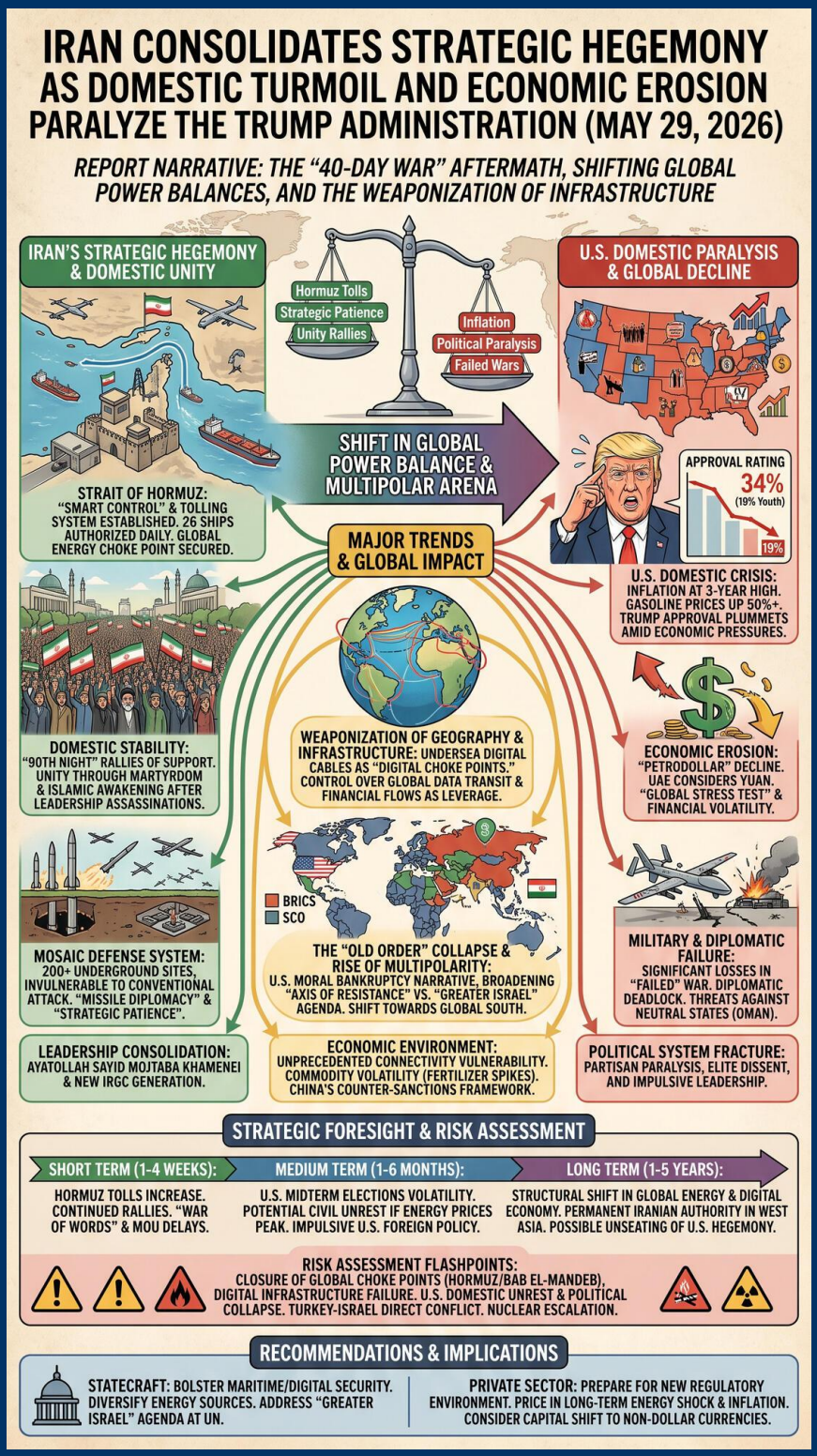
TODAY'S MEDIA TRENDS

PRESSTV

MAY 29, 2026

THE GDELT PROJECT



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IRAN CONSOLIDATES STRATEGIC HEGEMONY AS DOMESTIC TURMOIL AND ECONOMIC EROSION PARALYZE THE TRUMP ADMINISTRATION

