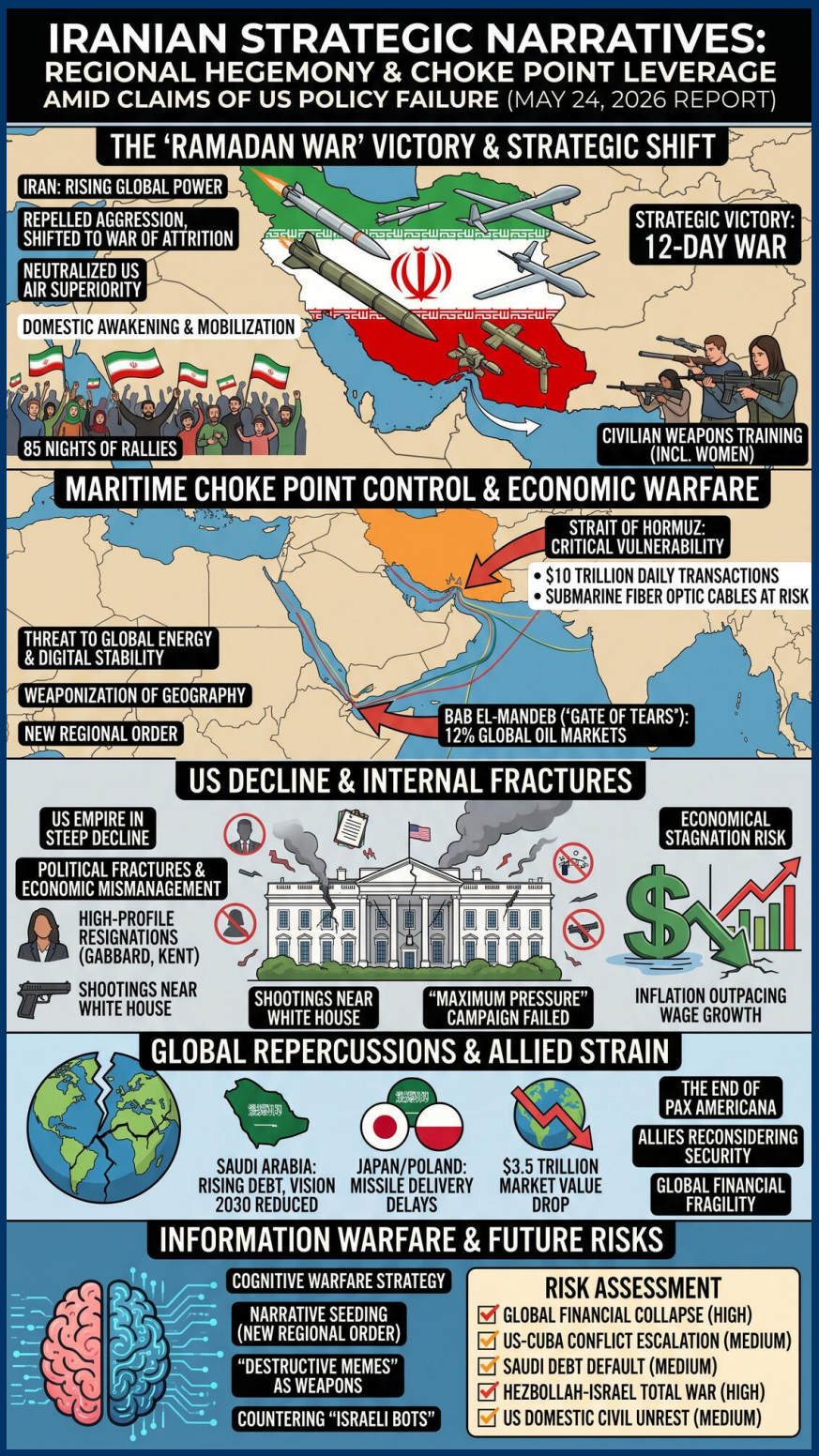
TODAY'S MEDIA TRENDS

PRESSTV

MAY 24, 2026

THE GDELT PROJECT



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IRANIAN STRATEGIC NARRATIVES EMPHASIZE REGIONAL HEGEMONY AND CHOKE POINT LEVERAGE AMID CLAIMS OF US POLICY FAILURE

