

TODAY'S MEDIA TRENDS

PRESSTV

JULY 13, 2026

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



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THE COLLAPSE OF REGIONAL DE-
ESCALATION FRAMEWORK AND
THE DEATH OF IRAN'S SUPREME
LEADER TRIGGER MULTI-FRONT
RETALIATORY STRIKES AND A
STRATEGIC BLOCKADE OF THE
STRAIT OF HORMUZ.

DAY-AT-A-GLANCE

July 13, 2026, marks a critical inflection point in West Asian security as the Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has effectively collapsed following 135 days of conflict. The regional landscape is dominated by the aftermath of the assassination of Iran's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, during a coordinated U.S.-Israeli strike on February 28th. This event has catalyzed a state of "modular world war," with Iran's Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC) launching five waves of retaliatory missile and drone strikes against U.S. military installations in Kuwait, Bahrain, and Jordan. Concurrently, Iran has asserted total control over the [Strait of Hormuz](#), demanding transit fees and coordinating management with Oman, while the U.S. administration under Donald Trump has countered by announcing a

20% "protection fee" on all commercial cargo transiting the waterway.

The conflict has expanded into a secondary theater involving Yemen and Saudi Arabia. Ansarullah forces in Yemen have declared an end to their 2022 ceasefire with Riyadh after Saudi air strikes targeted Sanaa International Airport to prevent an Iranian delegation from returning. In response, Yemeni forces have launched strikes against Saudi airports and energy infrastructure, threatening to merge their blockade of the [Bab el-Mandeb](#) with Iran's closure of Hormuz. This synchronized maritime pressure has sent global oil prices above \$79 per barrel, causing significant volatility in Asian markets. Domestically, the death of U.S. Senator Lindsey Graham is being framed by regional media as a symbolic "karma" for his hawkish foreign policy, further deepening the ideological divide between Western leadership and the "Axis of Resistance."

MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS

- **Assassination of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and Leadership Transition:** Iran is in a state of national mourning following the assassination of the Supreme Leader, with funeral processions in Tehran and Mashad drawing between [40 and 45 million people](#). The transition of power to a collective leadership structure appears focused on an "enduring path" of resistance rather than collapse.
- **IRGC Retaliatory Strikes on U.S. Regional Bases:** The IRGC carried out five waves of missile attacks targeting US fuel tanks and Patriot systems at [Al-Ali Salem base](#) in Kuwait, Isa airbase in Bahrain, and Prince Hassan airbase in Jordan.

- **Hormuz and Bab el-Mandeb Blockades:** Iran has enforced a north-channel blockade in the Strait of Hormuz, effectively halting traffic in the Omani-U.S. channel. Yemeni forces have threatened to coordinate a similar closure of the [Bab el-Mandeb](#) to push oil prices to \$200 per barrel.
- **Death of U.S. Senator Lindsey Graham:** The long-serving Republican Senator died at age 71 after a sudden illness. Regional commentary frames him as a ["merchant of death"](#) whose legacy was defined by the advocacy for nuclear strikes on Gaza and regime change in Iran.
- **Bolivian Uprising against Paz Government:** A massive general strike led by the COB trade union has paralyzed Bolivia, protesting the [Rodrigo Paz administration's](#) pivot toward Israel and the reversal of Evo Morales-era pro-Palestine policies.

KEY GOVERNANCE TOPICS

Armed Conflict & Militarization

- The IRGC claims to have destroyed strategic [FPS radar systems](#) and drone command centers in Bahrain and Jordan.
- The U.S. Central Command has launched retaliatory strikes on dozens of targets in southern Iran, primarily focusing on civilian and industrial infrastructure [near Hondob](#).

Energy & Critical Minerals

- The blockade of the Strait of Hormuz affects approximately [20% of the world's oil supply](#).

- Bolivia's strategic lithium reserves are a central point of contention, with the current right-wing government seeking [strategic cooperation with Israel](#) for extraction.

