

NIGHTWATCH — Iran Strait of Hormuz Crisis

Generated: 2026-03-26 14:00 UTC Coverage window: 2026-03-26 02:00 UTC to 2026-03-26 13:00 UTC

Sources: 414 articles from 21 locales across 187 domains Quality threshold: extract_quality ≥ 0.70

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Day 27 opened with the diplomatic impasse hardening into what multiple analysts now characterize as an intractable negotiating stalemate. Iran's FM Araghchi delivered his clearest statement yet: "We have no intention to negotiate — no negotiations have taken place, and our position is completely principled." He elaborated that Iran targets only US bases and locations "used to carry out attacks" against it, and described the war as a "golden point in Iran's history" — framing catastrophic military losses as a triumph of national resistance. Simultaneously, Trump told Republican Congressional leaders that Iran "desperately wants a deal" but its negotiators "are afraid to say so because they think they will be killed by their own people" — a claim that, if true, describes an interlocutor structurally unable to make concessions publicly ([T-Online](#), [Middle East Monitor](#)).

The overnight period produced two revelations that reshape the strategic picture. First, the Wall Street Journal reported that the US temporarily removed Iran's FM Araghchi and Parliament Speaker Ghalibaf from the kill list for "four or five days" to facilitate potential direct talks — a form of coercive diplomacy that creates a literal countdown on their lives ([TASS/WSJ](#)). Second, CENTCOM chief Admiral Brad Cooper provided the most detailed operational briefing yet: over 10,000 targets struck inside Iran, 92% of Iran's largest naval vessels destroyed, drone and missile launch rates down over 90%, and two-thirds of missile/drone production facilities damaged or destroyed ([CNN](#)). Yet despite this extraordinary level of military destruction, Iran continues to fire missiles daily at Israel and Gulf states, Hezbollah struck the Israeli Defence Ministry compound in Tel Aviv, and Iran's military declared: "What we want will happen — passage through Hormuz will not return to prior conditions."

The third critical development overnight was a classified House Armed Services Committee briefing that produced bipartisan congressional fury. NBC News quoted four congressional officials: "There was no plan, no strategy, no end game shared, and they didn't give any answers." The briefers could not provide details on ground troop deployments but "would not rule them out." A lawmaker identified ground troops as the "red line" that would cause Republican supporters to "abandon the effort" — making Kharg Island seizure politically constrained from within Trump's own party before it begins ([NBC News](#)).

The war's cascading economic effects continued to widen. The Philippines is now in a declared state of energy emergency — the first nation to do so — with diesel and petrol prices doubling since February 28, hundreds of Manila transport workers on strike, and jeepney drivers queuing five hours for \$63 government cash handouts ([BBC](#)). Bangladesh closed all universities and implemented fuel rationing. Sri Lanka turned off streetlights and imposed a 4-day work week. Japan began distributing strategic petroleum reserves to refineries — the second time it has tapped reserves. German export expectations flipped from positive (+2.7) to negative (-0.9) in a single month. And Bavarian farmers told Merkur their fertilizer costs have risen 75% in four weeks, with one declaring: “Slowly it is becoming existential” ([Merkur](#)).

10 MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS

1. US Temporarily Removes Araghchi and Ghalibaf from Kill List to Enable Talks

The Wall Street Journal reported the US temporarily removed Iran's FM Abbas Araghchi and Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Ghalibaf from the target list for “up to four or five days” as Trump opened the door to high-level negotiations. This is a form of coercive diplomacy unprecedented in modern warfare — creating a literal countdown during which the two highest-value surviving Iranian officials can negotiate, after which they become legitimate targets again. White House spokesperson Leavitt, when asked if the US was satisfied with Iran's current leadership, answered: “It's too soon to say” — leaving regime change ambiguity explicitly on the table ([TASS/WSJ](#)).

Ghalibaf is a former IRGC general and close ally of new Supreme Leader Mojtaba Khamenei. His inclusion in talks signals the US is willing to engage with the Revolutionary Guard faction directly. But the temporary targeting pause also ensures Iran's negotiators know the personal consequences of failure.

