

T H E G D E L T P R O J E C T

IRANIAN NATIONAL MOBILIZATION AND REGIONAL MILITARY ESCALATION FOLLOWING THE TRANSITION TO NEW LEADERSHIP

DAY-AT-A-GLANCE

JULY 9, 2026:

Unprecedented national mourning & political consolidation.
Massive state legitimacy display.
Transition to new leader, Seyed Murtaba Khamenei, framed as seamless continuity.

SIMULTANEOUSLY:

Regional kinetic warfare.
US strikes on Iranian infrastructure.
IRGC retaliatory strikes on 85+ US positions in Bahrain, Kuwait, Jordan, Gulf.
Strait of Hormuz closed under "Iranian arrangements."
Global energy prices spike.

STRATEGIC PIVOT: LONG GAME OF ATTRITION

MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS

FINAL BURIAL IN MASHAD

Millions gather, pledge allegiance to Seyed Murtaba.

US-ISRAELI KINETIC STRIKES

Targeting Iranian civilian & military infrastructure.

IRGC REGIONAL RETALIATION

Strikes on US bases, 5th Fleet, downing of MQ-9.

KEY GOVERNANCE TOPICS & DEEP DIVE TRENDS

GOVERNANCE

ARMED CONFLICT
Extra-regional war.
IRGC "updated approach".

ENERGY SECURITY
Hormuz closure disrupts 22% global energy. Oil prices spike.

LEADERSHIP DYNAMICS
Systemic institution intact.
"Knowledge-driven economy".

DIPLOMACY
Boost ties with China/Russia (BRICS).
Islamabad MoU "violated".

TRENDS & THEMES

"REFERENDUM" OF THE STREETS

Funeral turnouts as political legitimacy. Dismantling "anti-hijab" narratives.

"EXPANSION TO 'CLIENT STATES'"

No distinction between US & host countries. Fragmenting US security architecture.

INFORMATIONAL ASYMMETRY & THE "UGLY AMERICAN"

Spirituality/Integrity vs. Vulgarity/Decay
Contrast to damage US moral authority.
Iran as moral leader.

INTERNAL & EXTERNAL DYNAMICS

INTERNAL STABILITY (IRAN)

Rally-around-the-flag effect.
State managing massive logistics.
"Proof of superior governance".

ENERGY WEAPONIZATION & AUTARKY
Hormuz closure triggers inflation.
Claims of 97% medicine self-sufficiency.

EXTERNAL POSTURE (GLOBAL SOUTH/BRICS)

LEADERSHIP, GEOPOLITICS & FUTURE

LEADERSHIP CHANGES & GEOPOLITICAL FRAMING

SEYED MURTABA KHAMENEI
New Supreme Leader, "most Iranian", anti-imperialist.

IRGC HIGH COMMAND
"Revenge", US power as "illusion".

SHEIKH NAJIM QASIM
"Martyrdom augments resistance".

"AXIS OF RESISTANCE" VS "AXIS OF EVIL"

IRAN/ALLIES
Stable/principled

US/ALLIES
Chaotic/failing

INFORMATION WARFARE & FUTURE OUTLOOK

INFO WARFARE
"Software of resistance" vs. Western "fake AI propaganda".
"Kill Trump" bounty psyop.

HYPOTHESES & STRATEGIC FORESIGHT

SHORT TERM
(1-4 WEEKS):

Continued blockade, more base attacks, oil volatility.

MEDIUM TERM
(1-6 MONTHS):

Escalation to "global war", "New Islamic civilization" as deeper BRICS pacts.

TODAY'S MEDIA TRENDS

PRESSTV

JULY 9, 2026

IRANIAN NATIONAL MOBILIZATION AND REGIONAL MILITARY ESCALATION FOLLOWING THE TRANSITION TO NEW LEADERSHIP

DAY-AT-A-GLANCE

On July 9, 2026, Iran concluded a week of unprecedented national mourning and political consolidation following the assassination of its long-time leader. The final burial ceremonies in Mashad served as a massive display of state legitimacy and "soft power," with official estimates claiming up to [30 million participants](#) across Iran and Iraq. This mass mobilization has been framed by the state media as a "referendum" on the Islamic Republic's survival and its defiance against the "Global Arrogance," specifically the United States and Israel. The transition of power to the new leader, [Seyed Mujtaba Khamenei](#), has been presented as seamless, aimed at signaling institutional continuity to both domestic and foreign observers.