DAY-AT-A-GLANCE

On May 24, 2026, state-aligned news coverage heavily prioritized a narrative of Iranian strategic victory following a recent "12-day war" (also termed the "Ramadan War") against US-Israeli forces. The day's broadcasts characterized Iran as a rising global power that successfully repelled military aggression, shifting the theater of conflict from kinetic strikes to a sophisticated "war of attrition" involving the control of critical maritime choke points. Central to this posture is the threat to global energy and digital stability via the potential closure of the Strait of Hormuz and Bab el-Mandeb, which the network claims hold $10 trillion in daily financial transactions and a quarter of the world's oil supply. This external projection of strength is coupled with a domestic "awakening," evidenced by 84 consecutive nights of nationwide rallies and the training of civilians, including women, in weaponry to defend the Islamic Republic.

Simultaneously, the coverage frames the United States as an empire in steep decline, crippled by internal political fractures and economic mismanagement. High-profile resignations within the Trump administration, specifically Director of National Intelligence Tulsi Gabbard, and reports of shootings near the White House are leveraged to portray a government in crisis. The network argues that President Trump is desperately seeking a diplomatic "off-ramp" through mediators like Pakistan and Qatar because his "maximum pressure" campaign has failed to yield military or economic capitulation. This narrative suggests that any upcoming memorandum of understanding (MoU) would be on Iranian terms, acknowledging a new regional order where US bases are no longer safe and its allies, including Saudi Arabia and the UAE, are reconsidering their security architectures.

MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS

- **Strategic Maritime Control and Economic Warfare:** Iran has asserted full sovereignty over the Strait of Hormuz, linking its security to global energy flows and the physical integrity of submarine fiber optic cables. submarine cable systems lying beneath the strait are described as a "critical vulnerability" for the global digital economy.
- **US Administration Instability:** The resignation of National Intelligence Director Tulsi Gabbard and several other high-ranking officials is reported as a sign of Trump's losing control over the government amid disagreements over the war with Iran.

- **Saudi Arabian Economic Pivot:** A detailed analysis suggests Saudi Arabia is facing a "current account deficit" trend and rising public debt, leading the kingdom to reassess its economic geography and redirect oil exports toward the Red Sea to bypass the Strait of Hormuz.
- **Domestic Mobilization in Iran:** For 85 consecutive nights, Iranians have gathered in public squares to demonstrate support for the leadership, with new programs training volunteer citizens in the use of Kalashnikov rifles.
- **International Condemnation of Israeli Actions:** Multiple reports highlight a growing global backlash against the Israeli cabinet, specifically Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir, following the interception of the Somud flotilla and allegations of abuse against activists.

KEY GOVERNANCE TOPICS

Armed Conflict & Militarization The discourse is dominated by the "hybrid warfare" model employed by the IRGC, which claims to have neutralized US air superiority and anti-air systems within the first 11 days of conflict. Reports indicate that Iran's missile and drone attacks redrew the rules of regional deterrence, specifically targeting US central command hubs in Qatar and Kuwait. Domestically, the state has institutionalized the "Ramadan War" through a new media festival category, aimed at documenting the conflict as a definitive national struggle.

Energy & Critical Minerals The Straits of Hormuz and Bab el-Mandeb are framed as "strategic pressure points" capable of inducing "biblical proportions" of economic damage if closed. The network emphasizes that oil prices would soar and global supply chains would paralyze, specifically impacting Europe's reliance on Persian Gulf LNG and jet fuel. The narrative also highlights that US allies, including Japan and Poland, are facing missile delivery delays as US stocks are depleted by the war.

Macroeconomics & Trade Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 is under scrutiny, with reports citing modified designs and reduced sizes for mega-projects like "The Line" due to ballooning debt and funding shortfalls. The Saudi Public Investment Fund (PIF) has reportedly begun reducing foreign commitments, including stakes in sports and arts partnerships, to manage a quarterly deficit that is the largest since 2020.

Information Warfare & Disinformation The network aggressively counters the idea that Iran's government lacks popular support, claiming that 50% of social media interactions against the regime are generated by Israeli-supported bots. Public notes on platforms like X are dismissed as unfounded propaganda, while "destructive memes" are celebrated as a legitimate front in a war fought through words and images.