2. Congress Briefing Produces Bipartisan Fury: “No Plan, No Strategy, No End Game”

A classified House Armed Services Committee briefing on Wednesday generated extraordinary bipartisan frustration. Four congressional officials told NBC News the briefers provided “no plan, no strategy, no end game” and “didn't give any answers.” The Pentagon could not provide details about potential ground troop deployments but “would not rule them out.” HASC Chairman Mike Rogers (R-AL) acknowledged “frustration with ALL the briefings we have been receiving for the last several months” but maintained policy support — a carefully constructed distinction between tactical communication failure and strategic endorsement ([NBC News](#)).

A lawmaker stated that ground troops in Iran represent “the red line” that would cause current supporters to “abandon the effort.” This is the first explicit Republican defection threshold identified in the conflict — and the Pentagon is now publicly aware of it. Separately, tensions flared over “conflicting explanations from the administration about the justification for starting the war” — the first NBC confirmation that the administration has given inconsistent rationales to Congress.

3. CENTCOM: 10,000+ Targets, 92% of Navy Destroyed — Iran Still Firing Daily

Admiral Brad Cooper, CENTCOM chief, provided the most operationally specific US military briefing of the war: over 10,000 targets struck inside Iran; 92% of Iran's largest naval vessels destroyed; drone and missile launch rates

down over 90%; two-thirds of missile, drone, and naval production facilities and shipyards damaged or destroyed ([CNN](#)). White House declared Operation Epic Fury is “ahead of schedule” with a “resounding military victory.”

Yet the paradox remains: Iran fires missiles daily at Israel, Hezbollah struck the Israeli Defence Ministry compound in Tel Aviv, and Hormuz remains effectively closed. Citadel Securities bond head Nohshad Shah warned investors are “dangerously underestimating” the conflict’s complexity: “Investors assume Trump can end this like he could reverse tariffs. For Iran, this is an existential war” ([Business Insider Japan](#)).

4. Iran Threatens to Open Second Front at Bab el-Mandab Strait

Iran’s semi-official Tasnim News Agency cited an unnamed military source saying Iran could open a new front at the Bab el-Mandab Strait — the chokepoint between Yemen and Djibouti controlling entry to the Red Sea — if its territory continues to be attacked. Separately, Parliament Speaker Ghalibaf warned Iran will conduct “relentless attacks” on any regional country that supports an attempt to occupy an Iranian island — a direct deterrent aimed at Saudi Arabia and UAE regarding a potential Kharg Island operation ([Hindustan Times](#)).

Executing the Bab el-Mandab threat would likely involve Houthi proxy forces in Yemen. Combining Hormuz (20% of global oil) with Bab el-Mandab (10-15% of global trade) would represent an unprecedented simultaneous disruption of two of the world’s four major maritime chokepoints.

5. German Defence Minister Pistorius: “No Strategy, No Exit Strategy” — Sharpest NATO Critique

German Defence Minister Boris Pistorius, speaking at Australia’s National Press Club during an Indo-Pacific tour, delivered the most direct criticism of US war strategy from any NATO defence minister: “There is no strategy, no clear objective — and for me the worst thing: there is no exit strategy.” He stated explicitly: “It is not our war. We were not consulted. And we do not want to be dragged into it” ([Die Zeit](#), [Ukrainska Pravda](#)).

Pistorius offered Germany’s participation in post-ceasefire security — specifically Hormuz freedom-of-navigation operations — but only after hostilities end. The statement was made in Canberra after stops in Tokyo and Singapore, giving it a broad Indo-Pacific audience. Germany and Australia simultaneously signed a bilateral military cooperation framework and joint space surveillance system targeting Russian and Chinese satellite disruption.

