

TODAY'S MEDIA TRENDS

PRESSTV

JUNE 28, 2026

THE GDELT PROJECT

IRAN LEVERAGES MARITIME DOMINANCE: THE 'RAMADAN WAR' & THE ISLAMABAD MEMORANDUM (JUNE 2026)

A Strategic Reset: US Sanctions Relief & the End of Unipolarity in West Asia



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IRAN LEVERAGES MARITIME DOMINANCE TO FORCE A STRATEGIC RESET AND US SANCTIONS RELIEF

DAY-AT-A-GLANCE

On June 28, 2026, the geopolitical landscape is dominated by the fallout of the "Ramadan War" and the subsequent [Islamabad Memorandum](#), which Iranian state media characterizes as a total strategic victory for Tehran. The narrative posits that Iran successfully utilized its "asymmetric prowess"—specifically its ability to shutter the Strait of Hormuz and deploy low-cost FPV drones—to compel the United States, under President Donald Trump, to accept an agreement that concedes to all of Iran's primary "red lines." This includes the permanent cessation of military operations, the total withdrawal of Israeli forces from Lebanon, and the lifting of all primary and secondary sanctions.

The day's reporting highlights a significant fracturing of the US-Israel alliance. While Washington appears driven by a need to prevent a global economic collapse triggered by record-high oil prices and the depletion of

[strategic petroleum reserves](#), the Netanyahu government is portrayed as increasingly isolated and "fuming" over the deal. Concurrently, regional actors within the "Axis of Resistance," notably Yemen's Ansarullah movement and Lebanese resistance groups, are expanding their operational scope, with Yemen issuing direct threats against Israeli military deployments in [Somaliland](#). This convergence suggests a shift where Iranian-aligned forces are now setting the rules of engagement across the Middle East and the Horn of Africa.

MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS

The Islamabad Memorandum and US Capitulation

- The IRGC claims that US forces were forced to the negotiating table due to their "failure on the battlefield" and the threat of [global economic catastrophe](#).
- The MOU reportedly guarantees Lebanon's territorial integrity and mandates a [complete withdrawal](#) of Israeli forces from occupied territories.
- Economic provisions include the release of billions in [blocked assets](#) and the lifting of oil, banking, and shipping sanctions.

Escalation of Asymmetric Maritime Warfare

- Iran asserts "smart control" over the Strait of Hormuz, claiming its naval forces recently [hit two US destroyers](#) attempting to escort vessels through the waterway.
- The IRGC reports destroying eight military structures at US bases in [Kuwait and Bahrain](#) using ballistic missiles and drones in response to US strikes on coastal posts.

- FPV drones are highlighted as a "game changer" that has [shattered the image](#) of Israeli military invincibility, particularly against armored units and Iron Dome batteries.

Regional Expansion of the Conflict Axis

- Yemen has warned that any Israeli presence in the Horn of Africa, specifically [Somaliland](#), will be treated as a legitimate target.
- Lebanon's Amal movement and Hezbollah have [rejected separate agreements](#) with Israel, viewing them as attempts to sow internal division and bypass the broader US-Iran MOU.
- Bolivia is facing domestic uprisings that could lead to the [reversal of its support](#) for Israel and the US.

KEY GOVERNANCE TOPICS

Armed Conflict & Militarization

- The "Ramadan War" (June 2025-2026) is framed as a 100-day conflict that tested new Iranian [drones and missiles](#), proving their efficacy against Western naval supremacy.
- IRGC Brigadier General Hussein Muhebi states Iranian forces are [highly prepared](#) for decisive responses to any violation of the ceasefire.

Diplomacy & Statecraft

- The Islamabad Memorandum is portrayed as a [surrender document](#) for the US, marking the collapse of the "maximalist pressure" policy.
- Iran and Iraq are coordinating [funeral ceremonies](#) for a "martyred leader," using the event to solidify bilateral strategic ties.

