US–Iran Conflict Briefing

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United States Tightens Iran Blockade to Cover Ship-to-Ship Oil Transfers

- The US military will treat ships that receive cargo at sea from vessels loaded in Iran as attempting to evade its blockade of Iranian ports and could take action against them, according to an advisory issued by US Central Command on Wednesday, November 18, 2026, Reuters reported. — Reuters
- CENTCOM said in the advisory update that any ship receiving cargo via a ship-to-ship transfer with a vessel subject to the blockade and carrying cargo loaded at an Iranian port or coastline may be considered to be evading the blockade even if it has not entered Iranian ports, and such ships may be stopped, boarded, diverted, captured, or directed to proceed to the Iranian port where the cargo originated, with ships that fail to comply facing enforcement action including the use of force consistent with applicable law, Reuters reported. — Reuters
- Reuters reported the Panama-flagged LPG tanker Tara Gas and the unnamed ADNOC L&S vessel as two separate attacks in the Strait of Hormuz on Tuesday, November 17, 2026, each with one crew member missing, so the ADNOC vessel is a second ship and not the Tara Gas; ADNOC has still not named its vessel, Reuters reported. — Reuters

Israel's Spy Chief Lobbied Washington for Joint Strikes on Iran

- Mossad chief Roman Gofman advocated for joint US-Israeli strikes on Iran during meetings with US officials last week, meeting CIA Director John Ratcliffe in Washington and envoy Steve Witkoff in Miami and briefing officials on Israeli intelligence on Iran's nuclear programme, according to two people briefed on the visit, Reuters reported. — Reuters
- Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu believes the opportunity to launch an attack on Iran is narrowing and Israel is concerned the United States could begin drawing down its military deployment in the region before the end of the year, with former minister Ron Dermer also advocating a joint attack in US meetings, according to two people briefed on the outreach, Reuters reported. — Reuters
- Israel's military assesses that Iran does not pose an imminent threat to Israel, meaning immediate military action is not necessary, according to two people briefed on Mossad chief Roman Gofman's US visit, Reuters reported. — Reuters

Saudi Arabia Sees Yemen Campaign Lasting Well Into 2027

- Saudi officials now foresee the campaign against Yemen's Houthis stretching on for up to six months, well into 2027, aiming to see gains on the ground by the kingdom's Yemeni allies before any negotiations with the Houthis, two Western officials briefed by Saudis on the plans told Reuters, with a third source familiar with the Saudi plans confirming the accounts. — Reuters
- Riyadh believes that US offensive support for Saudi operations in Yemen, which President Donald Trump's administration has so far withheld, could help change the tide of the conflict and potentially allow Saudi-backed forces to make the gains they want within weeks, a third source familiar with the Saudi plans told Reuters. — Reuters

US Intelligence Chief Says Iranian Threats to Americans Have Increased Substantially

- Threats from Iran to Americans inside and outside the United States have increased substantially, Director of National Intelligence Jay Clayton told the House Homeland Security Committee on Wednesday, November 18, 2026, saying lethal plots by Tehran against American citizens have reached 'advanced stages' in a memo seen by Reuters last month, Reuters reported. — Reuters
- Secretary of State Marco Rubio said on Wednesday, November 18, 2026 that he did not think there was any imminent threat to Washington, D.C., when asked about a CNN report citing US intelligence assessments of a possible Iranian dirty-bomb plan; President Trump said on Tuesday the US was taking the possibility seriously, Reuters reported. — Reuters

Trump, Xi and Putin Set for Thursday Trilateral With Iran on the Agenda

- President Trump arrived in Shenzhen on Wednesday, November 18, 2026 for the APEC summit, where Xi Jinping greeted him at the airport; Trump, Xi and Putin are scheduled to hold their first trilateral meeting on Thursday, with Trump also expected to meet Putin separately and to meet Xi bilaterally beforehand, Reuters reported. — Reuters
- One hour has been allocated for Thursday's Trump-Xi-Putin trilateral meeting in Shenzhen, and no full-scale bilateral negotiations are planned for the separate Putin-Trump meeting on the sidelines, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov and foreign policy aide Yuri Ushakov said via Russian news agencies, Reuters reported. — Reuters
- Expectations for a major breakthrough at Thursday's Shenzhen trilateral are low; Trump wants nuclear arms control as a central topic despite Chinese objections, has said Ukraine and Iran will come up, while White House officials have said Trump is not expected to raise the war in Ukraine during the trilateral itself, Reuters reported. — Reuters

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