OPEN-SOURCE PRESS INTELLIGENCE

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Daily Front-Page Intelligence

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TERMS AND TARGETS EDITION

Nine Persian front pages of 30 Shahrivar 1405, read alongside six outlet channels and three agency wires; the English government daily available was two cycles old and Tehran Times was not available at the time of compilation.

Front pages published the morning of 21 September 2026, reflecting events through late 20 September local.

Defensive open-source press-intelligence. Hostile rhetoric is quoted and translated for attribution and analysis only; nothing herein endorses or amplifies it.



Front page: Farhikhtegan

Executive Summary

The lead judgment of this edition is that the negotiating position and the threat have been published together, deliberately, and that the Iranian press has printed the doctrine that reconciles them. One cycle ago this monitor recorded that every front page printed three of Iran's conditions while the count of seven sat only on the outlet channels, and filed the four withheld terms as the part of the file that open sources could not reach. This morning the count crossed onto the page. Farhikhtegan gives its whole cover to «تصمیم ایران», Iran's decision, over a deck in which the Secretary of the Supreme National Security Council, the Speaker of Parliament and the Foreign Ministry speak as one: «یا آمریکا شکست را بپذیرد و شروط ۷ گانه ایران را قبول کند یا با شگفتانه‌های نظامی جدید آماده دفاع از ایران هستیم», either America accepts defeat and accepts Iran's seven conditions, or we are ready to defend Iran with new military surprises. Qods prints the same count with the route attached: «ایران شروط هفت‌گانه آغاز مذاکره را از مسیر قطر و پاکستان به واشنگتن رسانده است», Iran has conveyed the sevenfold conditions to Washington by way of Qatar and Pakistan. The count is now public. The four withheld terms are not, and that has not changed.

On the same morning, and on five separate surfaces, the Khatam al-Anbia Central Headquarters put the neighbours on the list. Kayhan gives it the full banner: «کشورهای منطقه اگر با آمریکا همراهی کنند هدف قرار می‌گیرند», the countries of the region, if they go along with America, will be targeted. Iran carries it as the kicker above its own lead, Shargh as the sub-kicker under a question mark, Seda-ye Iran as a right-rail box, Sobh-e No on its channel with the scope spelled out as continuous strikes on all American basing centers and interests in the region. The statement is corroborated in outline by non-Iranian reporting of 20 September. Only Kayhan adds a venue for the meeting it alleges, Germany, and that detail appears nowhere else on any surface, Iranian or foreign. Read against the record, the substance is not new: the targeting of states that host American bases was in Mojtaba Khamenei's only published statement, in March. What is new is who is saying it, and to whom. The terms went to Washington through Qatar and Pakistan. The threat went to the region that contains them.

The third group of covers is the one that makes this a policy rather than a contradiction. The government daily leads on the Speaker: «قالیباف: دوگانه جنگ یا مذاکره واقعی نیست، هم باید جنگید هم مذاکره کرد», the war-or-negotiation dichotomy is not real, one must both fight and negotiate. Khorasan states the same thing as its own analysis rather than as a quotation, «منطق نبرد و تفاهم», the logic of battle and understanding, arguing that the recent statements of Rezaei and Ghalibaf reveal war and negotiation to be two complementary instruments of the national interest. Sobh-e No's own front page for the day, carried on its channel, reads «می‌جنگیم و مذاکره می‌کنیم», we fight and we negotiate. Four surfaces, three factions, one formula, on the morning a fifth set prints the terms and a sixth prints the threat. That is not editorial convergence on a news event; it is the publication of a doctrine, and the doctrine's function is to make the terms and the target list legible as a single posture rather than as a split.

The chokepoint file moved in the direction this monitor named one cycle ago, and further. On 20 September this file judged that the Hormuz bypass was being closed at its Red Sea outlet and that Bab al-Mandab had displaced the Aramco restoration timetable as the decisive variable. Vatan-e Emrooz's channel now carries the chair of Yemen's Supreme Political Council saying Bab al-Mandab is safe for everyone except Saudi vessels, and external reporting confirms a declared closure aimed at Saudi shipping alone, framed as a blockade for a blockade, with American ships expressly exempted. A second chokepoint is under selective closure, and the selection is the finding: the Yemeni instrument exempts the United States while the Iranian front pages threaten any regional state that assists the United States. Two coercion theories are running on one axis, and they point at different targets. Meanwhile the Iran-Oman understanding on safe passage

through Hormuz, which this monitor recorded on 20 September as the first mechanism capable of unwinding the closure without a concession, appears today on no front page and on no channel at all.

