



## **WATCH: US ready to restart combat if no Iran deal reached, Hegseth says**

*April 16, 2026 jpost.com* reported: "Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth asserted that the US military is ready to restart combat against Iran if no ceasefire deal is reached, during a briefing regarding Iran on Thursday.

"While you are digging out bombed-out and devastated facilities, we are only getting stronger," Hegseth said.

Hegseth stated that he had a message for the Iranian leadership: "We are watching you. Your capabilities are not the same as ours. Remember, this is not a fair fight."

He added that, at the direction of US President Donald Trump, the US will never allow Iran to develop or acquire nuclear weapons.

"We'd prefer to do it the nice way through a deal led by our vice president and negotiating team," Hegseth said, "or we can do it the hard way. We urge this new regime to choose wisely."

"If Iran chooses poorly, then they will have a blockade and bombs dropping on infrastructure, power, and energy," he threatened..."

## **Defense Minister: Iran stands at a crossroads, before an abyss of ruin**

*April 16, 2026 israelnationalnews.com* reported: "Israeli Minister of Defense Israel Katz delivered an address on Thursday during a memorial ceremony for the fallen family members of the Defense Ministry.

In his address, Katz set a clear ultimatum for the Iranian regime, clarifying that Israel is prepared to dramatically escalate its military response if Tehran continues on the path of confrontation and terrorism.

Katz described Iran's current position as being at a "historic crossroads." According to him, the Iranian leadership could take one of two paths: The one, adopting the American proposal, which includes giving up terrorism and its nuclear program in exchange for stability and economic rehabilitation, and the other, to be persistent in its aggression which will lead it to "an abyss of isolation and ruin."

The Minister stressed that Israel has already proved its abilities when it hit significant strategic targets on Iranian soil, but hinted that it was only the tip of the iceberg.

In a direct message to the Iranian leadership, the defense minister warned that Israel has an expansive bank of targets which has yet been expended. "If the Iranian regime chooses the second path, it will learn very quickly that the targets that haven't been hit yet hurt more than those we have struck," Katz declared. He added that the IDF will not hesitate to act again with greater force to neutralize any strategic threat to Israel's security..."

## **Iran's regime fears peace more than war**

*April 15, 2026 wnd.com* reported: "The failure of negotiations between Iran and the United States on April 12 reveals a critical reality: For the Iranian regime, peace is not a solution – it is a threat.

Far from seeking de-escalation, Tehran remains deeply committed to a long-time strategy built on three pillars: its nuclear program, its ballistic missile development and its network of proxy forces.

As Maryam Rajavi, leader of the opposition National Council of Resistance of Iran, noted on March 26, this strategic framework is not negotiable for the regime. Recent moves, including the promotion of Khamenei's son as a potential successor, further signal continuity rather than change.

Ayatollah Khomeini, the founder of the Islamic Republic, who wielded considerable charisma among his followers, famously described accepting the indispensable ceasefire in the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war as "drinking a chalice of poison." To compensate for this retreat – in stark contrast to his earlier slogan, "We will fight to the last house in Tehran" – he issued a fatwa ordering the execution of some 30,000 political prisoners in 1988, individuals who had remained steadfast in their opposition to the regime.

Around 90% of them were members of the People's Mojahedin Organization of Iran, the principal force of the resistance. Rooted in rigid, outdated dogma, this theocratic regime has proven unable to meet the demands of its people in the 21st century and has relied on repression since its inception. To mask this reality, it has consistently



*Israel Defense Minister Katz*

manufactured external enemies or fueled crises along its borders. In this context, peace is not an opportunity for the regime; it is a threat to its survival.

Today, peace – or even a temporary ceasefire – may pose a far greater danger to a regime lacking a charismatic leader like Khomeini than it did during the latter's era. The authorities' primary concern appears to be that the Iranian people could seize this moment to reignite a nationwide uprising, particularly at a time when the regime is significantly weakened.

Gholamreza Ghasemian, a cleric close to the leadership, warned explicitly on April 8 that any reduction in the security presence in the streets could lead to "sedition"..."

### **Chinese-built satellite in Iranian hands tracked US bases – report**

*April 15, 2026 jpost.com* reported: "Iran secretly acquired a Chinese spy satellite, giving the Islamic Republic a new capability to target US military bases across the Middle East during the recent war, *the Financial Times* reported on Wednesday.

The TEE-01B satellite, built and launched by the Chinese company Earth Eye Co, was acquired by the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps' Aerospace Force in late 2024 after it was launched into space from China, the report said, citing leaked Iranian military documents.

The Iranian military commanders directed the satellite to monitor major US military sites, the newspaper said, citing time-stamped coordinate lists, satellite imagery, and orbital analysis. The images were taken in March, before and after drone and missile strikes on those locations, *FT* said.

In response to the report, China's Foreign Ministry stated to *Reuters* that the notion of Iran using its satellite to direct attacks on US targets was – 'not true.' The White House, CIA, Pentagon, as well as Earth Eye Co. and Emposat, did not immediately respond to *Reuters* requests for comment..."

### **Chinese tanker sanctioned by US crosses Strait of Hormuz despite blockade**

*April 14, 2026 jpost.com* reported: "A Chinese tanker sanctioned by the United States passed through the Strait of Hormuz on Tuesday despite a US blockade on the chokepoint, shipping data showed.

The *Rich Starry* would be the first to make it through the strait and to exit the Gulf since the blockade began, data from LSEG, Marine Traffic and Kpler showed. The tanker and its owner Shanghai Xuanrun Shipping Co Ltd were sanctioned by the United States for dealing with Iran. The company could not be immediately reached for comment.



*Rich Starry Tanker*

*Rich Starry* is a medium-range tanker that is carrying about 250,000 barrels of methanol on board, according to the data. It loaded the cargo at its last port of call, the United Arab Emirates' Hamriyah, the data showed. The Chinese-owned tanker has Chinese crew on board, the data showed.

Another US-sanctioned tanker Murlikishan also headed into the strait on Tuesday, LSEG data showed. The empty handy size tanker is expected to load fuel oil at Iraq on April 16, Kpler data showed. The vessel, formerly known as MKA, has transported Russian and Iranian oil.

The US military officially began a blockade of Iran's ports on Monday, angering Tehran and adding uncertainty around the crucial waterway, although hopes for dialogue to end the war provided some relief to oil markets, where benchmark prices fell below \$100 on Tuesday..."

### **France, Spain's anti-Israel bias push Israel-Europe relations to new heights**

*April 13, 2026 jpost.com* reported: According to unnamed sources quoted in Israeli media on Sunday, Israel refused to allow France to participate in mediation talks between it and Lebanon, claiming France is an "unfair mediator."

Last week, an incident in Lebanon involving Israeli warning shots towards a UN convoy of Spanish and Italian peacekeeping soldiers added to already heightened tensions between the countries.

"In terms of relations with the State of Israel, Israel still has a lot of credit in its contribution to the EU, especially in terms of innovation, especially in its security and defense industry, which Europe needs," Dr. Maya Sion-Tzidkiyahu, director of the Israel-Europe Relations Program at the Mitvim Institute and a lecturer at the Hebrew University European Forum, told The Media Line..."