DAY-AT-A-GLANCE

On May 29, 2026, Iranian state media narratives center on the aftermath of a "40-day war" (also referred to as the Ramadan War), which the Islamic Republic claims has resulted in a decisive military and geopolitical victory over the United States and Israel. The central theme of the day's broadcasts is the shifting regional balance of power, where Iran has transitioned from a defensive posture to an assertive regional hegemon. This is punctuated by Tehran's enforcement of a "smart control" and tolling system in the Strait of Hormuz, effectively holding the global energy economy as leverage against continuing U.S. sanctions and military pressure. The network portrays the U.S. as a declining empire led by an impulsive and "deceived" President Donald Trump, whose domestic standing is at an all-time low due to surging inflation and the perceived failure of his military adventures.

Domestic stability within Iran is presented as high, marked by the "90th night" of nationwide rallies supporting the Islamic establishment following the assassination of high-ranking leaders, including a member of the Supreme Leader's family and General Muhammad Pakpur. These rallies are framed as a manifestation of "Islamic awakening" and national unity, contrasting sharply with the "collective insanity" and moral decay attributed to the United States. Externally, the broadcast highlights a broadening "Axis of Resistance" that now includes voices of solidarity from Mexico and India, while warning of a burgeoning confrontation between Turkey and the "Zionist entity" as Israel allegedly pivots its aggression toward Ankara.

The convergence of these events suggests a strategic stalemate where the U.S. administration is seeking an "off-ramp" through Pakistani-mediated negotiations, even as it issues "desperate" threats against neutral states like Oman. Iran's governance strategy appears to be a calculated blend of "missile diplomacy" and "strategic patience," refusing to finalize any Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) until its maximalist demands—including the lifting of all sanctions and $300 billion in reparations—are met. The economic environment is characterized as a "global stress test," with the potential closure of maritime and digital choke points (undersea cables) serving as a final deterrent against further U.S. escalation.

MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS

- **Strait of Hormuz Hegemony:** Iran claims absolute control over the waterway, implementing a tolling system for environmental and security services while denying passage to "hostile" U.S. and Israeli vessels. 26 ships reportedly crossed under Iranian authorization in a 24-hour period.
- **U.S. Domestic Crisis:** Reports highlight U.S. inflation hitting a three-year high in April, with gasoline prices rising over 50%. President Trump's approval rating has plummeted to 34% (19% among youth) amid these economic pressures and the "failed" war on Iran.
- **Regional Escalation in Lebanon:** Israel has reportedly conducted over 1,100 airstrikes in Lebanon since mid-April, with the death toll exceeding 3,200 people. Hezbollah is credited with forcing the Israeli military into a stalemate.
- **Turkey-Israel Tensions:** Analysts warn that Turkey is the "next Iran" in Israel's "Greater Israel" agenda, citing Israeli military alignments with Greece and Cyprus as a direct threat to Turkish maritime sovereignty.
- **Diplomatic Deadlock:** Despite U.S. claims of a pending deal, the Iranian Foreign Ministry asserts that no final agreement has been reached, maintaining that "actions, not words" will dictate any Iranian concessions.

KEY GOVERNANCE TOPICS

Armed Conflict & Militarization

- Iran showcases its "mosaic defense system," claiming that its 200+ underground missile and drone systems across 31 provinces make it invulnerable to conventional destruction.
- The U.S. military reportedly suffered significant losses, including the destruction of $1 billion worth of Reaper drones and damage to 17 regional bases.

Macroeconomics & Trade

- The "petrodollar" is described as being in decline, with the UAE reportedly considering a switch to the Yuan due to U.S. asset seizures and sanctions volatility.
- China has implemented a "counter-sanctions framework" (Decrees 834 and 835) to protect its industrial and supply chain resilience against U.S. pressure.

Critical Infrastructure Security

- The Bab el-Mandeb and Strait of Hormuz are identified as "digital choke points," carrying fiber optic cables responsible for 90% of Europe-Asia bandwidth. Iran suggests it may impose "transit fees" on digital data flows.

Leadership Dynamics & Governance

- The broadcast portrays President Trump as an "IPAC puppet" whose policy is driven by the "Greater Israel" agenda rather than U.S. national interests.
- Iran emphasizes its governance by "religious democracy," where the Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) dictates all major strategic decisions with the Leader's approval.