The edition's one unambiguous fact is a domestic one, and it is the state's own. Nobonyad gives its entire cover to «۱۰ منفی٪», minus ten percent, over a photograph of President Masoud Pezeshkian holding a sectoral chart to a conference room, reporting the Statistical Center's finding that real output in the quarter ending 20 June fell by about a tenth against the year before, with oil and gas down roughly a quarter. That quarter is the first full quarter of the war, and the figure is confirmed by international reporting of the same release. What the page does with it is the point: directly above the number runs «اصرار بر خطای مذاکراتی», insistence on the negotiating error, and a rail column keeps the threat of leaving the Non-Proliferation Treaty alive. A principlist title printed the war's cost in full and argued on the same page against the exit from it, which is only coherent if the cost is offered as the price of endurance rather than as an argument.

Two things are missing and both are findings. Lebanon appears on no front page in this batch, and the only Lebanon-adjacent voice anywhere in the day's material is Mojtaba Amani, who served as Iran's ambassador in Beirut until February, talking about regional security architecture on the government daily's channel. For a file whose standing brief puts Israel, the United States and Lebanon first, a full batch with no Lebanese item is a change of shape worth recording. And for a seventh consecutive cycle the serving Leader publishes nothing: no message, no speech, no quoted remark on any of ten scans or nine channels, while the operational command restates his March policy across the factional press, Kayhan's boxed note warns the President to beware the pro-Western current's prescriptions when he reaches New York, and the national succession campaign that led Kayhan's rail yesterday is gone from Kayhan today.

Net assessment: this is a fully assembled negotiating posture published in one edition, and the assembly is now visible in a way it was not yesterday. Yesterday the terms and the nuclear ambiguity were split cleanly between factions and the split looked like discipline through selection. Today the parts are not split at all: the same batch carries the count of seven, the route through Qatar and Pakistan, the ultimatum wording, the threat to the neighbours, and the doctrine that says the two are complementary. A press that can print a demand, a threat and the formula reconciling them on one morning is not disagreeing about policy. The pressure, though, is on the page as well: the state's own quarterly number, the school-year cost series, a second chokepoint whose closure exempts the adversary Iran is threatening the region over, and a de-escalation channel that has vanished from view for a cycle. What is being advertised is strength. What is being published alongside it is the price.

BOTTOM LINE Iran put the number seven on a front page this morning and put every neighbour on a target list in the same edition, and a third set of covers printed the doctrine that makes the two one policy: terms conveyed through Qatar and Pakistan, a threat to any state that helps the government those terms are addressed to, and the formula that Iran must fight and negotiate at once.

CRITICAL SOURCING NOTE Nine Persian front pages of 30 Shahrivar 1405 (Shargh, Farhikhtegan, Asr-e Iranian, Khorasan, Qods, Nobonyad, Iran, Seda-ye Iran, Kayhan) from the NewspaperTasnim kiosk album posted 03:26 UTC on 21 September; the album's printed Jalali date matched the target date, so the stale-batch guard passed on the first attempt. Six outlet channels and three agency wires were read for corroboration, with agency material treated as claims throughout. The only English-language front page available was Iran Daily of 19 September, two cycles old, recorded for coverage accounting and carrying no weight in the judgments; Tehran Times and the Leader's office publication site were not available at the time of compilation, and Kayhan's front-page «یادداشت روز» could not be retrieved, so its title is reported as printed with no author or argument attributed. Independently confirmed for this edition: the quarterly contraction of about ten percent; the seven conditions with three disclosed and four withheld, and the Qatari and Pakistani channel; the Khatam al-Anbia statement in outline; the Bab al-

Mandab exemption of all but Saudi shipping; the death of Grand Ayatollah Seyyed Mousa Shobeiri Zanjani on 21 September at 98; and the scale of the drone attack during Russia's State Duma vote that Shargh's lead photograph reports. Carried as uncorroborated Iranian claims and not adopted: the Germany venue, single-sourced to Kayhan; the destruction of an American MQ-1 over the Strait of Hormuz; the strike on a vessel carrying seventeen buses; the cumulative claim of a fifty-second American MQ-9 downed; and the IRGC spokesman's assertions about American bases and intelligence centers, whose speaker's personal name could not be verified independently and is therefore not asserted anywhere in this edition.

