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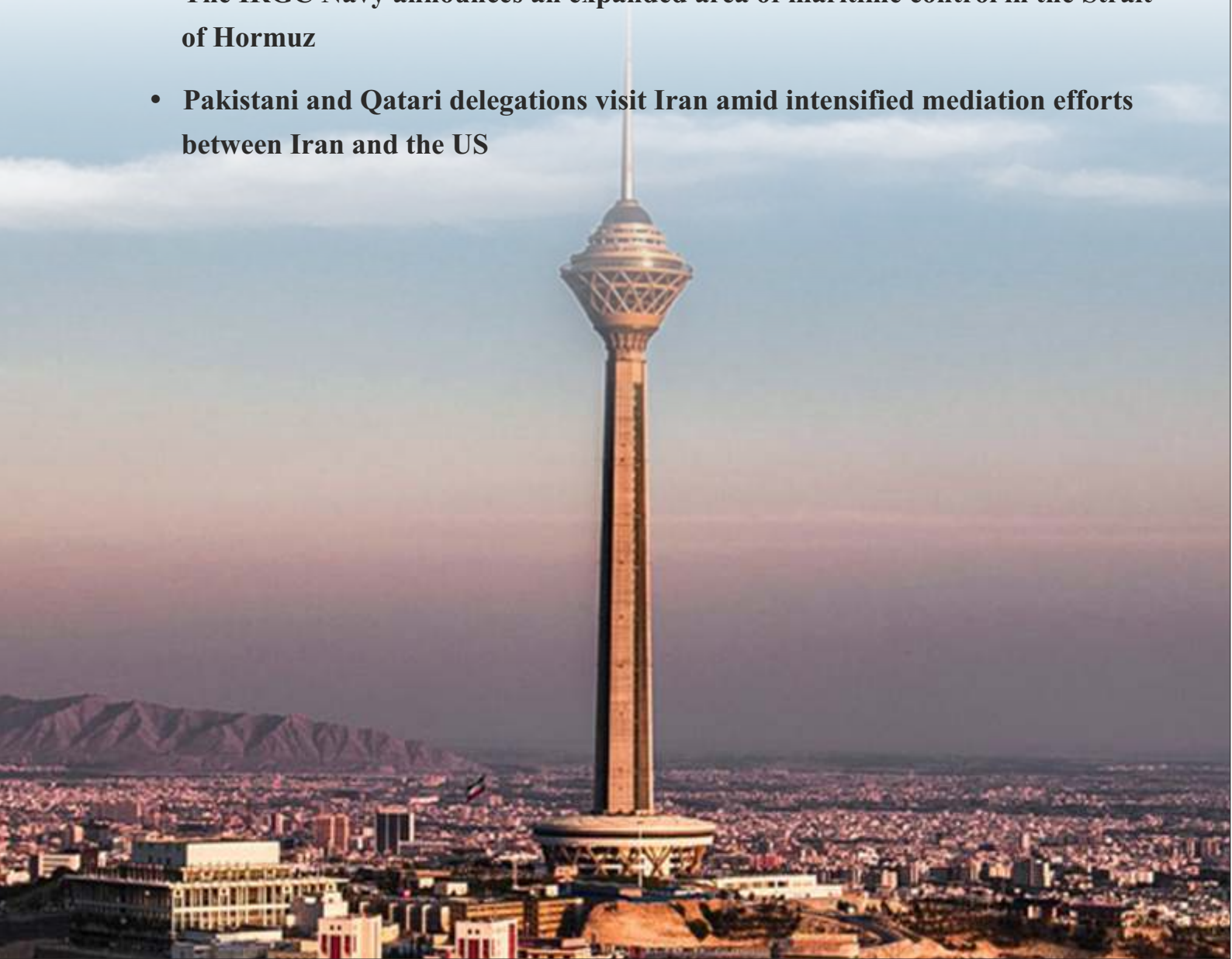
मनोहर पर्रिकर रक्षा अध्ययन एवं विश्लेषण संस्थान

Iran

Digest

May 2026

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Iran's Supreme Leader issues a message on the annual Hajj Pilgrimage