DEEP DIVE: TRENDS AND THEMES

The Weaponization of Geography and Infrastructure

- Iran has shifted the paradigm of regional conflict by asserting administrative and fiscal control over global trade arteries. By reframing its blockade as a "legal tolling system" for services rendered, it seeks to legitimize its control under international law while bypassing U.S. sanctions through bilateral "individual deals" with other nations.
- The focus on undersea cables in the Red Sea and Hormuz suggests a new frontier of asymmetric warfare where data transit is as critical as oil flow, providing Iran with leverage over Western "Big Tech" and financial markets.

The Moral and Political Collapse of the "Old Order"

- A recurring narrative is the "moral bankruptcy" of the U.S. system. The network uses guests like Paul Craig Roberts and Keno Keif to argue that the U.S. is no longer a functioning democracy but an oligarchy serving "Zionist money mafias."
- The "Greater Israel" agenda is framed as the primary driver of all Middle Eastern instability, with the U.S. portrayed as a "puppet" that has sacrificed its own economy and lives for the benefit of the Israeli state.

Unity Through Martyrdom

- The "90th night" of rallies and the memorial services for General Pakpur and the Leader's family members are used to demonstrate that Iranian society has been strengthened, not broken, by the conflict. This "Islamic awakening" is presented as a counter to the "ideological subversion" and "individualism" that the network claims has hollowed out American society.

INTERNAL DYNAMICS & DOMESTIC INSTABILITY

United States: The broadcast paints a picture of a nation on the brink of internal collapse. It cites surging inflation and gas prices as the primary drivers of public anger, which is currently "bottled up" on social media but expected to manifest as "actual unrest" as economic consequences fully manifest. The political system is described as paralyzed by partisanship, with the Trump administration "bluffing" about military victories to save face ahead of critical midterm elections. The network highlights dissent from figures like the Mayor of New York and Senator Chris Murphy as evidence of a fracturing elite.

Iran: In contrast, Iran is portrayed as exceptionally stable and unified. The "90 nights" of protests are framed not as civil unrest, but as "rallies of support" for the Islamic establishment. The network admits to economic hardships caused by sanctions but claims the population has a "clear mandate" for the government to resist U.S. demands. The leadership is described as being in "consultation with God and the Quran," contrasting this with the "satanic" nature attributed to U.S. billionaires and leadership.

Lebanon: Lebanon's internal state is described as dire, with the broadcast accusing the government of being "submissive" to Israeli and U.S. dictation. The network suggests that the Lebanese presidency and prime minister have "sold out" their people, leaving Hezbollah as the only legitimate defender of national sovereignty.

EXTERNAL DYNAMICS & GLOBAL POSTURE

The world is framed as a "multipolar arena" where the era of "absolute U.S. military dominance" has ended. Iran is portrayed as the "obvious hegemon" of the Persian Gulf, a status reportedly recognized by bilateral deals it is cutting with countries worldwide to grant access to the Strait of Hormuz. The broadcast highlights the "Global South," including China and Russia, as the new center of gravity, with the "BRICS" and "Shanghai Cooperation" groups serving as the primary diplomatic and economic alternatives to the Western system.

Iran is actively projecting its "soft power" by positioning itself as the leader of the "Axis of Resistance," which it claims is fighting for the "liberty of the entire human race" against a "satanic money mafia." The network showcases international support from non-state actors and groups in Mexico and India to validate this claim. Meanwhile, the network characterizes the U.S. posture as "piracy" and "extortion," specifically citing threats to sanction Oman for its cooperation with Iran.

THE ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

The global economic environment is described as being in a state of "unprecedented connectivity" that makes it highly vulnerable to regional shocks. The network emphasizes that the U.S. "cannot punish China without punishing itself," and that the "40-day war" has already triggered an energy shock that has severely impacted European economies like Italy.

- **Gasoline and Energy:** U.S. gasoline prices have reportedly increased by more than 50%. The network predicts that oil prices will spike further as current deposits are exhausted by June.
- **Inflation:** U.S. inflation jumped 3.8% through April, the fastest pace in three years, leading to a drop in household income for three consecutive months.
- **Financial Flows:** The Tehran Securities Exchange reopened with over two trillion tomans invested, which the network presents as a sign of economic resilience despite the war.
- **Commodity Volatility:** Prices for anhydrous ammonia (fertilizer) reportedly rose from $970 to $1,020 in a single morning, illustrating the immediate market reaction to regional instability.