Simultaneously, the region has devolved into active kinetic warfare. Following two consecutive nights of US air strikes on Iranian infrastructure—including [railway bridges and power grids](#)—the Islamic Revolutionary Guard

Corps (IRGC) launched extensive retaliatory strikes. These operations targeted at least [85 US military positions](#) across Bahrain, Kuwait, Jordan, and the Persian Gulf. The situation is exacerbated by Iran's declared closure of the [Strait of Hormuz](#), asserting that the waterway will now only operate under "Iranian arrangements." This move has already triggered a spike in global energy prices and disrupted nearly half of the usual maritime traffic in the region.

The convergence of these events suggests a strategic pivot by Tehran toward a "long game" of attrition. By leveraging mass domestic support and its regional "Axis of Resistance," Iran is attempting to raise the economic and political costs of US presence in the Middle East. The administration of President Donald Trump is portrayed as being in a state of "panic," reacting with "hasty" and "pathetic" strikes intended to [disrupt the funeral processions](#) rather than achieve clear military objectives. The overarching narrative of the day is one of a "new era" of resistance, where the psychological bond between the Iranian people and their leadership is touted as a "software of strength" that exceeds the technological capabilities of Western militaries.

MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS

- **Final Burial of the Late Leader in Mashad:** The seventh and final day of mourning culminated in the holy city of Mashad. Massive crowds, estimated at [4 million in Mashad alone](#), gathered despite extreme heat (reaching 100 degrees) and US strikes on transport infrastructure. The event was used to pledge [allegiance to the new leader](#), Seyed Mujtaba Khamenei.

- **US-Israeli Kinetic Strikes on Iranian Soil:** For two consecutive nights, US forces targeted [civilian and military infrastructure](#) along Iran's southern coastline, including hospitals, fishing ports, and an air defense site near the [Bushehr nuclear power plant](#). Strikes also hit the [Tehran-Mashad railway](#) to disrupt mourner movement.
- **IRGC Regional Retaliation:** The IRGC reported striking over [90 military targets](#) along its coastline and at US bases in neighboring countries. Retaliatory measures included the downing of a [US MQ-9 drone](#) and ballistic missile attacks on the [US Fifth Fleet](#) in Bahrain and the Ali al-Salem Air Base in Kuwait.
- **Closure of the Strait of Hormuz:** Iran has asserted total control over the Strait, stating it will [not distinguish between the US and its regional partners](#) if they facilitate aggression. Reopening the waterway is now contingent upon [Tehran's specific arrangements](#) and compliance with the Islamabad Memorandum.
- **Solidification of the New Leadership:** State media has aggressively promoted [Seyed Mujtaba Khamenei](#) as the legitimate and chosen successor, vowing he will "walk in the same path" as his predecessor. The transition is framed as a "triumph" over Western hopes for a regime collapse.

KEY GOVERNANCE TOPICS

Armed Conflict & Militarization

- The conflict has transitioned from a "40-day war" to an [extra-regional war](#) involving US bases in Bahrain, Kuwait, and Jordan.

- The IRGC is implementing its "updated approach," where any attack leads to [immediate closure](#) of the Strait of Hormuz and strikes on enemy assets at "twice the scale" of the initial attack.

Energy & Critical Infrastructure Security

- Attacks on [radars and telecommunications](#) in southern Iran were reported, alongside strikes on [power grids](#) leaving major coastal cities without electricity.
- Closure of the Strait of Hormuz has disrupted [22% of the world's energy needs](#), causing oil prices to spike.

Leadership Dynamics & Governance

- Tehran is emphasizing the "systemic institution" of the Islamic Republic, arguing that the [political system is intact](#) despite the loss of its top figure.
- The state is promoting a ["knowledge-driven economy"](#) and "economy of resistance" to mitigate the impact of renewed sanctions and war.

Diplomacy & Statecraft

- The [Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding](#) (MoU) is cited repeatedly as a defunct or violated treaty, with Iran accusing the US of bad faith.
- Tehran continues to boost ties with [China and Russia](#) (BRICS/Shanghai Cooperation) to bypass Western economic hegemony.

DEEP DIVE: TRENDS AND THEMES

The "Referendum" of the Streets Tehran is using the massive funeral turnouts as a primary metric of political legitimacy. By framing the millions on the streets as a "silent

referendum," the state aims to delegitimize Western narratives of popular discontent. This trend suggests the regime has successfully [dismantled the "anti-hijab" narratives](#) of previous years through a nationalist rallying effect during a state of war.

Expansion of the Conflict to "Client States" A critical shift in the IRGC's military doctrine is the refusal to distinguish between the primary aggressor (the US) and the "host countries" of US bases. Warning neighboring Gulf states that their [bases will be hit](#) if used for US strikes is a clear attempt to fragment the regional US security architecture and force neutral or compliant stances from GCC members.