Diplomacy & Statecraft

- The Islamabad MOU, signed just weeks ago, is considered ["in crisis mode"](#) due to continuous U.S. violations regarding funds release and naval blockades.
- Israeli ruling coalition announces general elections for [October 27th](#), serving as a referendum on Netanyahu's wartime policies.

Information Warfare & Disinformation

- Iranian media highlights the ["modular world war"](#) narrative, portraying Western powers as desperate to delay economic depression through regional instability.
- Social media algorithms (Meta) are accused of forcing content creators to share ["trivial content"](#) to suppress political awareness regarding the Palestinian cause.

DEEP DIVE: TRENDS AND THEMES

The End of the Unipolar Era and "Escalation Dominance"

- The broadcasts suggest a shift from U.S. deterrence to [Iranian escalation dominance](#). Analysts argue that by successfully blockading the Strait and striking U.S. bases with impunity, Iran has demonstrated that the U.S. military is no longer "invincible" in the region.

- The U.S. response—imposing cargo tolls and naval blockades—is framed as a type of ["state-sponsored piracy"](#) resulting from an inability to achieve clear military victory.

Ideological Consolidation through Martyrdom

- Rather than fracturing the Iranian state, the assassination of Ali Khamenei has been used to forge a [united front](#) across religious and political lines. This "martyrdom" theme is being exported to Yemen and Iraq to solidify the "Axis of Resistance."

Economic Weaponization of Choke Points

- The synchronization of Ansarullah and IRGC maritime strategies represents a new trend in global risk where non-state and regional actors can [paralyze the global economy](#) by targeting specific bottlenecks (Hormuz and Bab el-Mandeb) simultaneously.

INTERNAL DYNAMICS & DOMESTIC INSTABILITY

Iran: Mourning and Mobilization

- Internal stability in Iran remains high despite the decapitation of its top leadership. The massive public participation in funeral rites is cited as evidence that the ["dictatorship" narrative](#) promoted by Western media is failing to resonate with the domestic population.

Bolivia: Social Collapse and General Strike

- The country is facing 75 active barricades on major highways, completely [shutting down the transport infrastructure](#). The military and police are reportedly leaking information to protestors, indicating a significant erosion of state control under President Rodrigo Paz.

United States: Economic Exhaustion and Political Polarization

- Analysts claim the U.S. is facing a critical [oil reserve shortage](#) (down to 313 million barrels) and that the public is increasingly opposed to "wars of choice" for Israel's benefit. The impending midterm elections are expected to be a referendum on the administration's military expenditures, which have reportedly exceeded \$1 trillion for the Iran war.

EXTERNAL DYNAMICS & GLOBAL POSTURE

The Frame of the "Modular World War"

- The international system is framed as a fracturing arena where the U.S. is attempting to "deindustrialize Europe" by making it dependent on [U.S. hydrocarbons](#) after the sabotage of the Nord Stream pipeline.
- Russia and China are urged to play a more active role in the region to counter U.S. unilateralism. The [Chinese Foreign Ministry](#) has stated its support for "free and safe passage" in Hormuz, setting the stage for a potential head-to-head confrontation with U.S. toll-imposing forces.

Fragmentation of the Arab Bloc

- Saudi Arabia and the UAE are portrayed as being in a ["panicky mood,"](#) flip-flopping between flirting with a "Eurasian axis" and acting as "puppets" for U.S.-Zionist interests. Qatar is noted as showing a "change in response," realizing that the U.S. presence brings more insecurity than benefit.

THE ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

The global economic environment is entering a period of severe stagflation fueled by the energy crisis. Brent crude rose [above \\$79 a barrel](#), while U.S. West Texas Intermediate climbed to \$74. These spikes are a direct result of the naval hostilities and the closure of the Hormuz northern channel.