LEADERSHIP CHANGES

The day's transcripts reflect a period of significant leadership flux and consolidation within both the "Axis of Resistance" and its adversaries.

- **Ayatollah Sayid Mojtaba Khamenei:** Mentioned as the new leader following the assassination of the former leader. The broadcast emphasizes his popular support and the "90th night" of allegiance pledging as a sign of seamless succession.
- **General Muhammad Pakpur:** The late Commander-in-Chief of the IRGC Ground Forces. His assassination is framed as a turning point that has radicalized a new generation of Iranian military personnel.

- **Donald Trump:** Portrayed as a leader in a "confined corner," whose schizophrenic decision-making is alienating both his allies and his domestic base.
- **Ibrahim Traore (Burkina Faso):** Highlighted as an inspiring figure of anti-colonial resistance in the Sahel, signifying a shift in African leadership away from Western influence.

EDITORIAL POSTURE & STORY HIERARCHY

Press TV's editorial hierarchy is strictly aligned with state strategic interests. The **Lead Stories** throughout the day focus on the "smart control" of the Strait of Hormuz, the "defeat" of the U.S. military, and the domestic rallies in Iran. These stories are presented with a tone of triumphalism and nationalistic resolve. **Buried Stories** include details of civilian hardships within Iran, which are only mentioned in the context of being "motivation" for resistance. The **Conspicuous Omissions** include any mention of the internal Iranian opposition (other than labeling them "terrorists" or "foreign agents") and any neutral analysis of the "40-day war's" casualties on the Iranian side. The emotional tone is highly charged, shifting between mourning for "martyrs" and aggressive defiance toward the "Zionist-U.S. axis."

GEOPOLITICAL FRAMING

The day's reporting is underpinned by a worldview that pits a moral, unified "Axis of Resistance" against a decaying, corrupt Western hegemon.

COUNTRIES

- **Iran:** Framed as a "principled/strong" regional superpower. It is described as a nation that "secures its diplomatic advantages through missiles rather than talks."
- **United States:** Portrayed as a "weak/chaotic" bully. It is described as "digging its own grave" and becoming morally bankrupt.
- **Oman:** Framed as a "peaceful/sovereign" victim of U.S. "piracy" and "blackmail" due to its joint collaboration with Iran.
- **Turkey:** Portrayed as a "potential/anxious" target of Israel, with its military and maritime interests being strategically encircled by Israeli-Greek alliances.

LEADERS

- **Donald Trump:** Framed as an "inept/corrupt" narcissist who has been "deceived" by Israel into a war he cannot win.
- **Benjamin Netanyahu:** Portrayed as a "villainous/desperate" strategist who uses the U.S. as a "wrecking ball" to achieve his "Greater Israel" agenda.

NON-STATE & CORPORATE ACTORS

- **Hezbollah:** Framed as a "heroic/competent" force that has shattered the image of Israeli omnipotence.
- **U.S. Big Tech (Google, Meta, etc.):** Framed as "subservient/vulnerable" entities that Iran intends to force into compliance with Iranian law through control of undersea cables.

INFORMATION WARFARE ENVIRONMENT

The broadcast itself is an instrument of psychological warfare, aimed at both domestic Iranian and international audiences. **Disinformation and Narrative Seeding** are evident in the claims that the U.S. "failed" in every objective during the "40-day war" and that the "Greater Israel" map is a current, active policy document held up by Israeli ministers to threaten the entire region from the "Nile to Pakistan."

- **Psy-ops:** The network repeatedly plays up the theme of U.S. "economic meltdown" and "regime change in the US" as the best option for the American people to end their suffering.
- **Censorship:** Guests like Keno Keif discuss how their content is "banned on YouTube" and how the "Zionist media" controls the narrative in the West, framing Press TV as the only source of "real journalism."