Informational Asymmetry and the "Ugly American" State media is leveraging the contrast between Iranian "spirituality/integrity" and the perceived "vulgarity" of US leadership. The portrayal of [President Trump as a "liar"](#) and "disgrace" who is "sliding into dementia" is intended to damage US moral authority globally, particularly in the "Global South." This informational war aims to paint Iran as the only [moral authority](#) capable of resisting Western "mental colonization."

INTERNAL DYNAMICS & DOMESTIC INSTABILITY

Iran: Despite the ongoing war, the nation appears internally stable under a "rally-around-the-flag" effect. State media highlights that [former critics of the establishment](#) are now "crying and begging for forgiveness" from the martyred leader. The state is managing massive logistics—feeding and watering millions—without major incidents, using this as proof of [superior governance capacity](#) over Western nations.

United States: Iranian analysis focuses heavily on perceived US domestic decay. Reports emphasize [historically low popularity ratings](#) for the Trump administration and a "splintering" Republican party. The broadcasts suggest that the US is [heading toward being "ripped apart"](#) similar to the countries it has invaded, driven by the greed of the "absentee class" and the military-industrial complex.

EXTERNAL DYNAMICS & GLOBAL POSTURE

The "Global South" is framed as being on the threshold of a ["new civilization"](#) led by the Islamic Republic. This civilization defines success by "dignity" and "resistance" rather than materialistic or monetary gains. Iran is positioning itself as the ["natural hegemon"](#) of the region, asserting that if the US withdraws, there would be "no countervailing force" to Tehran. The alliance with [China and Russia](#) is characterized as a "strategic alliance" to counter NATO, with Iran claiming it is now the "fourth superpower" in the world, capable of defeating "two most powerful countries" (US and Israel).

THE ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

The economic landscape is defined by the weaponization of the energy market and a push for autarky. The closure of the Strait of Hormuz is the primary economic weapon, intended to trigger global inflation and punish Western economies through high shipping costs.

- **Oil Prices:** Brent crude jumped over [7% to \\$80 per barrel](#) following US strikes and Hormuz closure threats.

- **Strategic Reserves:** Iran analysts predict Trump will be forced to [deplete US strategic reserves](#) to keep gas prices stable before the November midterms.
- **Self-Sufficiency:** Iran claims to have achieved [97% self-sufficiency in medicine](#) and 14 million tons in wheat production to withstand the "maximum pressure" campaign.
- **Market Volatility:** US attacks on Iranian infrastructure are framed as a "pathetic" attempt by Trump to [manipulate oil markets](#) for personal profit.

LEADERSHIP CHANGES

The leadership environment is dominated by the official debut and consolidation of the new Supreme Leader, signaling a harder-line stance toward regional security.

- **Seyed Mujtaba Khamenei:** Solidified as the [new leader](#) following the assassination of his father. He is portrayed as the "most Iranian leader" who will maintain the "Axis of Resistance."
- **IRGC High Command:** Senior military figures like [Major General Abdullahi](#) have taken a front-and-center role, promising "revenge" and asserting that US military power is "an illusion."
- **Sheikh Naim Qasim (Hezbollah):** Reinforced as a key [regional ally](#), stating that the "martyrdom of leaders" only augments the strength of the resistance.

EDITORIAL POSTURE & STORY HIERARCHY

PressTV's editorial stance is one of **revolutionary nationalism** and **kinetic defiance**. The lead stories were consistently

the funeral processions in Mashad and the IRGC's retaliatory strikes, framed as heroic defensive actions. The tone is emotional yet assertive, focusing on "grief turned into thunder." Stories about humanitarian crises in Gaza and Lebanon are frequently linked to the Iranian leader's legacy, maintaining a hierarchy where [Palestine](#) is the "central pillar" of the state's narrative. Conspicuous omissions include any mention of Iranian military casualties (beyond broad acknowledgments of "martyrs"), details of internal dissent within the Iranian military, or the specific status of the Iranian economy's non-energy sectors under total blockade.

GEOPOLITICAL FRAMING

The day's framing is binary: the "Axis of Resistance" versus the "Axis of Evil" (US, Israel, UK, France). The US is portrayed as a **chaotic, failing hegemon** led by an **unstable president**, while Iran is a **principled, stable superpower** on the right side of history.

- **United States:** Inept and corrupt. Characterized as ["criminal"](#) in its methods and ["laughing stock"](#) in its leadership. "If Trump was to die, how many people would actually show up for a tyrant?"
- **Israel:** A ["cancerous tumor"](#) that must be "inilated" (annihilated). Framed as a "puppet" state that has "mortgaged its fate" to US power.
- **China & Russia:** Friendly "strategic allies" who provide [military and economic weight](#) to the BRICS/Shanghai coalition against NATO.
- **Gulf States (Bahrain/Kuwait/Jordan):** "Puppets" who are being warned to [stop making futile efforts](#) to host US forces or face destruction.