DEEP DIVE: TRENDS AND THEMES

The Weaponization of Geography Iran is no longer merely threatening to close the Strait of Hormuz; it is theorizing a "new regional order" based on the misuse of the straight being forbidden to "hostile regimes." By broadening the scope to include the Bab el-Mandeb (the "Gate of Tears"), the narrative creates a geopolitical squeeze play that forces the international community to choose between supporting US/Israeli military goals or maintaining global economic stability. This "Hamani Doctrine" rising as a superpower is

framed as the successor to the Monroe Doctrine, asserting regional control over all maritime traffic and underwater infrastructure.

The Decomposition of the Trump Administration The coverage frames US President Donald Trump as "facing his own doom" facing his own doom due to the failure of military objectives. The narrative suggests a pattern of "theatrical moves" designed to hide a lack of legal or popular legitimacy for the war. By linking Trump's decisions to the "Epstein files" and "zionist mafia" zionist mafia influence, the network aims to delegitimize the US presidency as a "puppet" entity, suggesting that the "grown-ups in the room" are now in Tehran, not Washington.

The End of Pax Americana in West Asia There is a consistent theme that US bases in the region, once seen as deterrents, are now "sponges" pull up sponges for conflict. The strategic failure of the US to "decapitate Iranian leadership" is seen as a turning point, where even traditional allies like Pakistan and Qatar are acting as mediators logical path for a US retreat. This transition is portrayed not as a negotiation but as a "surrender" in installments.

INTERNAL DYNAMICS & DOMESTIC INSTABILITY

- **Iran:** Domestic stability is portrayed as exceptionally high, driven by the "Ramadan War" resolve. However, there are mentions of economic adaptations to adapt to economic pressure. The mobilization of youth into the "Basij" campaigns to repair damaged Tehrani homes suggests a state successfully channeling civil unrest into national service.
- **United States:** The US is depicted as on the verge of "economical stagnation" economical stagnation comparable to the Great Depression. The network highlights a "lockdown" of the White House after gunshots gunshots were heard and a 37% presidential approval rating as evidence of an imminent collapse of social order.
- **Israel:** The Israeli leadership is characterized as being in a "crisis" leadership in Israel of its own making. The military is described as "desperate" to find solutions to Hezbollah's daily operations, with troop morale reportedly at the "worst level possible."

EXTERNAL DYNAMICS & GLOBAL POSTURE

The world is framed as a "fracturing multipolar arena" where the US is "begging for an off-ramp." Iran portrays its global posture as one of "strategic silence" and "absolute precision" battle of calculation. The state is actively projecting power by refusing to return to the status quo of pre-war maritime regulations. Instead, it is forging a deeper strategic relationship with China, emphasizing that China is now buying Iranian oil and that the US has become "dependent" on Beijing to solve its West Asian quagmire.

THE ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

The economic climate is characterized by high volatility in energy markets and a transition toward a "new economic order" where US sanctions are losing their efficacy. The day's reports provided specific data on the fragility

of global trade routes and the internal financial strain on US allies.

- **Energy Choke Points:** $10 trillion in daily transactions financial transactions rely on the cables under the Strait of Hormuz. Bab el-Mandeb carries 12% of global oil markets.
- **Saudi Debt:** Public debt has risen to 36% of GDP, up from 6% in 2015 6% in 2015. Debt service now consumes 10% of public spending.
- **US Inflation:** Wage growth (3.6%) is being outpaced by inflation (4%) april inflation is 4%. Market values of major companies have reportedly dropped by $3.5 trillion due to conflict uncertainty.
- **Commodity Shifts:** Anhydrous ammonia prices reportedly spiked from $970 to $1,020 within a 20-minute period due to supply chain instability.

LEADERSHIP CHANGES

The day saw significant reporting on shifts within the US executive branch, framing these as a collapse of presidential authority.

- **Tulsi Gabbard:** Resigned or was forced out as Director of National Intelligence due to differences over the war on Iran.
- **Joe Kent:** High-ranking counter-terrorism official resigned joe kent resigned amid disagreements on Iran policy.
- **Pam Bondi / Christie Noem:** Mentioned among a list of 50 resignations of lower and senior-level ranking staff in the current US administration.
- **Naftali Bennett:** Characterized as a potential successor to Netanyahu Naftali Bennet, though the network dismisses him as identical in policy to his predecessor.