Macro Trend Analysis

1 The count crossed onto the page, the content did not

One cycle ago the front pages printed three conditions and the channels printed seven, and this monitor filed the gap between them as the shape of the actual policy. Today «شروط ۷ گانه» leads Farhikhtegan and «شروط هفت‌گانه» sits in Qods's box with the mediation route attached. What moved is the number, not the terms: three conditions remain the disclosed set and four remain withheld. A position advertised by its length rather than its content is being used to signal seriousness to a domestic audience while staying testable only in private, and the migration of the count from channel to cover in a single cycle shows how fast this press moves a figure once the decision to publish it is taken.

2 The threat moved from the forces to the neighbours

For most of this series the targeting language has named American bases, ships and personnel. The Khatam al-Anbia statement carried on five surfaces this morning names states: any regional country that goes along with an American action is placed on the list, with continuous strikes on all American basing centers and interests promised in the fullest rendering. This is the military articulation of the policy Mojtaba Khamenei set out in March and it arrives in the same edition as terms conveyed to Washington through two of the region's governments. The coercive target set and the diplomatic channel now overlap.

3 Fight-and-negotiate became a stated doctrine rather than an implied one

Ghalibaf on the government daily's cover, Khorasan as its own analysis, Sobh-e No as its front-page headline and Farhikhtegan as an either-or ultimatum all print the same formula within one batch: the choice between war and negotiation is false and Iran does both. Yesterday the terms and the nuclear ambiguity were allocated cleanly between factions and the discipline showed as selection. Today the same batch carries every part of the posture at once and supplies the sentence that holds them together, which is a more confident form of message management and a harder one to read as factional disagreement.

4 A second chokepoint, closed selectively, and pointed elsewhere

Bab al-Mandab is now under a declared closure that exempts everyone but Saudi vessels, with American shipping explicitly excluded from the threat, at the same moment the Iranian front pages threaten any regional state that assists America. The Hormuz closure was general and aimed at world trade; this one is narrow and aimed at one government. Two instruments with different logics are running on one axis, and the narrower one is by construction easier to trade away. Track whether the Iranian press begins to print the Yemeni exemption, which it has so far not done.

5 The de-escalation mechanism has disappeared rather than been argued with

On 20 September the Foreign Ministry spokesman was quoted on a principlist channel saying Iran and Oman had reached an understanding on safe passage routes through the Strait of Hormuz, and this monitor recorded it as the first mechanism capable of unwinding the closure without a concession, absent from every front page. Today it is absent from the channels as well. Nothing contradicted it and nothing advanced it. An

item that appears once on a single surface and then vanishes is the pattern this file has previously seen around arrangements that are proceeding but are not to be discussed, and it should be watched for rather than written off.

6 The domestic number is now the most verifiable thing on any cover

Nobonyad's minus ten percent is the state's own statistic, externally confirmed, and it is the hardest domestic figure this series has recorded on a front page. It arrives with the school-cost series on Etemad Online showing food inflation at 127.5 percent year on year and per-child monthly costs at a quarter to a half of a worker's wage. The Iranian press is at its most accurate when the number is Iranian and at its least when the number is American, which inverts the asymmetry recorded on 20 September and suggests the domestic cost has passed the point where it can be managed by omission.

7 Sourcing is being laundered in both directions on the same page

Seda-ye Iran reprints a genuine American editorial cartoon about American fuel prices, credited on the page, as evidence of the adversary's distress, and on the same cover illustrates its drone claim with a screenshot of an English-language social-media post that is itself quoting Fars News. One Iranian wire assertion travels into English, acquires the appearance of foreign confirmation, and returns to an Iranian front page as a picture. The masthead demonstrably can source real adversary material, which makes the round trip a technique rather than a shortcut, and it is the clearest instance of the pattern this file has yet recorded.

8 The Saudi isolation list keeps changing its members

Yesterday Sobh-e No's cover had America, Britain, Pakistan, Turkey and Egypt all refusing Saudi requests. Today the same paper's channel has the requests going to France, Britain, Pakistan and Egypt, with Egypt refusing, and France appearing where America and Turkey stood. No Saudi, French, British or Pakistani source has appeared on any surface across either cycle. A list whose membership turns over from one day to the next, with the refusals asserted and never sourced, is placement rather than reporting, and the second cycle of turnover is what makes that judgment safe to hold.

9 Authority is being exercised by everyone except the Leader

A seventh consecutive cycle passes with no message, speech or quoted remark from Seyyed Mojtaba Khamenei on ten scans and nine channels. In that silence, the security council sets the terms, the Speaker states the doctrine, the operational command issues the threat, and the Leader's own flagship daily prints a boxed instruction to the President about what to avoid in New York. Yesterday's national succession campaign, «برای پدر، به عشق پسر», does not appear on Kayhan's page today. The office is not filling the silence with liturgy this cycle; it is simply being spoken for.