Energy & Critical Minerals

- The closure of the Strait of Hormuz and Bab el-Mandeb is cited as the primary driver for US concessions, as [25% of global oil and gas](#) supply was disrupted.
- Iran and Pakistan have reaffirmed their commitment to the [gas pipeline](#) project, targeting \$10 billion in bilateral trade.

Critical Infrastructure Security

- Palestinian rights groups warn of a [total collapse](#) of Gaza's water system, with 80% of networks destroyed by Israeli attacks.
- Iran targeted US "telecommunication sites" and "coastline surveillance facilities" in its [retaliatory strikes](#).

DEEP DIVE: TRENDS AND THEMES

The End of Unipolarity in West Asia

A central theme is the "narrative collapse" of Western dominance. State media emphasizes that the US can no longer protect its regional allies or maintain naval supremacy in the face of Iranian [asymmetric tactics](#). The framing suggests a transition to a multipolar reality where Iran dictates terms for maritime transit and regional security, effectively ending the era of US-led "Zionist logic" in the Middle East.

Maritime Choke Points as Strategic Weapons

The conflict has elevated the Strait of Hormuz and the Bab el-Mandeb from mere transit routes to [strategic pressure points](#). By demonstrating the ability to disrupt 12% of global trade and 5% of global oil flow, Iran has created a scenario where the "collective West" must choose between perpetual war and

economic survival. This lever is presented as more powerful than conventional military force.

Information Warfare and the "Digital Resistance"

There is a heavy focus on the propaganda value of battlefield footage, particularly [FPV drone strikes](#). The broadcast argues that these videos expose "Zionist lies" regarding casualty counts and military efficacy, breeding hope in the "hearts of those who support the resistance" while striking fear into "settler" communities.

INTERNAL DYNAMICS & DOMESTIC INSTABILITY

United States: Fragmentation and Political Peril

- President Trump's presidency is described as being "in peril" due to economic collapse and potential [catastrophic mid-term losses](#).
- Internal rifts are emerging between Trump and GOP hawks like Marco Rubio and J.D. Vance, with the latter exposing the "absurdity" of the [US-Israel relationship](#).
- Netanyahu-aligned media in the US are reportedly attacking Trump and Vice President Vance, calling the latter a "[scumbag](#)" for "selling out Israel."

Iraq: Corruption Raids and Sovereignty Battles

- Iraqi security forces have [raided the Green Zone](#), arresting high-ranking officials for financial corruption.

- There is significant tension regarding the use of Iraqi territory for [aggression against Iran](#), with the Iraqi government under pressure to ensure it does not become a launchpad for Israeli strikes.

Bolivia: Indigenous Uprising

- A "general strike" and popular uprising by indigenous and workers' movements threaten the current [right-wing government](#) due to its pro-Israel stance and austerity measures.

EXTERNAL DYNAMICS & GLOBAL POSTURE

Iran: Projecting Power and Forging Alliances

Iran is portrayed as a rising leader of the "Global South," standing up to "American unilateralism." Its strategic maneuverability has increased, as seen in its [diplomatic engagement with Iraq](#) and its burgeoning trade ties with Pakistan. The network frames the "Axis of Resistance" not just as a military bloc, but as a political force winning the "soft power" battle internationally.

Israel: Isolation and Internal Strife

Israel is framed as an "anachronism" and a "terror state" that is losing its grip on both regional security and its primary benefactor, the US. The broadcasts highlight [internal fragmentation](#) within traditional alliances, with Israeli officials "fuming" as European leaders express relief at the potential reopening of trade routes.

Germany: Loss of Credibility

Germany's failed bid for a [UN Security Council seat](#) is presented as a direct consequence of its "outspoken pro-Israel"

position and suppression of domestic pro-Palestine protests.

THE ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

The economic environment is characterized by extreme volatility and the looming threat of collapse, mitigated only by the tentative Islamabad Memorandum.