EDITORIAL POSTURE & STORY HIERARCHY

The lead stories focused on Iranian military and strategic resilience, specifically the "Ramadan War" anniversary and the failure of US "maximum pressure." The hierarchical structure emphasizes **triumph over aggression** and **global economic leverage**. Stories regarding the humanitarian crisis in Gaza and the "Somud" flotilla are given high prominence to underscore a moral contrast between the "resistance" and the "aggressors." Conspicuous omissions include any detailed admission of Iranian casualties or material losses during the recent conflict, and any mention of the internal dissent that occurred prior to January 2026, which is now framed as entirely resolved by the external threat.

GEOPOLITICAL FRAMING

The subtext of the day’s coverage paints a world where traditional Western power is being systemically dismantled by a superior "cognitive warfare" strategy from the East.

COUNTRIES

- **Iran:** Framed as the "grown-up in the room" and a "new superpower" rising as a superpower that acts with "maximum caution" but "absolute precision."
- **United States:** Portrayed as a "disorganized" and "compromised" absolute compromised entity, losing its place as a major foreign power.
- **Saudi Arabia:** Characterized as a "hostage of external and internal debt" hostage of debt, failing to meet the goals of Vision 2030.

- **China:** Portrayed as a calm beneficiary of US failure, now buying oil from Iran after letting Trump "squeeze out some concessions" that were actually "empty bottles."

LEADERS

- **Donald Trump:** Characterized as an "absolute maniac, madman, narcissist" absolute maniac whose words have lost all value.
- **Ayatollah Sayid Ali Khamenei:** (Deceased in the timeline) Described as the "martyred leader" whose death spontaneously took to the streets millions of supporters.
- **Benjamin Netanyahu:** Framed as "desperate" and a "burden on Trump," begging Trump for a new round of attacks.

INFORMATION WARFARE ENVIRONMENT

- **Narrative Seeding:** The network is actively seeding the concept of a "new regional order" where Iranian control of maritime routes is "irreversible." regulations are irreversible.
- **Domestic Propaganda:** The training of women and children in weaponry is framed as a "lesson in resistance" lesson in resistance, creating a societal expectation of total war.
- **Censorship Allegations:** The network claims mainstream media is censored in mainstream media, positioning itself as the only source for "authentic information."
- **Psy-ops:** The use of "destructive memes" destructive memes to mock US military credibility and Trump's personal failures is identified as a strategic pillar of the "news war."

RISK ASSESSMENT

- **Global Financial Collapse:** Triggers: A full closure of the Strait of Hormuz or the cutting of submarine fiber optic cables. Likelihood: High if the ceasefire breaks. Impact: Paralyzation of the world economy and swift banking messages. Mitigations: US withdrawal from maritime blockade and Iranian concessions on transit tolls disruption to these highways.
- **US-Cuba Conflict Escalation:** Triggers: US military mobilization in Florida bases. Likelihood: Medium. Impact: A secondary front that further depletes US munitions and worsens internal division. Mitigations: Diplomatic intervention by regional Latin American powers war with Cuba.
- **Saudi Sovereign Debt Default:** Triggers: Persistent quarterly deficits exceeding 125 billion riyals and continued closure of Hormuz. Likelihood: Medium. Impact: Destabilization of the Vision 2030 projects and regional power shifts. Mitigations: Successful redirection of 100% of oil exports to the Red Sea Saudi Public Investment Fund.
- **Hezbollah-Israel Total War:** Triggers: Israeli attempts to "reign in" Hezbollah or targeting of paramedics. Likelihood: High. Impact: Devastation of northern Israel and southern Lebanon, potential for Iranian ballistic intervention. Mitigations: Implementation of a 14-point ceasefire framework targeting a paramedic.

- **US Domestic Civil Unrest:** Triggers: Presidential attempt to access nuclear codes or further shootings near the White House. Likelihood: Medium. Impact: Institutional decay and potential loss of federal control over member states. Mitigations: Peaceful transition of power or resignation of current leadership armed individuals seen.