6. Philippines Declares Energy Emergency — Asian Supply Chain Cascade Deepens

The Philippines became the first country to formally declare a state of energy emergency, with diesel and petrol prices doubling since the war began. Hundreds of transport workers struck in Manila; jeepney driver Guillermo Japole told the BBC he queued five hours for a \$63 government handout and his name wasn’t on the list — he has five children and faces eviction. President Marcos signed legislation suspending excise tax on petroleum products; government offices switched to a 4-day week with mandatory AC above 24°C ([BBC](#)).

The cascade across Asia: Bangladesh closed all universities and implemented fuel rationing (projected \$1.8B additional import cost). Sri Lanka turned off streetlights and neon signs, cut government AC. Pakistan implemented work-from-home policies and cut minister salaries. Vietnam asked its population to work from home. All five are developing nations with minimal domestic energy production and near-total dependence on Middle Eastern oil transiting Hormuz ([Live Hindustan](#)).

7. Sri Lanka Caught Between US and Iran Over 252 Stranded Sailors

Sri Lanka faces an impossible diplomatic crisis: 252 Iranian naval survivors — 30 from the sunk IRIS Dena and 221 from the IRIS Bushehr — are trapped in the country. The US is demanding Sri Lanka not repatriate them; Iran insists on immediate return. The IRIS Dena was torpedoed by a US nuclear submarine in Sri Lanka's Exclusive Economic Zone on March 4, killing 87 Iranian sailors — without consulting Colombo. Sri Lanka's navy, with Indian assistance, recovered bodies that were returned to Iran ([Navbharat Times](#)).

Sri Lanka exports \$3B annually to the US (40% of textile exports) and imports 100% of its oil through Hormuz — dual dependency that makes neutrality functionally impossible. The government issued 1-month visas as a stopgap. The US Embassy formally requested non-repatriation, claiming the sailors could be intelligence operatives.

8. China Sees “Glimmer of Hope” — But Araghchi Says “No Negotiations Have Occurred”

Chinese FM Wang Yi told Egyptian FM Abdelatty that “a glimmer of hope for peace has emerged” based on Beijing's reading that both sides have signaled willingness to negotiate. Hours later, Araghchi stated publicly: “No negotiations have taken place.” Wang also spoke with Turkish FM Fidan, stating the conflict's “rights and wrongs are crystal clear” — backing Turkey's facilitation role while not explicitly condemning the US ([Express Tribune](#)).

China engaging Turkey, Egypt, and Pakistan simultaneously on Iran diplomacy signals Beijing is positioning itself as a de facto mediator without formally volunteering to host talks. The contradiction between China's optimism and Iran's denial suggests either Beijing is reading private signals that public statements don't reflect, or China is deliberately framing an optimistic narrative to encourage the process.

9. Netanyahu Faces Budget Deadline as War Fails to Boost Polls

Turkish financial analysis site Paraanaliz published polling data showing Netanyahu's coalition projected at only 51 Knesset seats (vs. 61 needed for a majority), with Likud falling from 34 to 28 seats. The war has not produced a “rally around the flag” effect. Netanyahu faces a constitutional deadline: the budget must pass by March 31 or elections are triggered within 90 days. He has reportedly allocated 5 billion shekels to ultra-Orthodox parties (Shas, UTJ) to secure their budget votes. Former Israeli NSC head Eyal Hulata warned Trump cannot end the war without a visible military achievement that prevents Iran from claiming it “bent the Americans” ([Paraanaliz](#), [Maariv](#)).

10. Nuclear Proliferation Paradox: Kim Jong-un Declares Vindication

North Korea's Kim Jong-un publicly congratulated himself for preserving his nuclear arsenal, explicitly framing the Iran war as proof that nuclear deterrence works. La Croix posed the question no other outlet in this coverage window addressed: does attacking a non-nuclear state (Iran) to prevent nuclear weapons paradoxically incentivize other states to acquire them faster? The implicit lesson: Iran was attacked while pursuing nuclear weapons; North Korea preserved its deterrent and was not attacked. The article notes Pakistan — a nuclear state — is serving as diplomatic intermediary precisely because its nuclear status makes it safe from attack ([La Croix](#)).