- **Market Declines:** Japan's Nikkei fell more than 1%, South Korea's KOSPI dropped over 5%, and Shanghai markets also declined as energy supply concerns intensified.
- **U.S. Inflation:** The return of the naval blockade is expected to [skyrocket prices](#) for global energy and food, impacting supply chains that were already strained.
- **Cargo Tolls:** President Trump's [20% cargo charge](#) is being criticized as a "mafia-style" piracy move that will lead to further global economic contraction.
- **European Losses:** Heat-driven losses and energy costs are projected to cost France [\\$240 billion](#) and Italy \$147 billion by 2030, though the current war is accelerating these economic impacts.

LEADERSHIP CHANGES

The day's events have seen significant turnover in both domestic and regional leadership, with a major vacuum in the U.S. legislative branch and a profound transition in Iran.

- **Ayatollah Ali Khamenei:** Assassinated by U.S.-Israeli forces; his death has paradoxically [unified Iranian factions](#) under a collective "enduring path."
- **Senator Lindsey Graham:** Deceased; his death removes a [primary architect](#) of hawkish U.S. policy toward the "Axis of Resistance."
- **Rodrigo Paz (Bolivia):** Current President facing potential [overthrow](#) as general strikes and protests demand a return to socialist/internationalist policies.
- **Gady Eisenkot (Israel):** Emerging as the primary [rival to Netanyahu](#) in the upcoming October elections, leading in recent polls after resigning from the war cabinet.

EDITORIAL POSTURE & STORY HIERARCHY

Lead Stories: The IRGC's five waves of retaliatory strikes on U.S. bases and the "heroic" funeral of the Supreme Leader were the dominant themes. The failed Saudi attempt to block the Iranian airliner in Yemen and the resulting Yemeni retaliation were given secondary priority but framed as part of the same struggle. The death of Lindsey Graham was presented as a significant moral victory for the region.

Buried Stories: Ukraine's military operations (hitting a refinery in Samara) were given minimal airtime, relegated to news tickers or short headlines. The ongoing [famine crisis in](#)

[Gaza](#), while mentioned, was treated as a backdrop to the larger regional war.

Editorial Tone: The broadcast maintained a highly nationalistic, defiant, and morally certain tone. It emphasized the "cowardice" of the U.S. and Israel while praising the "discipline" and "spirituality" of the resistance forces. Conspicuous omissions included any detailed reports on Iranian military casualties or the specifics of the new "collective leadership" structure in Tehran.

GEOPOLITICAL FRAMING

The regional media constructs a narrative of a dying Western empire attempting to loot resources to prevent its own collapse.

COUNTRIES

- **United States:** Portrayed as an ["eccentric and openly looting"](#) entity that has "exhausted its military options."
- **Saudi Arabia:** Framed as a ["milking cow"](#) for the U.S., currently "playing flip-flop" between regional peace and being a "puppet."
- **Israel:** Characterized as a "terror state" and an "expansionist project" whose ["Greater Israel" project](#) is driving U.S. desperation.

LEADERS

- **Donald Trump:** Portrayed as a ["delusional liar"](#) who changes his statements every few hours and has no real control over the region.
- **Benjamin Netanyahu:** Framed as a leader trying to ["evade justice"](#) for corruption by prolonging the war.

NON-STATE & CORPORATE ACTORS

- **Ansarullah (Yemen):** Portrayed as an ["ideologically and spiritually motivated force"](#) that has defeated the Saudi-U.S. coalition.
- **Meta (Facebook/Instagram):** Accused of acting as an ["arm of Western censorship"](#) by suppressing pro-resistance content.

INFORMATION WARFARE ENVIRONMENT

- **Narrative Seeding:** The term "Islamabad Memorandum of Misunderstanding" is being seeded to frame the [U.S. as inherently untrustworthy](#) and the MOU as a mere stalling tactic for Western rearmament.
- **Censorship Allegations:** Content creators like [Braja bin Ayad](#) allege that [Meta's algorithms](#) force the prioritization of "trivial content" over significant human rights reporting, creating a sanitized digital reality.
- **Psychological Operations:** The broadcast uses the death of Lindsey Graham to suggest ["karma" or divine intervention](#), aiming to demoralize Western hawks while energizing regional supporters.

