

More indications of imminent renewed imperialist assault on Iran

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26 October 2026

The *New York Times* reported Monday that officials from Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Pakistan converged on Tehran for emergency discussions as the Trump administration and Israeli government threaten a renewed assault on Iran, including possible strikes either before or after the November 3 US midterm elections.

The preparations for a major escalation expose the gulf between Washington's declarations of military success and US control of the Strait of Hormuz. Meanwhile, a British maritime agency confirmed Monday that a tanker had been disabled by a projectile, while Iran threatens further attacks on vessels defying Tehran's transit restrictions.

According to houseofsaud.com, citing Iran's Tasnim News Agency, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) declared the strait "closed" on Monday and warned that vessels violating its regulations risked being "engulfed in flames." The report described an enforcement system permitting approved passages rather than an independently established cessation of all shipping or an unqualified threat against every vessel.

Under the framework of the Persian Gulf Strait Authority (PGSA) described by houseofsaud.com, vessels must register, secure clearance before each transit and follow an Iranian-approved northern corridor. Ships using the southern route promoted by Washington and Oman are classified as noncompliant and face interdiction. The authority's blacklist reportedly expanded from 46 ships on August 24 to 124 by October 22.

Cooperation with the PGSA—including registration, data submission and payments—can expose companies to US sanctions, according to the houseofsaud.com report. Tehran has presented its actions as enforcement against unauthorized oil transfers and "smuggling."

Last week brought a wave of reported vessel strikes. Iranian accounts said four tankers conducting unauthorized ship-to-ship transfers were struck on

October 22–23, while three additional vessels encountered mines. CBS reported that Iran's claims to have struck four tankers could not be corroborated, and the vessels' identities and operators remained unconfirmed in the houseofsaud.com account.

There is, however, independent confirmation of at least one significant strike. On Monday, the United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO) agency disclosed a "verified time-late report" that an outbound tanker had been struck Friday by an unknown projectile, disabling it.

The UKMTO report states, "A tanker transiting outbound was struck by an unknown projectile, disabling the vessel. The crew have been reported safe. There is no damage assessment or environmental impact report at present. Vessels are advised to transit with caution and report any suspicious activity to UKMTO, whilst authorities investigate." The report did not establish the attacker's identity or demonstrate whether this incident coincided with Iran's claims.

Meanwhile, Washington's assurances of secure navigation through the strait cannot be accepted. CENTCOM (US Central Command) has said that lanes were cleared of mines and that 95 percent of vessels were "getting through." President Trump—who has repeatedly falsified information about flow of strait traffic as part of financial and oil market manipulation—accused Iran of inventing attacks to raise oil prices before the elections. Trump also made the ludicrous claim that more oil is passing through Hormuz than before the war.

As reported by the WSWWS on Monday, Trump openly threatened on Sunday's Fox News interview, "I have a decision to make: Do I finish it off, which would be very easy to do, or do I make a deal? That's all." On Friday, he had suggested another "little Epic Fury," the name of the opening US-Israeli air campaign that included the assassination of the Iranian leadership. CBS reported the deployment of additional American forces, including a

third aircraft carrier group that is en route to the Middle East.

The *New York Times* report on Monday's Tehran talks highlighted the urgency around the likelihood of a renewed conflagration. Saudi Defense Minister Prince Khalid bin Salman, Pakistani army chief Field Marshal Asim Munir and Turkish intelligence chief Ibrahim Kalin met Iranian representatives. Later reporting confirmed that the delegations had held an initial meeting and agreed to continue discussions. Qatar had also sent mediators to Tehran on Sunday.

The three visiting states belong to the new Mecca Pact, also described as the Makkah Joint Defense Agreement. Established in August, according to EA WorldView, the framework links Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Pakistan in collective defense. Iran is their interlocutor, not a reported member. Available reports do not establish the pact's detailed operational commitments or automatic military-response provisions.

The talks also addressed the Saudi-Houthi conflict, whose escalation threatens airports, oil infrastructure and alternative export routes. CBS News reported that the Mecca Pact governments' diplomatic efforts express their immediate interest in containing the war that is destabilizing the region's economic and security arrangements.

Against this background, Axios published details of an October 23 intelligence memorandum alleging Iranian efforts to kill American officials had reached "advanced stages." The one-page, unclassified document, sent by Director of National Intelligence Jay Clayton to Secretary of State Marco Rubio, asserted that Iran had "substantially increased" targeting efforts.

The memo named no specific targets, identified no countries outside the Middle East and supplied no operational evidence. US officials cited Iranian plots and Houthi threats as reasons for diplomatic drawdowns across several countries, a signal that military conflict in the region is imminent.

The memo's publication alongside known US military preparations lends credibility to assertions that the "intel" being circulated is the casus belli for renewal of the war. The conjunction of undisclosed intelligence claims, embassy evacuations and presidential threats of another assault cannot be denied.

The Houthis said they attacked Riyadh's international airport Sunday, hours after flights resumed after a closure lasting more than two weeks. Military spokesman Yahya Saree claimed a successful ballistic-missile strike and

drone attacks on oil pumping stations.

Saudi coalition spokesman Turki Al-Malki contradicted the Houthi claims saying air defenses intercepted and destroyed the ballistic missile directed toward Riyadh and Saudi authorities also announced drone interceptions.

On Saturday, President Trump celebrated the economic consequences for oil producers while dismissing the burden of high gasoline prices on consumers. At a Georgia rally, the falsifier-in-chief Trump declared: "So we're making hundreds and hundreds of billions, trillions of dollars," ignoring his advisors' warnings not to bring it up. The facts are that ExxonMobil's official second-quarter results recorded a doubling of earnings to \$14.525 billion, while Chevron's quarterly profit quadrupled to \$12.1 billion.

Meanwhile, the price of regular gasoline averaged \$4.28 a gallon on October 19, up \$1.22 from a year earlier, according to EIA figures cited by Yahoo Finance. Higher transportation and energy costs are spreading through household budgets. A *New York Times*/Siena poll found 73 percent disapproval of Trump's handling of gasoline prices and 65 percent disapproval of his handling of the Iran war.

The Democrats offer no opposition to the catastrophic war insanity of the Trump administration. While exploiting public anger over the rising cost of living and the decline of real wages, the Democrats support the imperialist war objectives against Iran, while criticizing Trump's Russia policy with demands for a greater confrontation with a nuclear armed country.

The WSWS previously reported the senior House Democrats' October 20 pledge to compel additional security, economic and intelligence support for Ukraine, alongside Democratic denunciations of Trump's "energy ceasefire" with Russia. The Iran war and the US-NATO confrontation with Russia through Ukraine are interconnected fronts of an expanding world war supported by both capitalist parties.



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