Key Judgments

KJ-1 [HIGH] **The count of seven crossed from the channels onto the front pages in a single cycle, and the four withheld terms did not.** Farhikhtegan's cover deck reads «یا آمریکا شکست را بپذیرد و شروط ۷ گانه ایران را قبول کند یا با شگفتانه‌های نظامی جدید آماده دفاع از ایران هستیم», attributing the sentence jointly to the Secretary of the Supreme National Security Council, the Speaker of Parliament and the Foreign Ministry. Qods's box reads «ایران شروط هفت‌گانه آغاز مذاکره را از مسیر قطر و پاکستان به واشنگتن رسانده است» and adds the page's own judgment that «شرایط برای مذاکره هنوز فراهم نیست», the conditions for negotiation are not yet in place. External reporting confirms three disclosed terms, four withheld, conveyed through Qatar, with Qatar and Pakistan both working the channel since the memorandum of understanding lapsed last month. On 20 September this monitor named the missing count as the gap between the page and the file; the gap closed in one cycle and closed only on the number. The significance is that Iran is now

advertising the size of its demand to its own readers while keeping its content available only to Washington, which converts a negotiating position into a public ultimatum that no domestic audience can evaluate and no foreign analyst can read.

KJ-2 [HIGH] **The joint operational command extended the target list from American forces to any regional state that assists them, and five separate surfaces carried it on one morning.** Kayhan gives the full banner to «قرارگاه خاتم‌الانبیا(ص): کشورهای منطقه اگر با آمریکا همراهی کنند هدف قرار می‌گیرند»; the government daily runs it as the kicker above its own lead; Shargh as the sub-kicker beneath a question; Seda-ye Iran as «خطا کنید هدف حملات دردناک قرار خواهید گرفت»; and Sobh-e No's channel (116086) with the scope as continuous strikes on all American basing centers and interests in the region. Non-Iranian reporting of 20 and 21 September corroborates the statement in outline, describing intelligence of American planning after consultations with regional partners. The substance restates the policy in Mojtaba Khamenei's only published statement, of March 2026. The significance is the addressee: the terms were sent to Washington through Qatar and Pakistan, and the threat was published to the region those two states sit in, which means the mediators are inside the target set of the message they are carrying.

KJ-3 [HIGH] **The Iranian press published the doctrine that makes the terms and the threat one policy, and it published it across the factional spectrum in a single batch.** The government daily leads «قالیباف: دوگانه جنگ یا مذاکره واقعی نیست، هم باید جنگید هم مذاکره کرد»; Khorasan states it as its own analysis, «منطق نبرد و تفاهم», with the deck arguing that the recent statements of Rezaei and Ghalibaf show war and negotiation to be complementary instruments of the national interest; Sobh-e No's own front page reads «می‌جنگیم و مذاکره می‌کنیم»; Farhikhtegan's deck builds the same logic into an either-or. One cycle ago this monitor recorded a single interview split cleanly between camps and judged the discipline to be operating through selection. That reading is now superseded. The significance is that this edition does not need selection: the same batch carries the demand, the threat and the formula reconciling them, which indicates a message architecture confident enough to publish its own seams, and it removes the factional read as an explanation for what the covers print.

KJ-4 [HIGH] **A second maritime chokepoint is under declared selective closure, and its exemptions point away from the target set the Iranian covers are threatening.** Vatan-e Emrooz's channel (25729) carries the chair of Yemen's Supreme Political Council saying Bab al-Mandab is safe for all but Saudi vessels; item 25743 has Ansarullah taking the Rasin heights west of al-Turbah. External reporting confirms the completed control of the Bab al-Mandab approaches, the Supreme Political Council's declaration that navigation is secure except for ships of the Saudi enemy, the blockade-for-blockade framing, and the explicit exemption of American vessels. On 20 September this monitor judged that Bab al-Mandab had replaced the Aramco restoration timetable as the decisive variable in the bypass file; that judgment is now carried by the facts and further than it went. The significance is the asymmetry. The Yemeni instrument spares the United States and squeezes one Gulf government; the Iranian front pages spare no regional government that helps the United States. These are different theories of coercion running on the same axis, the narrower one is by construction the easier to trade, and no Iranian front page has yet printed the exemption.