- **Oil Markets:** Disruptions in the Strait of Hormuz led to forecasts of a [historic surge](#) in oil prices, with potential spikes of 200% to 600% in crisis scenarios.
- **Iranian Economic Relief:** Estimates suggest Iran could receive up to [\\$1 trillion](#) in total economic benefits under the new framework, including the release of all restricted assets.
- **Shipping Costs:** Re-routing around Africa has added an estimated [\\$7 to \\$9 billion](#) in annual costs for major shipping lines like Maersk and MSC.
- **National Indicators:** The UN reports that twin earthquakes in Venezuela caused [\\$6.7 billion](#) in damage, equivalent to 6% of its GDP.

LEADERSHIP CHANGES

Strategic personnel shifts and public health/security developments regarding key figures are central to the day's narratives.

- **Donald Trump:** Portrayed as shifting from "maximum pressure" to ["common sense,"](#) signaling a desperate bid for political survival by abandoning hawkish Zionist logic.
- **Charlie Kirk:** Reported to have been ["killed,"](#) with his organization, TPUSA, allegedly falling back into line with the Israeli agenda after his death.

- **Ali Shamkhani:** Credited with developing the ["fast boat strategy"](#) that successfully challenged the US Navy in the Persian Gulf.
- **Hasim Salmani:** Iranian media recalls his assassination as a ["major escalation"](#) that continues to drive the demand for revenge against the US.

EDITORIAL POSTURE & STORY HIERARCHY

The editorial posture is overtly nationalistic and triumphalist, centering on Iran's military and diplomatic "victories." The hierarchy of stories prioritizes the Islamabad Memorandum and the failure of US/Israeli aggression. Buried or minimized stories include the specific human toll of the "Ramadan War" on Iranian civilians, which is instead channeled into a narrative of "martyrdom" and "resilience." A conspicuous omission is any detailed Western or Israeli perspective on the deal that isn't framed through the lens of their supposed "failure" or "internal chaos." The tone is consistently reassuring to the domestic audience while being aggressive toward "Zionist" and "imperialist" entities.

GEOPOLITICAL FRAMING

The subtext of the day's reporting revolves around the transition from a US-led regional order to one where Iran and its allies hold the strategic initiative. The primary spectrum is one of "principled resistance" versus "deceptive imperialism."

COUNTRIES and LEADERS

- **Iran** is framed as a **strong, stable, and principled** actor. It is the "victor" that "manufactured more advanced military equipment" during the conflict and refused to "submit to American pressure" [blackmail](#).
- **Zionist Israel** is framed as **weak, isolated, and chaotic**. It is described as a "terror state" that has failed to achieve a "single strategic objective" and is now "fuming" as its allies [abandon it](#).
- **Donald Trump** is framed as **competent but desperate**. He is portrayed as a leader forced by "reality" to signed a deal to "save the world from economic [catastrophe](#)."
- **J.D. Vance** is framed as **principled and realistic** for exposing the "absurdity" of the [US-Israel relationship](#).

NON-STATE & CORPORATE ACTORS

- **IRGC** is framed as the **principled protector** of Iranian sovereignty, capable of delivering a "crushing response" even to [low-value targets](#).
- **Hezbollah** is framed as a **competent resistance force** that has mastered [FPV drone technology](#) to bypass Western jamming and destroy advanced armor.
- **Exxon and Chevron** are framed as **vulnerable corporate entities** that were instrumental in pressuring the US government to end the conflict due to [depleted reserves](#).

INFORMATION WARFARE ENVIRONMENT

State media is actively engaged in "narrative seeding," presenting the Islamabad Memorandum as a settled fact and a total

Iranian victory. There is a clear delta between the network's spin—that the US has fully surrendered—and the likely ground truth of a fragile, potentially temporary MOU driven by economic necessity. The broadcast weaponizes battlefield FPV footage as a psychological operation to demoralize Israeli settlers and Western military planners, characterizing Western military hardware as ["vaporized"](#) in real-time. The network also utilizes "atrocities propaganda" by focusing heavily on the destruction of [Gaza's water infrastructure](#) to justify Iranian military actions as a moral imperative.