On 26 May, the Supreme Leader of Iran, Ayatollah Sayyid Mojtaba Khamenei, issued a [message for the annual Hajj pilgrimage](#). Ayatollah Khamenei argued that it was 'divine weapon' of faith that 'God is the greatest' that led the nation of Iran to topple the "tyrannical and dependent Pahlavi regime" 47 years ago, carry out the 8-year Sacred Defence against Saddam's invasion of Iran and continue on "steadfast resistance in the of economic siege, coups, unjust sanctions, and countless political, propaganda and economic attacks by enemies against the Islamic Republic". It enabled Iran to "reduce the Zionist regime to helplessness under its crushing blows during the Second Imposed War in June 2025." Describing the 40-day US-Israel-Iran war as the "Third Imposed War", Khamenei argued that "the Armed Forces of Islamic Iran, alongside the mujahideen of the Resistance Front – especially those in beloved Lebanon – secured decisive victories against the two terrorist, American-Zionist armies". Delineating Iran's vision for the region, he noted "the Islamic Ummah and the nations of the region possess many shared capacities and common interests that will shape the new order and the future architecture of the region and the world. I, with sincerity and purity of intention, invite all Islamic countries and governments to friendship and cooperation in goodness, so that by working together we may take steps toward the advancement of the Islamic Ummah and the resolution of the Islamic world's problems". On the US military presence in

the region, he noted that "what is certain in this regard is that the hands of time will not turn back, and the nations and lands of the region will no longer serve as shields for US bases. The United States not only will no longer have a safe haven for its mischief and for establishing military bases in the region, but day by day, it is growing more distant from its former status".

The IRGC Navy announces an expanded area of maritime control in the Strait of Hormuz

On 4 May, Iran's Revolutionary Guard navy issued a new map marking an [expanded maritime area of control](#), including lengthy sections of the United Arab Emirates' coastline in the Strait of Hormuz. In the west, a line stretches from the westernmost tip of Iran's Qeshm Island to the UAE's Umm al Quwain emirate, while in the east, a second line connects Iran's Mount Mobarak to the UAE's Fujairah. The announcement came after the US Navy launched a campaign, dubbed "Project Freedom", deploying multiple guided-missile destroyers in the strait to secure safe passage for commercial vessels. US Army Apache helicopter gunships [sank six Iranian military speedboats](#) that were using 'swarm tactics' to threaten commercial vessels. The UAE accused Iran of carrying out drone and missile strikes on the Fujairah Oil Industry Zone, a strategic energy hub and emergency container gateway outside the strait. After Iran launched several cruise missiles, drones, and small boats as 'warning shots' at US Navy destroyers transiting the strait, the US struck Iranian missile-launching positions

in Bandar Abbas and port infrastructure on nearby Qeshm Island. Senior Iranian military officers warned that if the US continued attacking Iranian ships, Iran would sink US warships and strike US bases in the Gulf. When Trump suspended the mission on its second day, and US Navy destroyers withdrew to the Sea of Oman, only [two American-flagged commercial vessels](#) had passed through the US-guarded route. Most vessels remained unwilling to be escorted because of the heightened risk of being fired upon by Iranian anti-ship assets.

Pakistani and Qatari delegations visit Iran amid intensified mediation efforts between Iran and the US

On 23 May, Pakistan's Chief of Defense Forces, Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, travelled to Tehran amid intensified mediation efforts to end the US-Israeli war that began on 28 February. Pakistan's Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi was already in Tehran for the second time in less than a week to discuss the contents of the US proposal with Iranian leaders.

On 22 May, US media outlet Axios reported that President Trump convened a meeting with his senior national security team and was "seriously considering" launching fresh strikes against Iran if last-minute negotiations do not result in a peace deal. In a meeting with Munir, Iran's Parliament Speaker and chief negotiator Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf said Iran would continue to pursue its "legitimate rights" both on the battlefield and through diplomacy. In response to Trump's threats, Qalibaf warned that if the United States

"foolishly restarts the war," the consequences would be "more crushing and bitter." On the same day, Esmail Baghaei, the spokesperson for Iran's negotiating team, noted in his weekly press meeting that the future management of the strait of Hormuz was a matter for Oman and Iran to reach an agreement on, and that it was not tolls that were being proposed but "fees for navigational services." The US Secretary of State, Marco Rubio, speaking at NATO Foreign Ministers' meeting in Sweden, warned that "no country in the world" should accept Iran's proposed "tolling system" in the Strait of Hormuz. Earlier on 14 May, the five Gulf States, including Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Kuwait, and Qatar, as well as Jordan, sent a letter to the UN secretary-general protesting Iran's "unacceptable claim" to have imposed new rules for ships passing through the Strait of Hormuz. Coinciding with Pakistani army chief's visit to Tehran, a Qatari delegation arrived in Tehran with the aim of conducting regional consultations and coordination with Pakistan and other countries in the region.

Amid the efforts to reach a memorandum of understanding that would restore full access to the strait in 30 days after a deal ending hostilities, the US military's Central Command said on 26 May that US forces had carried out strikes on southern Iran in "self-defence". Iran's demand that Lebanon be included in the ceasefire deal, its refusal to accept the US demand to hand over Iran's highly enriched uranium stockpile to the US, and the release of the frozen Iranian funds in a Qatari bank remain the major contentious issues.