KJ-5 [HIGH] **The war's cost to the Iranian economy is now a front-page number, it is the state's own, and it is the most verifiable fact in the edition.** Nobonyad gives its whole cover to «۱۰ منفی٪» over «جدیدترین گزارش مرکز آمار از میزان رشد اقتصادی کشور در بهار ۱۴۰۵ منتشر شد», with President Masoud Pezeshkian photographed holding a sectoral chart. International reporting of the same Statistical Center

release confirms a fall of about ten percent in real output for the quarter of 21 March to 20 June against the year before, with crude oil and natural gas down roughly a quarter and mining and manufacturing down roughly a seventh; that quarter is the first full quarter of the war. Etemad Online (534755) prices the same period domestically at 127.5 percent annual food inflation and a per-child monthly school cost running at a quarter to a half of a typical wage. The significance is in what the cover does next: directly above the number sits «اصرار بر خطای مذاکراتی», insistence on the negotiating error, and a rail column sustaining the threat to leave the Non-Proliferation Treaty. A principlist title has chosen to publish the full cost and argue against the exit on the same page, which reads the contraction as the price of endurance and is the clearest statement yet of what the hardline case now costs to make.

KJ-6 [MODERATE-HIGH] **Negative evidence: a seventh consecutive cycle of total silence from the serving Leader, with his policy being restated by the command and his President being instructed by his newspaper.** Across ten scans and nine channels there is no message, speech, decree or directly quoted remark from Seyyed Mojtaba Khamenei; the office's own publication site could not be reached, and an independent search returns nothing attributed to him in September 2026. In the same edition, the Khatam al-Anbia statement restates the targeting of states that host American forces, which was his March position; and Kayhan runs a boxed instruction, «آقای پزشکیان! در نیویورک مراقب نسخه‌های خطرناک جریان غربگرا باشید», Mr Pezeshkian, in New York beware the dangerous prescriptions of the pro-Western current, the only reference in the batch to the President's presence at the United Nations. Yesterday's national succession campaign, «برای پدر، به عشق پسر», is absent from Kayhan's page today. Confidence is held rather than raised because absence across eleven surfaces is consistent with a communications choice as well as with an incapacity. The significance is that the office is no longer even furnishing the silence with liturgy: it is being spoken for by the command, by the Speaker and by its own daily, and that is a more durable arrangement than a campaign.

KJ-7 [MODERATE-HIGH] **Negative evidence: the one mechanism capable of unwinding the Hormuz closure without a concession has now vanished from the channels as well as the covers.** On 20 September this monitor recorded the Foreign Ministry spokesman on Sobh-e No's channel stating that Iran and Oman had reached an understanding on determining safe passage routes through the Strait, placed it against external reporting of an Iran-Oman corridor process running since late August, and filed its absence from every front page as a finding. Today it is absent from all nine channels and all nine covers. Nothing contradicted it; nothing advanced it; no Iranian surface returned to it. Sobh-e No's own channel instead runs three commentaries arguing that Iran commands two energy arteries and should convert that position into a regional settlement before the window closes. The significance is that the corridor and the commentary are the same argument at different levels of deniability, and the disappearance of the concrete item while the abstract case for trading the chokepoints expands is the pattern this file associates with an arrangement proceeding out of view. Treat a second silent cycle as reinforcing, not as closing, this line.

KJ-8 [MODERATE-HIGH] **Negative evidence: Lebanon is absent from every front page in the batch, for the first time this monitor has recorded.** Nine Persian covers carry no Lebanese item of any kind. The only Lebanon-adjacent voice anywhere in the day's material is Mojtaba Amani, who served as Iran's ambassador in Beirut until February 2026 and now appears on the government daily's channel (507479) discussing regional security architecture and a shift away from American-dependent frameworks, without Lebanon as his subject. Against a standing brief that puts Israel, the United States and Lebanon first, and against a file in which Lebanon has been a live flashpoint since the memorandum of understanding, a clean absence is a change of shape rather than a quiet day. Israel itself survives on the covers only obliquely:

Netanyahu inside Kayhan's Yemen headline, American and Israeli-linked operatives in Nobonyad's intelligence-ministry item, and a Haaretz-sourced piece on Defa Press. The significance is that the Iranian front pages have reorganized around the Gulf, the Red Sea and Washington, and the Levant has dropped out of the frame at the moment the Red Sea entered it. Whether this is displacement or de-prioritization is the thing the next cycles decide.