Pivot 1 – Does China cut a passage deal?

Timeline: Apr 2026 **Current assessment:** YES — probability trending UP **Evidence:** - Chinese FM declared “glimmer of hope” and engaged Turkey, Egypt, and Pakistan in simultaneous diplomatic calls — positioning as de facto mediator - Iran already allows Chinese and Indian tankers through Hormuz while blocking Western-allied shipping — the differential access regime is the deal in practice - Deutsche Bank petroyuan thesis now reinforced by Iran’s selective Hormuz access creating yuan payment infrastructure in real-time

Pivot 2A – Saudi back-channel to Iran?

Timeline: Jun 2026 **Current assessment:** NO — probability trending DOWN **Evidence:** - CNN reported MBS privately pushing Trump to continue the war — “historic opportunity to remake the Middle East” - Gulf states lobbying US not to stop before degrading Iran’s missile capability - Qatar’s LNG “come to a complete halt” — creating permanent structural incentive for anti-Iran alignment

Pivot 2B – Nuclear sprint to 90%?

Timeline: May 2026 **Current assessment:** UNCLEAR — probability trending UP **Evidence:** - Iran’s conditions explicitly refuse nuclear negotiations and promise a “new nuclear policy” - IDF struck Isfahan submarine design facility — nuclear-adjacent infrastructure targeted - Kim Jong-un’s vindication narrative validates nuclear deterrence logic for Iran’s hardliners - La Croix proliferation paradox: attacking a non-nuclear state incentivizes others to go nuclear faster

Pivot 3A – Ceasefire deal?

Timeline: Sep–Oct 2026 **Current assessment:** UNCLEAR — probability DOWN (short-term) **Evidence:** - Iran rejected 15-point plan; counter-demands fundamentally incompatible with US demands - Iran told intermediaries Lebanon must be included in any ceasefire — six regional sources confirm - Kill list targeting pause creates 4-5 day window; but Iran’s public rejection makes talks within that window unlikely - Israeli Channel 12: Israel fears Trump may declare unilateral ceasefire March 28

Pivot 3B – US recommit militarily?

Timeline: Aug 2026 **Current assessment:** YES — probability trending UP (but politically constrained) **Evidence:** - 82nd Airborne deploying; Iran fortifying Kharg Island with traps and air defences - HASC briefing: Pentagon would not rule out ground troops - BUT: Republican lawmakers identified ground troops as “red line” for abandoning support — making Kharg seizure politically constrained within Trump’s own party

Pivot 3C – US strike nuclear sites?

Timeline: Jul 2026 **Current assessment:** CONFIRMED — continuing **Evidence:** - IDF struck Isfahan submarine design facility - Bushehr struck twice; Russia evacuating workers - Netanyahu ordered 48-hour strike intensification after viewing US plan as insufficient

Pivot 4A – China fills security vacuum?

Timeline: Nov 2026 **Current assessment:** YES – probability trending UP **Evidence:** - China conducting simultaneous diplomatic engagement with Turkey, Egypt, Pakistan - Deutsche Bank petroyuan thesis validated - Pistorius's Indo-Pacific tour (Japan, Singapore, Australia) created new German-Australian defence framework – allies building alternative security architecture while US is consumed by Iran - Singapore PM calling Australian PM to coordinate energy security outside US framework