HYPOTHESES AND FUTURE OUTLOOK

- **Resumption of Hostilities:** Despite talk of a 60-day ceasefire extension, analysts hypothesize that the Trump administration may resort to a "massive destruction" bombing campaign 24/7 with "zero pauses" if it cannot achieve a "victory" via negotiations.
- **Transition to Cuba:** With the perceived failure of the Iran war, there is a hypothesis that Trump will pivot his "aggression" to Cuba as a target to save political face domestically.
- **Nuclear Proliferation:** There is a suggestion that Iran may decide to pursue "highly enriched uranium" as its only remaining deterrence power against an administration that is "not bound by any agreements."

STRATEGIC FORESIGHT

Short Term (1-4 Weeks): Expect a continued "war of words" over the MOU finalization. Iran will likely increase "transit fees" for ships in Hormuz to further pressure the U.S. economy. Rallies in Iran will likely continue through the 100th night to maintain domestic fervor.

Medium Term (1-6 Months): The U.S. midterm elections in November will likely drive more impulsive foreign policy decisions from the White House. If energy prices do not stabilize, the U.S. may face significant "civil unrest" as predicted by the network's analysts.

Long Term (1-5 Years): A structural shift in the global energy and digital economy is possible if Iran successfully implements its "cable tolling" and "Strait authority" over the long term. This could lead to a permanent "unseating" of U.S. hegemony in West Asia.

RISK ASSESSMENT

The transcripts identify several high-stakes flashpoints that could trigger a global catastrophe.

- **Closure of Global Choke Points:** The combined closure of the Strait of Hormuz and the Bab el-Mandeb could disrupt 25% of the world's oil and gas supply. **Triggers:** A new U.S. bombing campaign or a failed Israeli ground operation. **Likelihood:** Moderate-High. **Impact:** Massive global starvation and a 600% surge in shipping rates. **Mitigations:** Successful Pakistani-mediated negotiations and removal of the U.S. naval blockade.
- **Digital Infrastructure Failure:** Intentional or accidental damage to submarine cables in the Red Sea. **Triggers:** Military escalation or "sabotage" by non-state actors. **Likelihood:** Moderate. **Impact:** Loss of $1 trillion in daily financial transactions and total communication blackout between Europe and Asia. **Mitigations:** International agreements for cable protection and regional coordination among Red Sea states.
- **U.S. Domestic Unrest:** Widespread riots due to economic hardship. **Triggers:** Gas prices hitting $7 per gallon or a "political collapse" at home. **Likelihood:** Moderate. **Impact:** Loss of state capacity to project power abroad and potential "civil war." **Mitigations:** Immediate federal intervention to stabilize fuel prices and de-escalation of foreign wars.
- **Turkey-Israel Direct Conflict:** Expansion of the war to include NATO member Turkey. **Triggers:** Israeli military incursions into northern Syria or maritime disputes in the eastern Mediterranean. **Likelihood:** Low-Moderate. **Impact:** A "big war" that could involve Russia and China. **Mitigations:** Diplomatic intervention by Russia and a "new security framework" in West Asia.
- **Nuclear Escalation:** Resumption of an "uncontrolled" nuclear arms race. **Triggers:** U.S. attempts to seize Iranian uranium or Iran withdrawing from the NPT. **Likelihood:** Moderate. **Impact:** High risk of a nuclear exchange. **Mitigations:** Return to the JCPOA framework or a new bilateral nuclear treaty.

GAPS & BLIND SPOTS

- **True Military Status:** While Iran claims to have destroyed 70% of its pre-war missile stockpile remains intact, there is no verified data on actual Iranian losses in the "40-day war."
- **U.S. Internal Support:** The broadcast relies heavily on fringe activists (Keno Keif) and controversial economists (Paul Craig Roberts), which may not accurately reflect the broader American sentiment.
- **Economic Resilience:** The network claims Iran "already knows how to survive" under extreme pressure, but fails to detail the real-world impact of hyperinflation and shortages on the Iranian middle class.
- **The Role of Russia and China:** While mentioned as allies, the specific **military** or **financial** commitments of these nations to Iran remain vague and unverified.