KJ-9 [MODERATE] **An Iranian wire claim was exported into English and re-imported onto an Iranian front page as a screenshot, on the same cover that sources a genuine American cartoon correctly.** Seda-ye Iran illustrates «پهپادهای MQ-9 ایران اسلامی جمهوری مسلح نیروهای تیررس در آمریکایی» not with a photograph but with a picture of an English-language post on X which itself quotes a Fars News Agency item claiming the IRGC has downed its fifty-second American MQ-9 since the war began, set against a pre-war American inventory figure. The claim is uncorroborated outside the Iranian press. The same page reprints, with an accurate credit to Ramirez of the Las Vegas Review-Journal for the Washington Post, a real American editorial cartoon about American fuel prices, and builds its main headline on it. The significance is that the masthead is demonstrably capable of sourcing authentic adversary material when it exists, so the round trip on the drone item is a technique for manufacturing the appearance of foreign confirmation rather than a failure of access. Confidence is moderate because a single page cannot establish a practice; the item to watch is whether other titles begin illustrating Iranian claims with screenshots of English renderings of the same claims.

KJ-10 [MODERATE] **Kayhan hardened an official statement by one unshared detail, and runs its own war-day counter three days ahead of the calendar.** Alone in the batch and alone in the available external record, Kayhan places the American, Israeli and Arab military meeting that allegedly authorized a resumption of action against Iran in Germany; Shargh, working from the same statement, prints only «یکی از کشورهای اروپایی», one of the European countries, and the external accounts name no venue at all. Separately, Kayhan's right rail heads «گزارش روز دویست و پنجم جنگ», report of the two hundred and fifth day of the war, which implies a start date of 1 March 2026 against this series' fixed count of Day 202. Neither item changes the statement's substance. The significance is procedural and cumulative: this is the masthead whose specificity consistently exceeds its sourcing, the added detail is always the one that makes the threat more concrete, and an outlet keeping its own war clock is maintaining a frame as well as a number. Log the Germany claim as unconfirmed and watch for it appearing downstream as though it were sourced.

KJ-11 [MODERATE] **The Saudi isolation list turned over its membership for a second consecutive cycle without acquiring a single source.** On 20 September Sobh-e No's cover carried America, Britain, Pakistan, Turkey and Egypt all refusing Saudi military help, and this monitor judged the list assembled rather than reported. Today the same paper's channel (116085) has Saudi air-defense requests going to France, Britain, Pakistan and Egypt, with Egypt refusing and the American supplier constrained by its own inventory, and France standing where America and Turkey stood a day earlier. Across both cycles no Saudi, French, British, Turkish or Pakistani source appears on any Iranian surface. The significance is that the turnover is itself the evidence: a real refusal list does not change three of its five members overnight, and the stable element across both versions is the conclusion rather than any of its parts. Iranian reporting of Riyadh's diplomatic position should continue to be treated as argument, not as intelligence.

KJ-12 [MODERATE] **The most operationally specific claims of the day came from an Iranian official whose name this monitor could not verify, and none of them is corroborated.** Nour News (396163,

396164, 396165), Fars News (463325, 463326) and Etemad Online (534754) all carry the IRGC spokesman saying that America has been defeated and lacks the courage to admit a historic and disgraceful defeat, that American bases in the region can no longer even protect themselves, and that, contrary to the picture painted, Washington's intelligence centers in the Gulf and northern Iraq were reachable and were struck. The third is the most specific assertion in the day's material and the least testable. An independent check of who currently holds the IRGC spokesman's post did not return a confirmation matching the name one outlet printed, so no name is asserted anywhere in this edition. Separately, three surfaces carry the destruction of an American MQ-1 over the Strait of Hormuz and Kayhan's channel (84533) claims an American strike on a vessel carrying seventeen public-transport buses; neither is corroborated outside the Iranian press. The significance is calibration: overstating these would manufacture an escalation the record does not support, and dismissing them would miss the fact that claims of penetrated American intelligence facilities are now being made on the record, by an official, on the morning Iran publishes its terms.