HYPOTHESES AND FUTURE OUTLOOK

- **Kinetic Escalation:** Given that the U.S. and Israel have failed to achieve their stated goals (disarming Hezbollah/Hamas) after nearly three years of war, a ["kinetic" phase](#) of direct U.S.-Iran conflict is highly probable in the coming weeks.

- **Oil as a Strategic Weapon:** The Yemen-Iran alliance will likely formalize the [joint blockade](#) of both Hormuz and Bab el-Mandeb, potentially triggering a global Great Depression.
- **Bolivian Regime Change:** The Paz government is unlikely to survive the current general strike without significant military intervention, which could lead to a ["full transition"](#) back to a pro-Palestine socialist government.

STRATEGIC FORESIGHT

Short Term (1-4 Weeks): Expect intensified drone and missile exchanges between Yemen and Saudi Arabia. The Iranian "2 for 1" retaliation policy [dominance strategy](#) will likely result in strikes on U.S. assets for every U.S. violation of the MOU. Social unrest in Bolivia will reach a peak, potentially resulting in the ousting of President Paz.

Medium Term (1-6 Months): Global markets will price in a long-term energy shortage. The [Israeli elections](#) in October will likely lead to the fall of Netanyahu's coalition. The U.S. midterms in November will be dominated by the failure of the "refill" strategy of the Islamabad MOU.

Long Term (1-5 Years): The formation of a ["Warsaw Pact-style" military alliance](#) in West Asia led by Iran, involving Iraq, Yemen, and potentially a reformed Lebanese and Syrian state, will permanently end U.S. regional hegemony.

RISK ASSESSMENT

- **Global Energy Collapse:** Simultaneous closure of Hormuz and Bab el-Mandeb. Triggers: Further Saudi strikes on Sanaa or U.S. attempts to force Hormuz. Likelihood: High. Impact: Catastrophic (global depression). Mitigations: Return to diplomacy and lifting of Iranian oil sanctions.
- **Direct U.S.-Iran Kinetic War:** Large-scale missile strikes on Iranian mainland. Triggers: Death of U.S. soldiers in regional bases ([currently reported in Kuwait](#)). Likelihood: Moderate. Impact: High (total regional conflagration). Mitigations: Adherence to MOU terms.
- **Bolivian Civil War:** Conflict between the military and indigenous/worker movements. Triggers: Violent repression of general strike. Likelihood: Moderate. Impact: Regional instability in South America. Mitigations: Early elections in Bolivia [requested by COB](#).
- **Israeli Domestic Collapse:** Polarization during the October 27th elections. Triggers: Failure of wartime goals in Gaza/Lebanon. Likelihood: High. Impact: Internal civil strife in Israel. Mitigations: Resignation of Netanyahu [urged by Eisenkot](#).
- **Food and Water Security Crisis:** Destruction of agricultural infrastructure. Triggers: Continued [strikes on Gaza's wells](#) and Iran's water pumping stations. Likelihood: High. Impact: Mass famine and displacement. Mitigations: International humanitarian corridors and reconstruction aid.

GAPS & BLIND SPOTS

- The transcripts do not verify the [death of three American soldiers](#) in Kuwait, which would be a major casus belli for U.S. escalation.
- There is a lack of information regarding the specific [negotiating positions](#) of the Iranian team at the current stage of the MOU crisis.
- The actual readiness of the [U.S. military industrial complex](#) to sustain a direct high-intensity conflict with Iran is questioned by analysts but unconfirmed by Western sources.
- The reports of [tanker attacks near Aden](#) are attributed to "pirates," but the link to Ansarullah remains unconfirmed.

CONTRARIAN NARRATIVE SCENARIOS

- **Strategic Deception:** The apparent failure of the Islamabad MOU may be a [stalling tactic](#) by the U.S. to replenish ammunition stocks rather than a genuine move toward war.
- **Iranian Internal Fracture:** The massive funeral participation may hide deep [internal divisions](#) within the Iranian elite regarding the succession plan, which the broadcast carefully avoids discussing.
- **Black Swan - Israeli Pre-emptive Strike:** A desperate Netanyahu government may launch a [nuclear strike](#) on Iranian nuclear facilities (Esfahan) to prevent electoral defeat, which would lead to an immediate global collapse of the status quo.