GAPS & BLIND SPOTS

- **Internal Dissent in Iran:** The transcripts completely gloss over the "January 2026" protests mentioned in passing, failing to explain how the state reconciled with those elements beyond the current rallies January 2026 protests.
- **12-Day War Casualties:** While celebrating "great victories," the network provides no data on Iranian military or civilian losses, presenting a lopsided view of the conflict's cost qualitative shift.
- **Alternative Energy Routes:** The feasibility of Saudi Arabia's East-West pipeline to fully replace the Strait of Hormuz is mentioned but its limitations (capacity constraints) are downplayed Red Sea via the East West Pipeline.
- **US Legislative Nuance:** Claims that Trump "lost all legitimacy" ignore the potential for executive orders or GOP support in the Senate that could override House refusals no legitimacy left.

LEGISLATIVE ROUNDUP

The day’s discussions touched on the failure of international legal frameworks to constrain the conflict and the emergence of new, unilateral maritime regulations by Iran.

- **BILLS DISCUSSED/DEBATED:**
  - **11th NPT Review Conference:** Reported as a "failure" because Western states tried to "reverse the roles of aggressor and victim," leading Iran to reject the final document failure of the 11th NPT.
  - **1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea:** Cited by Iran to justify its 12-nautical-mile territorial sea claim over the Strait of Hormuz precise geometry of international maritime law.
  - **14-Point Ceasefire Framework:** A proposed agreement to end hostilities, which Iran claims the US is "derailing" 14 points cease fire framework.
- **HEARINGS & PRESS EVENTS:**
  - **Presidential Meetings with Broadcasting Officials:** President Masoud Pezeshkian emphasized that all diplomatic decisions must be approved by the Supreme National Security Council Iran Supreme National Security Council.
  - **UN Economic and Social Council Special Meeting:** Ambassador Said Rawani asserted that US aggression is the "root cause" of energy instability safeguarding energy and supply flows.

KEY STORIES

- **Gabbard Resignation:** US National Intelligence Director Tulsi Gabbard forced out due to clashing with Trump's inner circle over the war on Iran forced out by the White House.

- **Maritime Choke Point Threat:** Analysis of Hormuz and Bab el-Mandeb as economic leverage points against the US and Europe detour around Africa.
- **Saudi Debt Crisis:** Deep dive into Saudi Arabia's rising quarterly deficit (125 billion riyals) and its impact on Vision 2030 feasibility Saudi Ministry of Finance.
- **Iranian Weapons Training:** Civilian volunteers, including women, receive free Kalashnikov training during nightly rallies learn how to handle weapons.
- **Somud Flotilla Abuse:** Release of activists who allege rape and torture by the Israeli army following the interception of their aid mission at least 15 cases of sexual abuse.
- **White House Security Incident:** Multiple gunshots fired near the White House, suspect killed, and Secret Service locking down the complex gunshots were heard.
- **Hormuz Fiber Optic Vulnerability:** Discovery that five major submarine cables carrying $10 trillion in daily traffic are under Iranian territorial control submarine fiber optic cable systems.
- **Gaza Health Infrastructure Attacks:** Report that 94% of Gaza's hospitals have been damaged or destroyed since October 2023 800 attacks on healthcare facilities.
- **Syria-UK Migrant Documentary:** Controversy surrounding a Channel 4 show replicating migrant lives, with claims of Zionist lobby attempts to cancel it Israel lobby who were trying to cancel me.
- **Asian Allies Munitions Crisis:** US informs Japan of serious delays in Tomahawk missile deliveries due to war depletion delays in the delivery of 400 tomahawk missiles.

ABOUT THIS REPORT

Today's Media Trends is a public interest experiment in applying deep thematic trend analysis to television news coverage from around the world to explore how responsibly applied advanced AI can help journalists and scholars better understand the overarching trends, themes and patterns of our global world.

No data is used to train or tune any AI model.

Each morning, in collaboration with the Internet Archive's TV News Archive, we apply Google's Gemini 3 to deeply examine yesterday's coverage from each television news channel to tease out the overarching themes and trends of its news coverage into a richly annotated thematic analysis. Each high-level insight is connected back to the original broadcast, allowing journalists and scholars to understand the dominate themes and trends and instantly click out to the underlying sources for details.

By helping journalists and scholars see the broader trends and patterns of global news coverage, this analysis helps them identify relevant stories and coverage they might not otherwise have encountered and uncover connections, emphases and narrative shifts that enable more comprehensive reporting and deeper, evidence-based research.

This report is entirely machine generated using Gemini 3 and may include errors and omissions. Please verify all findings. No data is used to train or tune any AI model.

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