INFORMATION WARFARE ENVIRONMENT

Tehran is aggressively seeding the narrative that its "software of resistance"—the ideological commitment of its people—is [invincible to bombs](#). State media frames Western reporting as **fake and AI-generated propaganda** intended to minimize the scale of Iranian solidarity. The broadcast uses the term ["age of technological reproduction"](#) to argue that every Iranian citizen with a cell phone is a soldier in the truth-war against Western mass media (BBC, CNN). The "Kill Trump" bounty of [\\$100 million](#) is aired repeatedly, likely as a psychological operation to induce caution in US decision-making and embolden non-state actors globally.

HYPOTHESES AND FUTURE OUTLOOK

The "long game" strategy is likely to intensify. Tehran appears to believe that by [shutting down the Strait of Hormuz](#) for a period of months, it can force a US economic crisis that will lead to Trump's electoral defeat in November. The "new leader," Mujtaba Khamenei, will likely oversee a more [militant regional policy](#) to prove his capability and maintain the momentum of the "Axis of Resistance." Conflict with US regional bases is set to become the "new normal," as Iran tests the willingness of Arab nations to continue hosting US forces under fire.

STRATEGIC FORESIGHT

- **Short Term (1-4 Weeks):** Continued blockade of the Strait. Possible IRGC [destruction of more US regional bases](#). Extreme global oil price volatility. Reactionary US strikes on IRGC leadership centers in Tehran.
- **Medium Term (1-6 Months):** Escalation toward a "global war" scenario if NATO enters the fray. Formalization of deeper [military pacts with Russia and China](#) to secure the "fourth superpower" status.
- **Long Term (1-5 Years):** Emergence of a ["new Islamic civilization"](#) that acts as the dominant regional hegemon, effectively ending the unipolar "US century" in the Middle East.

RISK ASSESSMENT

The current geopolitical flashpoint is the southern Iranian coast and the naval bases of the Persian Gulf, where direct US-Iran kinetic engagement has bypassed traditional deterrent thresholds.

- **Total Energy Blockade:** Risk of global economic depression. Triggers: Full IRGC closure of the Strait and Bab-el-Mandeb. Likelihood: High. Impact: Catastrophic. Mitigations: Immediate US withdrawal or successful naval escort of all tankers (unlikely without massive casualties).
- **Nuclear Escalation:** Strikes near [Bushehr nuclear power plant](#) risk environmental catastrophe or an Iranian decision to "unveil" a nuclear deterrent. Likelihood: Moderate. Impact: Existential. Mitigations: De-escalation of air strikes in civilian/nuclear zones.

- **Regional Civil Unrest:** Conflict spreading to [Lebanon and Syria](#), leading to state collapses. Likelihood: High. Impact: Massive. Mitigations: Implementation of the Islamabad Memorandum (currently unlikely).
- **US Presidential Assassination Attempt:** The public [\\$100 million bounty](#) increases the risk of lone-wolf or state-sponsored attempts on Trump. Likelihood: Moderate. Impact: High (total war trigger). Mitigations: Secret Service surge.
- **Fragmentation of GCC Security:** Attacks on US bases in [Bahrain and Kuwait](#) could force these nations to expel US forces to avoid destruction. Likelihood: Moderate. Impact: Strategic US defeat. Mitigations: Enhanced regional missile defense.

GAPS & BLIND SPOTS

- **Iranian Internal Dissent:** The state media presents a [monolithic support narrative](#); however, the lack of coverage on internal security crackdowns or military desertions remains a major blind spot for accurate risk analysis.
- **Casualty Realities:** IRGC reports claim zero or [minimal casualties](#) in the face of 90+ strikes, which is statistically improbable. The true impact on Iran's "Software of Strength" is unknown.
- **Succession Friction:** There is no mention of potential [power struggles](#) within the clerical or military elite regarding Seyed Mujtaba's rise, which historically occurs during such transitions.
- **US Resolve:** PressTV frames Trump as a "lame duck" and "pathetic," potentially [underestimating the US military's capacity](#) to sustain high-intensity operations even under domestic political strain.