HYPOTHESES AND FUTURE OUTLOOK

- If the Islamabad Memorandum is fully implemented, Iran will likely transition its wartime posture into a period of rapid economic growth and regional diplomatic consolidation, potentially achieving its [\\$1 trillion](#) benefit goal.
- The US-Israel alliance may face a permanent rift, with Israeli leaders potentially taking unilateral military action to [sabotage the negotiations](#) and pull the US back into a direct conflict.
- The expansion of Ansarullah's operational scope into the Horn of Africa suggests the next phase of conflict will move away from the Persian Gulf and toward the [African coast](#), targeting Israeli and Western logistics hubs.

STRATEGIC FORESIGHT

Short Term (1-4 Weeks): Expect a 60-day "truth" period where both sides test the ceasefire limits. High risk of "tit-for-tat" strikes if [violations occur](#). Immediate release

of frozen Iranian assets in exchange for the continued reopening of maritime transit.

Medium Term (1-6 Months): The focus will shift to "practical implementation" of sanctions relief. Potential for a major diplomatic reset between Iran and Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states as the [incentive for cooperation](#) grows. Internal US mid-term elections will likely be fought over the "surrender" in Islamabad.

Long Term (1-5 Years): A permanent shift in the regional balance of power, with the "Axis of Resistance" formalizing its role as a security provider. Long-term energy infrastructure, including the [Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline](#), will become the new backbone of regional trade, further isolating Western-backed corridors.

RISK ASSESSMENT

The current environment is fraught with flashpoints that could rapidly dissolve the tentative peace.

- **Regional Front Expansion:** The risk of Yemeni strikes on Israeli assets in Somaliland. Triggers: Reported Israeli troop movements in the Horn of Africa. Likelihood: High. Impact: Disrupts Red Sea trade and expands the "Ramadan War" to Africa. Mitigations: Diplomatic pressure from Arab states on Somaliland to refuse Israeli basing.
- **Oil Price Collapse/Surge:** The risk of extreme market volatility. Triggers: A breakdown of the Islamabad MOU or renewed closing of the Strait. Likelihood: Moderate. Impact: Global [economic catastrophe](#) and collapse in demand. Mitigations: Immediate release of Iranian oil exports to stabilize supply.

- **Lebanese Civil Strife:** The risk of internal conflict between pro-West factions and Hezbollah. Triggers: Israel refusing to withdraw from southern Lebanon as per the MOU. Likelihood: High. Impact: Torpedoes the broader US-Iran deal and restarts [Beirut bombings](#). Mitigations: UN-backed binding timetable for withdrawal.
- **US Domestic Sabotage:** The risk of Congress voting against the lifting of sanctions in Phase Two. Triggers: Pressure from the [Israel lobby](#) or Netanyahu. Likelihood: High. Impact: Iran returns to "maximalist" military response. Mitigations: Trump leveraging executive orders to bypass legislative hurdles.
- **Asymmetric Technology Proliferation:** The risk of FPV drone tech spreading to West Bank resistance factions. Triggers: Success of the technology in Lebanon. Likelihood: High. Impact: Renders Israeli [settler class](#) defense untenable. Mitigations: Increased electronic warfare capabilities (though current jamming axis is failing).

GAPS & BLIND SPOTS

- The specific military and civilian casualty counts for Iran during the "Ramadan War" remain unverified and largely suppressed by nationalistic framing.
- The broadcasts fail to provide context on the "Islamabad Memorandum's" actual 14 points, relying on vague claims of [total victory](#).
- The role of China and Russia in mediating or backing the Islamabad deal is conspicuously absent from the narrative.

- The reporting on the death of US political figures (like [Charlie Kirk](#)) lacks verifiable evidence and appears to be a narrative tool to explain shifts in US policy.

CONTRARIAN NARRATIVE SCENARIOS

- **The "Stalling Tactic" Scenario:** The apparent US surrender is actually a strategic pause designed to allow the US and Israel to rebuild munitions stores and develop counter-drone technology before launching a renewed, more decisive offensive. The Islamabad MOU is a [rupture-in-waiting](#).
- **The "Regime Stability" Black Swan:** The public celebration in Iran masks deep internal divisions and "cautiousness" about the deal. If sanctions relief does not translate into immediate improvements for the [Iranian people](#), the government could face renewed internal protests that are even more dangerous than the external war.

