



Trump Learns Iran's 'Art of the Deal' as Tehran Negotiators Come Under Hardline Fire

July 2, 2026 haaretz.com reported: "According to reports from the negotiations, the sides appear to have reached at least a preliminary understanding on the issue of Iran's frozen assets. Saudi outlet Al Arabiya reported that the United States had agreed to release \$3 billion of the roughly \$24 billion in Iranian funds currently frozen abroad.

It remains unclear whether that amount will satisfy Tehran or what Iran would offer in return. At the start of the negotiations, Iran reportedly demanded the immediate release of \$12 billion, along with guarantees that the remaining funds would be unfrozen as talks progressed.

The dispute over the frozen assets has become more than just a sticking point between Washington and Tehran. It has also fueled fierce opposition from Iran's hardline camp, which opposes the negotiations altogether and views any financial compromise with the United States as a betrayal of Supreme Leader Mojtaba Khamenei's directives..."

Ukraine has brought the (drone) war to Russia. But it may prolong the fighting.

June 29, 2026 The Christian Science Monitor reported: "Alexei Mukhin says he was vacationing at a Black Sea resort near Sochi in late June when an incoming Ukrainian drone was shot down by Russian air defenses, with a loud explosion, in full sight of a beach crowded with people.

"The thing is, no one looked particularly surprised. Many people didn't even seem to notice," says Mr. Mukhin, head of the Center for Political Information, a Moscow-based independent consultancy. "It's a near-daily occurrence around there, and people are getting used to it. I felt like the most nervous person on that beach."



Drone Swarm

Ukrainian drone strikes deep into Russia's heartland – including a wave on Monday night – are causing fuel shortages and long lines at gas stations, even in Moscow. The attacks are dampening the mood of average Russians more visibly than at any time since the war in Ukraine began 4 1/2 years ago. For many Russians, particularly in the capital, it's the first time the war has struck so close to home. People have been irritated by internet and cellphone disruptions that authorities say are war-related, and small businesses have been hit with tax increases due to the rising costs of the war, but spending hours trying to fill the gas tank is a new level of inconvenience.

"The increase in drone attacks is putting pressure on the economy, civil infrastructure, and it's certainly affecting the public mood," says Sergei Strokan, an independent political analyst. "Social tension is rising. People are worried. Things are obviously not going on as before."

But experts such as Mr. Strokan and Mr. Mukhin say the idea that Russians are likely to panic, even as the pressure ramps up, is misguided. Though public exhaustion with the war is growing, and the number of people who favor peace talks is high, experts say the voices calling for tougher prosecution of the war against Ukraine are also becoming louder and more persuasive..."

'We're really circling back to this?'

June 30, 2026 World Net Daily reported: "It was some 40 years ago that the AIDS catastrophe struck America, mostly in the homosexual community. The Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome proved a lethal threat, and the response included a decision by the city of Minneapolis to ban gay bathhouses, the scenes of rampant sexual activity.

Now the city is bringing them back. The Minneapolis City Council recently approved repealing a ban on adult bathhouses, with nine members of a 13-person council endorsing that action. When the new locations open, "consenting adults can legally engage in sexual activity" there, according to reports. The plan also provides exemptions to existing "indecent conduct laws" so that that activity can happen.

The ban, back in the day, even had the support of Councilman Brian Coyle, the first-known gay Minneapolis city councilor who later died of AIDS-related illnesses. Bathhouses had been confirmed as hot spots for HIV transmission, and in 1988 there were 447 cases reported to the state.

Coyle explained at the time he was moved to support the ban because of the gravity of the threat for homosexuals engaging in bathhouse behavior. He said, back then, "I have some people who won't speak to me. This is one of those tougher issues because it's so emotionally laden and passionate. It deals with the stuff of life and death. I've been taking the flak on it for months..."

Now councilman Jason Chavez proposed the repeal. "I believe if Brian Coyle was here with us today, with everything we know about public health, he would be standing with us proudly and me on this council," Chavez claimed. A report at Lifesitenews said Mayor Jacob Frey hailed the decision as a victory for homosexuals.