OUTCOME PROBABILITY ASSESSMENT

RANK	OUTCOME	TREND	RATIONALE
1	B: Frozen conflict	↑	Iran's categorical rejection + US political constraints on ground troops = stalemate. Neither side can force the other to capitulate. Partial Hormuz access with continued strikes most likely.
2	G: China wins the peace	↑	Beijing positioning as mediator while petroyuan infrastructure builds. German-Australian defence pact signals allies diversifying away from US-centric security. Structural winner regardless of outcome.
3	C: Pyrrhic US war	↑	10,000+ targets struck yet Iran fires daily. Congress told "no plan, no strategy." \$30B+ spent. War solidifying regime per academic analysis. Ground troops politically impossible. Rising.
4	F: Nuclear Iran fait accompli	↑	Kim Jong-un's vindication + Iran refusing nuclear negotiations + proliferation paradox = post-war Iran likely emerges as threshold state. Knowledge cannot be bombed.
5	H: Uneasy US restoration	↓	Congressional red line on ground troops constrains Kharg seizure. "No exit strategy" critique from NATO ally. 36% approval. The political conditions for recommitment are narrowing.
6	A: Early capitulation	↓	Araghchi: "golden point in Iran's history." Zolfaghari: "never come to terms." No capitulation pathway visible.
7	D: Gulf collapse	→	Philippines first formal energy emergency. Asian cascade deepening.

RANK	OUTCOME	TREND	RATIONALE
			But Gulf states themselves lobbying for continued war rather than collapsing – they’re active participants, not passive victims.
8	E: Full regional war	↑	Bab el-Mandab threat would add second chokepoint. Hezbollah struck Israeli Defence Ministry. Iran told intermediaries Lebanon must be in any deal. The war is expanding geographically. Rising.

BIAS & NARRATIVE ANALYSIS

LOCALE	DOMINANT NARRATIVE	KEY FRAMING
US (English)	Congressional fury; “no plan, no strategy”; bipartisan red line on ground troops	NBC/CNN framing war as slipping beyond Trump’s control; Aaron David Miller: “war of necessity”
Israel (Hebrew)	Netanyahu faces budget deadline; war hasn’t boosted polls; NSC warns Trump needs visible victory	Maariv: limited ground operation at Kharg likely; Paraanaliz: coalition at 51 seats
Germany (German)	Pistorius “no exit strategy”; Ifo exports flip negative; fertilizer crisis hitting farmers	Bavarian farmers: “slowly existential”; auto sector paradoxically positive (+30.7)
India (Hindi)	All-party meeting; Jaishankar dismisses Pakistan as “broker”; LPG rationing; Sri Lanka sailor crisis	The Wire: opposition protests with empty LPG cylinders; Modi told Trump war must end
Spain (Spanish)	elDiario: Iran’s distrust structurally rational given attack-during-negotiation pattern	Most detailed Western analysis of why Iran rejected the plan – citing June 2025 and Feb 2026 precedents
France (French)	La Croix: nuclear proliferation paradox; Paris Match: Trump/Araghchi “he said/she said”	G7 FM meeting in France; Rubio arriving Friday – US diplomatically isolated even among allies
Turkey (Turkish)	Odatv: Israeli journalist exposes “good cop/bad cop” Trump-Netanyahu deception pattern	Paraanaliz: Netanyahu polling data; TRT: Japan tapping strategic reserves
Russia (Russian)	TASS: US leveraging Iran war to squeeze Ukraine funding; kill list as coercive diplomacy	Pravda.ua (Ukrainian): Pistorius critique means German attention stays on Ukraine

LOCALE	DOMINANT NARRATIVE	KEY FRAMING
South Korea (Korean)	Bank of Korea financial stability warning; SME naphtha crisis; fertilizer “agflation”	LG Chem Yeosu shutdown; 13,859 Korean SMEs directly exposed; won as biggest FX loser
Pakistan (English)	China “glimmer of hope”; Aaj TV: Iran reviewing proposal despite public rejection	Pakistan’s intermediary role elevated; Express Tribune: China-Turkey-Egypt diplomatic alignment

Notable narrative divergences:

- **The “golden point” vs. “military defeat” gap is now unbridgeable in public framing.** Iran’s FM calls the war a national triumph; the White House demands Iran accept it has been “militarily defeated.” Both cannot be true, and neither side can back down publicly.
- **German media is the most operationally critical of the war** — Pistorius’s “no exit strategy” quote appeared in ZDF, Die Zeit, Ukrainska Pravda, Paris Match, and multiple syndications. It is becoming the European consensus framing.
- **Israeli media is strikingly self-critical:** Maariv, Times of Israel, and Paraanaliz all published analyses questioning whether the war is achieving its objectives. The budget deadline adds domestic political pressure Netanyahu cannot deflect with military success.
- **Former CIA Director Brennan publicly accused Trump of “helplessness and deliberate deception”** — the strongest criticism from a former US intelligence chief ([T-Online](#)).