RECOMMENDATIONS & IMPLICATIONS

For Statecraft/Public Sector:

- Security: Urgent need to prioritize counter-FPV drone technology as conventional defenses (Iron Dome, naval destroyers) are currently overmatched by [low-cost asymmetric systems](#).
- Economic: Diversify oil transit routes away from the Strait of Hormuz, as Iran's [maritime dominance](#) is now a permanent strategic reality.

- Diplomatic: Formalize regional security frameworks that include Iran and Iraq to prevent the "Axis of Resistance" from acting unilaterally.

For Private Sector/Investors:

- Supply Chain: Factor in permanent increases to shipping costs and transit times, as the re-routing around the [Cape of Good Hope](#) becomes standard during geopolitical flares.
- Capital Allocation: Opportunities exist in Iranian infrastructure and energy if the [\\$1 trillion](#) reset is realized, though political risk remains extremely high.
- Regulatory Compliance: Closely monitor the 60-day MOU implementation for shifts in US primary and secondary [sanctions](#).

LEGISLATIVE ROUNDUP

The day was marked by the announcement of the Islamabad Memorandum, a framework agreement that serves as the foundation for a permanent peace treaty between the US and Iran. This was accompanied by diplomatic summits in Baghdad and statements from regional parliaments.

• BILLS DISCUSSED/DEBATED:

- The **Islamabad Memorandum (MOU)**: A 14-point framework to end the US-Iran war, lift sanctions, and secure maritime transit.
- **June 17th Memorandum of Understanding**: A prior agreement between Iran and the US used as a **binding condition** for the current ceasefire.

- **HEARINGS & PRESS EVENTS:**

- **Bernstein Conference (New York):** Where global oil representatives (Exxon, Chevron) spoke on the **depletion of strategic reserves**.
- **Joint Press Conference (Baghdad):** Between Iranian and Iraqi foreign ministers to discuss the **MOU's implementation** and regional security.
- **White House Press Briefing:** Vice President Vance held a conference regarding the **Netanyahu cabinet's attacks** on the deal.

KEY STORIES

- **Islamabad Memorandum Signed:** A 14-point agreement between Iran and the US to end the "Ramadan War," lift all sanctions, and reopen the [Strait of Hormuz](#).
- **IRGC Missile Strikes on US Bases:** Retaliatory strikes against eight structures at bases in [Bahrain and Kuwait](#) following US attacks on Iranian coastal posts.
- **Yemen Threatens Somaliland Presence:** Ansarullah movement declares any Israeli military establishment on the [African coast](#) a legitimate target.
- **FPV Drones Shatter "Zionist Invincibility":** Discussion on how \$500 drones are destroying \$6 million [Merkava tanks](#) and bypassing Iron Dome batteries.
- **Germany Loses UN Security Council Seat:** Berlin loses credibility in diplomatic circles due to its [pro-Israel posture](#) during the Gaza genocide.
- **Trump vs Netanyahu Rift:** President Trump and Vice President Vance reportedly at odds with the Israeli government over the [terms of the MOU](#).

- **Charlie Kirk Reported Dead:** Narrative that the TPUSA leader was [killed](#), leading to a shift in US right-wing foreign policy toward the Israeli agenda.
- **Bolivian Protests and Austerity:** Popular uprising against President Rodrigo Pas due to austerity measures and the government's [pro-Israel alignment](#).
- **Gaza Water Infrastructure Collapse:** Reports that [80% of Gaza's water networks](#) have been destroyed, leaving 2 million people in catastrophic conditions.
- **Iraqi Green Zone Raids:** Security forces arrest high-ranking officials for [financial corruption](#) amid shifting regional dynamics.
- **Strait of Hormuz Naval Clash:** Iran claims to have repelled [three US destroyers](#) using a combination of small boats, missiles, and drones.
- **Ashura Commemorations:** Millions gather in [Karbala](#) and across the Muslim world, with the event used to galvanize support for the "Axis of Resistance."

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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