CONTRARIAN NARRATIVE SCENARIOS

- **The "Desperate Mobilization" Hypothesis:** The massive funerals are not a show of strength but a **forced state-managed spectacle** to hide a fracturing regime. The disruption of railways is not a "pathetic" US move but a successful degradation of IRGC logistics that the state is attempting to spin as a "civilian grievance."
- **The "Tactical Withdrawal" Scenario:** Trump's "erratic" behavior and the "failure" of the MoU were actually **stalling tactics** to allow the US to reposition heavy assets for a final, decapitating ground invasion of southern Iran, using the current strikes as distraction.
- **Black Swan Event:** An accidental **radiation leak** at Bushehr following a nearby strike causes a massive evacuation of the Persian Gulf, rendering the Strait unusable for all parties and causing a global "Green War" where NATO and BRICS must cooperate on environmental disaster management.

RECOMMENDATIONS & IMPLICATIONS

For Statecraft/Public Sector:

- **Security:** Prepare for "non-distinction" strikes. US and Allied bases in the Gulf must enter **Condition Delta**.
- **Economic:** Strategic reserves should be prioritized for civilian infrastructure to mitigate the [Hormuz price shock](#).

- **Diplomatic:** Re-engage with the **Islamabad Memorandum** or a successor treaty immediately to prevent the conflict from entering a "global war" phase.

For Private Sector/Investors:

- **Supply Chain:** Diversify energy inputs away from Middle Eastern crude. Expect **indefinite shipping delays** in the Arabian Sea.
- **Safety Standards:** Multinational personnel in the Gulf region should be **evacuated** from host nations mentioned as IRGC targets.
- **Regulatory Risk:** Monitor **secondary sanctions** against China and Russia as they deepen ties with the new Iranian leadership.

LEGISLATIVE ROUNDUP

Iranian governance is currently operating under **emergency wartime decrees**. Discussions center on the legality of [maritime closure](#) and the formal transition of religious and political duties under the new leadership structure.

- **BILLS DISCUSSED/DEBATED:**
 - **Hormuz Sovereignty Decree:** Asserts Iran's right to manage the Strait's transit fees and routes as a [sovereign arrangement](#).
 - **Economic Resistance Act:** Mandates [domestic production priorities](#) to reduce imports from "hostile nations."

• HEARINGS & PRESS EVENTS:

- **IRGC Press Briefing:** Confirmed targeting of [85 US positions](#) and warned of "second phase" if US strikes continue.
- **Mashad Funeral Address:** New leadership pledging [allegiance to resistance values](#) and vowing revenge for the martyred leader.

KEY STORIES

- **Final Burial of the Martyr Leader in Mashad:** Millions gathered in the holy city of Mashad for the final internment of the late leader. The city was reported as ["jampacked"](#) with people from over 30 countries, including Pakistan, India, and Brazil. Mourners held **red flags** symbolizing vengeance.
- **US Air Attacks on Southern Iran:** US forces struck cities along the southern coastline for [two nights](#). Targets included **railway bridges, hospitals, and power grids** in Hormozgan and Bushehr provinces. Iran Shah airport was also hit, resulting in the death of a [firefighter](#).
- **IRGC Counter-Strikes on Regional Bases:** The IRGC navy and aerospace forces struck **US Fifth Fleet** in Bahrain and the **Asrak Air Base** in Jordan with [10 ballistic missiles](#). A US **MQ-9 drone** was intercepted and destroyed over Iranian territory.
- **Closure of the Strait of Hormuz:** Iran declared the Strait closed to all vessels not following [Iranian arrangements](#). Oil prices spiked as 22% of global energy transit was halted.

- **Transition to Seyed Mujtaba Khamenei:** Official confirmation that [Seyed Mujtaba](#) has taken leadership. State media emphasized he is the "son of the martyred leader" and will maintain the same **anti-imperialist agenda**.
- **Global Protests for Dr. Hussam Abu Safiya:** Demonstrations occurred outside **Downing Street in London** demanding the release of the Palestinian doctor, who has been in [Israeli custody for 18 months](#).
- **Violation of the Islamabad Memorandum:** Iran's UN ambassador, [Amir Said Iravani](#), formally accused the US of a "material breach" of Paragraph 1 of the MoU following the recent air strikes.
- **Hezbollah Solidarity Rally in Beirut:** [Sheikh Naim Qasim](#) addressed thousands in Beirut, coinciding with the Iranian funerals, pledging that the resistance will "stay on the battlefield" until Israeli withdrawal from south Litani.
- **US Domestic Political Instability:** Reports highlighting the [cynicism of the US public](#) toward Trump and the emptiness of 4th of July celebrations compared to the "soul-stirring" Iranian funerals.
- **Economic Fallout and the \$80 Oil Barrel:** Brent crude oil prices surged [over 7%](#) as analysts warned of \$400-\$500 per barrel if the regional conflict persists.

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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