CONTRADICTIONARY CLAIMS

1. Are talks occurring?

- **Trump** ([T-Online](#)): Iran is negotiating but “afraid to say so because they think they will be killed”
- **Araghchi** ([Middle East Monitor](#)): “No negotiations have taken place — our position is completely principled”
- **China FM Wang** ([Express Tribune](#)): “A glimmer of hope for peace has emerged”
- **Assessment:** Messages are being exchanged through intermediaries (confirmed by both sides). Iran is reviewing the 15-point plan (confirmed by Araghchi). But “productive negotiations” is a US overstatement and “no negotiations” is an Iranian semantic distinction. China’s “glimmer” may reflect private signals not visible publicly.

2. Has Iran been defeated?

- **CENTCOM** ([CNN](#)): 10,000+ targets, 92% navy destroyed, 90% reduction in launches
- **Araghchi** ([Middle East Monitor](#)): US has “failed to achieve its objectives”; Hormuz is “another defeat for the enemy”
- **Citadel Securities** ([Business Insider Japan](#)): “For Iran, this is an existential war” — Iran’s incentive to concede is low regardless of military losses
- **Assessment:** Iran’s conventional military is severely degraded. But asymmetric capacity (Hormuz, missiles, proxies) remains functional. “Military defeat” in conventional terms coexists with Iranian strategic leverage that the US has not neutralized.

3. Does Iran's war strategy serve the regime or weaken it?

- **Christiane Amanpour** ([Katie Couric](#)): Iranian opposition groups fear negotiations will “leave the regime in place”
- **Israeli Yossi Melman** ([Odatv](#)): Iranian exile groups warned strikes would strengthen the regime through nationalist rally — “and they were right”
- **Jack Goldstone** (George Mason, prior day): War has “solidified” regime unity “more closely than at any time in the last dozen years”
- **Assessment:** The academic and exile consensus is converging: the war strengthened the regime it was meant to destroy.

4. Will the US deploy ground troops?

- **Pentagon** ([NBC News](#)): “Would not rule out” ground deployments
- **Republican lawmakers** (same): Ground troops are “the red line” — support would collapse
- **CNN** ([CNN](#)): Iran laying traps and moving air defences to Kharg Island
- **Assessment:** Ground troops are militarily planned but politically constrained. The 82nd Airborne is deploying, but congressional red lines may prevent actual deployment into Iran. The Kharg operation is in a quantum state — prepared but potentially unfirable.

UNCONFIRMED RUMORS & FORWARD SIGNALS

1. Bab el-Mandab Second Front Threat — HIGH

- **Claim:** Iran can open a new front at Bab el-Mandab if attacks continue ([Hindustan Times](#))
- **Credibility:** MODERATE — Tasnim is IRGC-linked; capability exists via Houthi proxies
- **Significance:** Dual chokepoint closure (Hormuz + Bab el-Mandab) would be catastrophic for global shipping. This is deterrence signaling, not an operational announcement — but the capability is real.

2. Hezbollah Struck Israeli Defence Ministry HQ — MODERATE

- **Claim:** Hezbollah's Telegram channel claimed strikes on the Israeli Defence Ministry compound in downtown Tel Aviv at 1:10 AM local time ([TASS](#))
- **Credibility:** MODERATE — Hezbollah claim only; no Israeli confirmation
- **Significance:** If confirmed, this would be one of Hezbollah's most symbolically significant strikes — targeting the nerve centre of Israel's military establishment.