RECOMMENDATIONS & IMPLICATIONS

For Statecraft/Public Sector:

- Security: Immediate reinforcement of [regional mechanism consultation](#) among non-aligned states to prevent total maritime closure.
- Economic: Diversification of energy supply routes away from the Persian Gulf in anticipation of a long-term Hormuz blockade.
- Diplomatic: Pressure on the U.S. to release [frozen Iranian funds](#) as a gesture of goodwill to save the Islamabad MOU.

For Private Sector/Investors:

- Supply Chain: Transition to overland routes or alternative maritime channels, as [cargo tolls and blockades](#) make the Persian Gulf commercially non-viable.
- Regulatory: Prepare for 20% protection fees in US-controlled waters and [toll-based maritime commerce](#).
- Allocation: Shift capital toward lithium and critical minerals in politically stable regions, given the [instability in Bolivia](#).

LEGISLATIVE ROUNDUP

Legislative activity in Israel and Iran is focused on consolidation and deterrence, while the U.S. explores new methods of

funding regional security through direct levies.

- **BILLS DISCUSSED/DEBATED:**

- **Israel Judicial Reform & Draft Bill:** Netanyahu seeking to [reform the judiciary](#) and suspend detention for ultra-orthodox draft evaders to maintain his coalition.
- **Iranian Regret-Inducing Legislation:** Proposal for [practical legislation](#) to determine firm responses to any future assassinations of Iranian leaders.
- **US NDAA Merger:** Proposals to [merge the U.S. and Israeli militaries](#) legally for a decisive war.

- **HEARINGS & PRESS EVENTS:**

- **IRGC Press Briefing:** Announcing five waves of strikes and [destroying FPS radar systems](#).
- **Ansarullah Statement:** Declaring the end of the [2022 ceasefire](#) with Saudi Arabia.
- **Bolivian General Strike Proclamation:** COB union declaring the [transport infrastructure shutdown](#).

KEY STORIES

- **IRGC Launches Multi-Front Strikes:** Iran fires missiles at US bases in Kuwait, Bahrain, and Jordan in retaliation for the Supreme Leader's assassination and MOU violations ([20260713-7](#)).
- **Assassination of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei:** Detailed history of the Supreme Leader's life and the Feb 28th attack that led to the current 135-day war ([20260713-100](#)).

- **Hormuz Blockade Enforced:** Iran asserts total control over the Strait, and Trump counters with a 20% cargo toll proposal ([20260713-34](#)).
- **Bolivia General Strike:** COB union paralyzes the country in protest against President Rodrigo Paz's pro-Israel shift and lithium policies ([20260713-5](#)).
- **Death of Lindsey Graham:** The US Senator dies at 71; regional media celebrates the loss of a prominent "warmonger" ([20260713-10](#)).
- **Yemen Retaliates Against Riyadh:** Ansarullah strikes Saudi power plants and airports after Saudi Arabia bombed Sanaa to prevent an Iranian flight from landing ([20260713-157](#)).
- **Israeli General Elections Set:** October 27th date confirmed as Netanyahu faces trial and a strong challenge from Gady Eisenkot ([20260713-15](#)).
- **Ukraine Samara Refinery Strike:** Ukrainian drones hit an oil refinery in Russia's Samara region, causing heavy damage ([20260713-7](#)).
- **Gaza Agriculture Famine Warned:** Three years of war have destroyed 85% of Gaza's agricultural sector, with a damage rate of 87.1% ([20260713-14](#)).
- **Braja bin Ayad Interview:** Discussion on digital media's role in the Palestinian struggle and censorship by Western platforms ([20260713-108](#)).
- **Hormuz Ownership Fees:** Iran and Oman coordinate management of territorial waters against U.S. attempts to build a parallel Omani corridor ([20260713-130](#)).

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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