Named-Figure Tracker

Figure	Role / relevance	Today's framing	Flag
Mohsen Rezaei	Secretary of the Supreme National Security Council	Named on Farhikhtegan's deck and in Khorasan's analysis as the source of the seven conditions and the military alternative; externally confirmed as the official who conveyed the terms through Qatar	COERCION SPOKESMAN
Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf	Speaker of Parliament	Leads the government daily with the fight-and-negotiate doctrine; cited on Sobh-e No's channel comparing the American position to Schrodinger's paradox	WATCH
Masoud Pezeshkian	President	Photographed on Nobonyad's cover holding the chart of the war quarter's contraction; addressed in a boxed Kayhan instruction to beware the pro-Western current's prescriptions in New York	WATCH
Seyyed Mojtaba Khamenei	Supreme Leader	No message, speech, decree or quoted remark on any of ten scans or nine channels; his March policy on targeting states that host American forces is restated by the operational command; yesterday's succession campaign gone from Kayhan's page	absence noted
Ebrahim Zolfaghari	Spokesman, Khatam al-Anbia Central Headquarters	Named in external reporting as the voice of the headquarters' September statements; the statement carried on five Iranian surfaces today is attributed to the headquarters rather than to him on any Iranian page	COERCION SPOKESMAN
Donald Trump	President of the United States	Cast as a horned shadow on Asr-e Iranian's full-page illustration under «تله ترامپ»; named in Kayhan's second lead as the address of Riyadh's appeal; awaiting his response to the seven conditions in external reporting	TARGET FRAMING

Figure	Role / relevance	Today's framing	Flag
Benjamin Netanyahu	Prime Minister of Israel	Appears once in the batch, inside Kayhan's Yemen headline as the second address of Riyadh's appeal; no Israeli item leads any cover	TARGET FRAMING
Seyyed Mousa Shobeiri Zanjani	Grand Ayatollah, senior marja of the Qom seminary	Death on 21 September at 98 reported across Jam-e Jam (28396), Nour News (396177) and Etemad Online (534754, 534756), with seminary classes suspended to the end of the week; reaches no front page because the presses had closed	NEW NAMED FIGURE
Ali al-Zaidi	Prime Minister of Iraq	Carried on Jam-e Jam's channel (28391) saying Iraq faces exceptional economic difficulty from the war and the closure of the Strait; the only neighbouring government's voice in the day's material, and a complaint printed without rebuttal	WATCH
Mojtaba Amani	Iranian diplomat; ambassador to Lebanon until February 2026	On the government daily's channel (507479) on regional security architecture and the shift away from American-dependent frameworks; the only Lebanon-adjacent figure anywhere in the day's material, and Lebanon is not his subject	absence noted
Hossein Shariatmadari	Managing editor of Kayhan, appointed by the Leader's office	Signature appears at the foot of the page; the day's «یادداشت روز», «این شکستنی‌های گردن‌گیر!», could not be retrieved and is not attributed to him	WATCH
Mahboobeh Niavaran	Commentator, Sobh-e No	Byline on the day's flagged commentary arguing that Iran commands two energy arteries and must convert the position into a regional settlement before the window closes; concedes the war's cost before making the case	NEW NAMED FIGURE

Headline Summary Table

Outlet	Lead Headline (English)	Orientation	Theme	Threat signal
Farhikhtegan	Iran's decision	Principlist, Azad University	The seven conditions on a front page for the first time, with military surprises as the alternative	HIGH: ultimatum framing
Qods	Diplomacy behind the line of fire	Conservative, Astan Quds Razavi, Mashhad	Seven conditions conveyed to Washington via Qatar and Pakistan; conditions for talks not yet in place	MODERATE-HIGH: mediation route disclosed with the obstacle named
Kayhan	Khatam al-Anbia Headquarters:	Hardline, Supreme	Target list extended to regional states;	SEVERE: neighbours placed

Outlet	Lead Headline (English)	Orientation	Theme	Threat signal
	regional countries that go along with America will be targeted	Leader's office	Yemen's strike at Riyadh; a boxed warning to the President before New York	on the target list
Seda-ye Iran	A Trumpian show to save the gas-pump display	Principlist, KHAMENEI.IR branding in the nameplate	American fuel costs as proof of defeat; the targeting threat repeated; a drone claim laundered through social media	HIGH: targeting threat plus an uncorroborated cumulative drone-kill claim
Iran	Ghalibaf: the war-or-negotiation dichotomy is not real; one must both fight and negotiate	Official government daily	The dual-track doctrine stated by the Speaker, with the military warning demoted to a kicker	MODERATE: war and negotiation as one policy
Khorasan	The logic of battle and understanding	Conservative, Mashhad	War and negotiation read as complementary instruments of the national interest; the batch's only China column	MODERATE: doctrine stated as analysis
Nobonyad	Minus 10 percent	Conservative / principlist	The Statistical Center's contraction for the war quarter, with the negotiating exit rejected on the same page	LOW-MODERATE: domestic cost published in full
Shargh	One step from an escalation of tension?	Reformist	Escalation posed as a question; the largest photograph on the page is Russia's election under drone attack	MODERATE: military claim reported at one remove
Asr-e Iranian	Trump's trap	Conservative	Adversary decline as the driver of events; a full-page caricature in place of reported fact	LOW-MODERATE: rhetoric without operational content
Outlet channels and agency wires	Ansarullah: Bab al-Mandab is safe for everyone except the Saudis	Six newspaper channels, three agency wires	A second chokepoint under selective closure; IRGC claims on American bases and intelligence centers; a senior marja's death after the presses closed	HIGH: second chokepoint closed selectively
Iran Daily (English)	US cannot escape responsibility for war crimes by	English-language	Edition two cycles old, recorded for coverage accounting only	LOW: stale edition