3. Kill List Countdown Creates Negotiation Deadline — CONFIRMED

- **Claim:** Araghchi and Ghalibaf removed from US target list for 4-5 days ([TASS/WSJ](#))
- **Credibility:** HIGH — WSJ sourcing

- **Significance:** Creates a literal deadline: negotiate within days or become targets again. The most coercive form of diplomacy imaginable – and one that may make genuine negotiation impossible, since Iranian officials know the US views them as expendable.

4. JD Vance May Meet Ghalibaf in Pakistan – MODERATE

- **Claim:** La Voz de Galicia cited reporting that Vance may meet Ghalibaf in Pakistan (lavozdegalicia.es)
- **Credibility:** MODERATE – single source; consistent with Iran’s stated preference for Vance over Witkoff/Kushner
- **Significance:** Would be the first direct high-level US-Iran political contact since the war began. Vance as interlocutor addresses Iran’s stated objection to Witkoff/Kushner.

5. Trump Avoiding the Word “War” to Evade War Powers Act – CONFIRMED

- **Claim:** Trump deliberately called the conflict a “military operation” at the Republican dinner, avoiding the word “war” to prevent triggering the War Powers Act ([T-Online](#))
- **Credibility:** HIGH – directly observed at the dinner
- **Significance:** Legal framing battle that determines whether Congress has authority over the conflict. The Senate has already voted 47-53 to reject a war powers resolution three times.

INFORMATION GAPS

The 4-5 day targeting pause expiry date

– When exactly does Araghchi/Ghalibaf go back on the kill list? This date determines the next escalation threshold

March 28 convergence

: 5-day energy strike pause expiry, Marine assault force arrival, potential unilateral ceasefire – three vectors converging on the same date with no reporting on which scenario the US is actually pursuing

Iran’s actual Kharg Island defences

– CNN reports traps and air defences, but the specifics (mines? anti-ship missiles? IRGC ground forces?) are unknown

Where is Iran’s enriched uranium?

– Multiple analysts note the 440kg HEU stockpile is not at known facilities; its location determines post-war nuclear risk

Gulf states’ private war aims

– CNN reports MBS privately pushing Trump to continue, while publicly calling for de-escalation. The actual Saudi/UAE exit conditions are unknown

Iran’s internet blackout continues into day 27

– independent verification of civilian casualties, internal dissent, and regime stability remains impossible

Mojtaba Khamenei's status

— still no video appearance; only voice messages; the question of who actually governs Iran remains unanswered

APPENDIX: SOURCE STATISTICS

LOCALE	ARTICLES	TOP DOMAINS
de-DE	50	t-online.de, merkur.de, wiwo.de, zdfheute.de
hi-IN	47	navbharattimes.indiatimes.com, livehindustan.com, bbc.com
fr-FR	39	parismatch.com, la-croix.com, bfmtv.com
es-ES	37	eldiario.es, 20minutos.es, lavozdegalicia.es
tr-TR	26	trthaber.com, odatv.com, paraanaliz.com
ja-JP	25	news.yahoo.co.jp, bbc.com
en-CA	25	bbc.com, globalnews.ca
ko-KR	24	donga.com, sisajournal.com, newsis.com
he-IL	18	maariv.co.il, c14.co.il
ru-RU	17	tass.com, pravda.com.ua
en-GB	17	theguardian.com, bbc.com, uk.finance.yahoo.com
en-IN	14	hindustantimes.com
ar-SA	13	skynewsarabia.com, aawsat.com
en-UK	12	middleeastmonitor.com, middleeasteye.net
ar-EG	12	almasryalyoum.com
en-US	9	cnn.com, nbcnews.com
en-PK	9	tribune.com.pk, english.aaj.tv
en-RU	8	tass.com, rt.com
en-KR	7	einfomax.co.kr
en-IL	4	timesofisrael.com
en-IR	1	iranintl.com

Total articles analysed: 414 Total unique domains: 187 Coverage window (UTC): 2026-03-26 02:00 to 2026-03-26 13:00

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