In flare-up over Hormuz, a hint at US-Iran roller coaster to come

June 29, 2026 The Christian Science Monitor reported: "The United States and Iran late Sunday pulled back from their escalating attacks over the Strait of Hormuz, a flare-up that had tested a fragile ceasefire and called into question both sides' desire to avoid a full return to battle.

The tit-for-tat exchanges saw Iran target two commercial vessels passing through the strategic waterway, U.S. retaliatory strikes against Iranian coastal military targets, and then, in response, Iran's launching of ballistic missiles and drones at Kuwait and Bahrain, which host U.S. forces.

Yet such surges of violence are expected, analysts say, as both sides seek to maximize leverage over key issues covered by a 14-point memorandum of understanding, agreed to on June 17, that sought to defuse the conflict. The memorandum, or MoU, requires a full opening of the strait for 60 days amid negotiations over Iran's nuclear program – a core dispute between the two sides – and can be extended by mutual consent.

Iran's closure of the Strait of Hormuz after Feb. 28, when the United States and Israel jointly launched surprise attacks against the Islamic Republic, caused a global surge in energy, food, and fertilizer prices. The risk of recession and the near-depletion of global oil reserves are believed to have convinced U.S. President Donald Trump to seek a ceasefire.

"I fully expect more ups and downs, and back and forth, for the duration of the 60, if not 90, if not 120 days," says Sanam Vakil, director of the Middle East and North Africa Program at Chatham House, a London-based think tank.

"We all know that negotiating with the Iranians is not for the faint-hearted, and this is [a U.S.] administration that also doesn't have patience for details, so it's going to be very bumpy," says Dr. Vakil..."

Putin's troops have 'just a 20-min life expectancy' on frontline as humiliated tyrant lures in 1,000 new soldiers a day

June 29, 2026 The U.S. Sun reported: "Vladimir Putin's cannon fodder troops have as little as a 20-minute life expectancy on the battlefield, a terrifying report claims.

The Russian tyrant, who admitted Moscow is having "problems" with the Ukraine invasion, is also luring about 1,000 recruits per day to fuel his dwindling war machine. Last weekend, he also announced he had rejected a Ukrainian plan to scale down strikes on Russia in a bid to move closer to peace.

From the moment they arrive at training grounds in preparation for war, Russian soldiers have 10 days to three weeks left to live, according to a Foreign Policy report, citing military bloggers.

The chilling investigation also found that once troops are deployed into front line combat, they have an average life expectancy of just 20 to 35 minutes. The harrowing statistic highlights the superiority of drone warfare and Ukraine's stern defence.

For every eight Russian front-line deaths or serious injuries, Kyiv is reportedly losing just one soldier. Moscow is now desperate to rejuvenate its shocking battlefield losses as the war drags towards its fifth year. In late 2025, the Kremlin said they had recruited more than 420,000 new soldiers for year-long military contracts. But even state media has admitted that sign-up numbers are down about 30 per cent this year..."

Venezuela earthquakes hit nation at an already delicate moment

June 26, 2026 The Christian Science Monitor reported: "He was watching a soccer match in his fifth-floor apartment in the coastal city of La Guaira, Venezuela, when phones in the room began warning that an earthquake was coming. His pregnant wife, Marbelys, ran out of the bedroom. Mr. Soto thought they should head for the stairs, but instead they moved toward a column.

Then, he says, the building folded around them. "It was like a whip," Mr. Soto says by phone. "The fifth, sixth, and seventh floors collapsed toward the basement, and I was left standing in the open air."

The 7.2 and 7.5 magnitude temblors that struck in quick succession on the northern coast of Venezuela just after 6 p.m. Wednesday have left 920 people confirmed dead and more than 3,000 wounded, according to the government. More than 52,000 are reported missing on an independent website. The death toll is expected to climb. These were some of the strongest earthquakes to hit Venezuela in decades, and they took place at a historically delicate moment..."

Richter scale

Level	Description	Occurrence
>9.0	Great	1 per 10 years
8.0-8.9	Great	1 per year
7.0-7.9	Major	10 per year
6.0-6.9	Strong	100 per year
5.0-5.9	Moderate	1,000 per year
4.0-4.9	Light	10,000 per year
3.0-3.9	Minor	100,000 per year
2.0-2.9	Minor	One million per year
1.0-1.9	Micro	100 million per year