CONTRARIAN NARRATIVE SCENARIOS

- **The "Strategic Pause" Scenario:** Iran's refusal to finalize the MOU is not a sign of strength, but a stalling tactic to replenish its own depleted missile stores and repair damaged infrastructure after the "40-day war." The "90 nights of rallies" may be a forced display to mask growing internal discontent over war costs.
- **The "Trump Offensive" Scenario:** The U.S. withdrawal and talk of lifting the blockade is a tactical feint. By repositioning aircraft carriers and sending "new radar systems" to Israel, the administration is preparing for a much more lethal second phase of the war once Iran has lowered its guard.
- **The "Black Swan" - Regional Regime Collapse:** A sudden collapse of the Lebanese government or a military coup in Turkey could radically alter the regional power dynamic, potentially leaving Iran overextended and vulnerable to a multi-front assault.

RECOMMENDATIONS & IMPLICATIONS

For Statecraft/Public Sector:

- **Security:** Neutral states should bolster their own maritime and digital infrastructure security to prevent becoming "collateral damage" in the U.S.-Iran confrontation.
- **Economic:** European nations must diversify energy sources immediately, as the Iranian "toll system" in Hormuz is likely to become a permanent fixture.
- **Diplomatic:** The UN must address the "Greater Israel" agenda as a primary security threat to prevent the isolation of Turkey.

For Private Sector/Investors:

- **Supply Chains:** Multi-national tech firms should prepare for a new regulatory environment where they must operate under Iranian law for regional data transit.
- **Regulatory Compliance:** Investors should price in a long-term "energy shock" and inflation, as the U.S. midterm cycle is unlikely to bring stability.
- **Capital Allocation:** A shift from the "petrodollar" to "Yuan" or "BRICS" currencies should be considered a realistic risk for long-term assets.

LEGISLATIVE ROUNDUP

The broadcasts highlight a shift toward "lawfare" where legislative and judicial bodies are used as weapons of statecraft.

- **BILLS DISCUSSED/DEBATED:**
  - **China's Decree 834 & 835:** Laws aimed at securing industrial supply chain resilience and countering foreign extraterritorial sanctions.
  - **EU Sanctions on Israeli Settlers:** New measures targeting seven settlers and organizations over rising violence in the West Bank.
  - **Iranian "Smart Control" Mandate:** A directive requiring all vessels in Hormuz to obtain IRGC Navy authorization and pay associated "service fees."

- **HEARINGS & PRESS EVENTS:**
  - **14th International Meeting of Security Officials (Moscow):** Where Iranian officials called for a "new security framework" that excludes U.S. military bases.
  - **Virginia Court Verdict:** A judicial decision reportedly favoring the Republican party, which has boosted President Trump's domestic confidence.
  - **UN Security Council Meeting (Thursday):** Focused on the "illegality" of U.S. maritime blockades and the status of Jerusalem/Gaza.

KEY STORIES

- **Hormuz Hegemony:** Iran enforces a tolling and authorization system in the Strait of Hormuz, with 26 ships passing under its oversight in 24 hours.
- **Gen. Pakpur Memorial:** Thousands gather in Tehran and at the holy shrine of Abdul Azim to honor the assassinated IRGC commander and the Leader's family.
- **Trump Approval Plummet:** A new Economist poll puts Trump at 34% approval, lower than Joe Biden's lowest point, amid 50% gas price increases.
- **Lebanon Massacre:** Reports of more than 300 Israeli bombs dropped on Lebanon in two days, with total deaths since March exceeding 3,300.
- **Turkey Pivot:** Turkish officials warn that the Israel-Greece-Cyprus alliance is a direct security threat aimed at "Greater Israel."
- **Gaza Aid Famine:** Activists claim Israel is using "engineered famine" and has murdered 270 journalists to prevent news of aid blockades from reaching the world.
- **Digital Bottleneck:** Iran identifies undersea cables as a "strategic pressure point" to leverage against U.S. Big Tech and the financial system.
- **U.S. Military Losses:** Detailed claims that Iran destroyed $1 billion in U.S. hardware and broke through "Iron Dome" defenses to hit Tel Aviv.
- **India/Mexico Solidarity:** Reports of Indian Muslims and Mexican intellectuals joining "Axis of Resistance" protests against "U.S. imperialism."
- **Oman Blackmail:** Iran condemns U.S. threats to "blow up" Oman if it continues to cooperate with Tehran on Hormuz management.
- **Iran International Debt Relief:** Claims that the "anti-Iran" network received a 650 million pound debt-for-equity swap from Saudi-linked investors.

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.

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