Outlet	Lead Headline (English)	Orientation	Theme	Threat signal
	leaving UN rights council: Deputy FM	government daily		

Per-Paper Front-Page Analysis

Farhikhtegan

Principlist, published by Azad University

“Iran's decision” «تصمیم ایران»

HIGH: ultimatum framing, acceptance of terms or new military surprises



- Main: The cover word is «تصمیم ایران», Iran's decision, over a photograph shot from behind a figure whose raised hands frame a missile on the horizon. The deck is the edition's single most consequential line: «دبیر شورای عالی امنیت ملی، رئیس مجلس و وزارت خارجه تأکید کردند: یا آمریکا شکست را بپذیرد و شروط ۷ گانه ایران را قبول کند یا با شگفتانه‌های نظامی جدید آماده دفاع از ایران هستیم», the Secretary of the Supreme National Security Council, the Speaker of Parliament and the Foreign Ministry emphasized: either America accepts defeat and accepts Iran's seven conditions, or we are ready to defend Iran with new military surprises.
- Main: The number is the point. «شروط ۷ گانه», the sevenfold conditions, is printed on a front page for the first time in this series. One cycle ago every cover in the batch printed three conditions while the count of seven sat only on the outlet channels, and this monitor recorded the gap as the part of the file that open sources could not reach. The count has now crossed onto the page; the four undisclosed terms still have not.
- Sub-item: «چرا تشکیل ائتلاف علیه انصارالله مشکل آمریکا و عربستان را حل نمی‌کند؟ / حمله به یمن پایان آل حلوب», why forming a coalition against Ansarullah does not solve America's and Saudi Arabia's problem, an attack on Yemen is the end of the House of Halub. «آل حلوب», the house of the milch cow, is a deliberate deformation of «آل سعود» and turns the American description of Saudi Arabia as a cow to be milked into the dynasty's name.
- Right rail: «چوب معلم از بودجه مرمه محتمی!» heads a signed column, and a business lead asks «ردپای ارزهای سرگردان در بازار تهران؟», the trace of wandering currency in the Tehran market, over a portrait interview on the return to rail and overtime pay.
- Sub-item: «استان یک مجله با بالاترین ضریب تأثیر در تاریخ علمی ایران ۵» and «ظرفیت دانشگاه آزاد در خدمت حل مسائل ایران» fill the foot of the page with the proprietor university's own institutional material.

> **ANALYST NOTE** This is the cover that resolves the open question from the previous edition, and it resolves it by aggregation rather than by disclosure: three institutions, the security council, the legislature and the foreign ministry, are presented as speaking one sentence, and that sentence prices the war at seven conditions with a military alternative attached. Printing the count while withholding the content converts a negotiating position into a public ultimatum whose terms only Washington can see, which is a harder posture than yesterday's, not a softer one. Watch whether the count of seven now spreads across the rest of the press or stays confined to the principlist titles.

Qods

Conservative, Mashhad; published by the Astan Quds Razavi foundation

MODERATE-HIGH: mediation route disclosed alongside an explicit statement that talks are not yet possible

“Diplomacy behind the line of fire” «دیپلماسی پشت خط آتش»



- Main: The dominant image is an American honor guard carrying a flag-draped coffin down the ramp of a military transport, under «بازگشت آمریکایی‌ها به قتلگاهشان؟», the return of the Americans to their killing ground? The photograph is a dignified-transfer scene and is used to argue a prospective American cost rather than to report a specific loss; no date, place or casualty is attached to it anywhere on the page.
- Main: The lower box is the most precise sourcing in the batch: «ایران شروط هفت‌گانه آغاز مذاکره را از مسیر قطر و پاکستان به واشنگتن رسانده است؛ همزمان تهدید حمله آمریکا و هشدار ایران درباره پاسخ گسترده نشان می‌دهد شرایط برای مذاکره هنوز فراهم نیست», Iran has conveyed the sevenfold conditions for beginning negotiations to Washington by way of Qatar and Pakistan; at the same time the threat of an American attack and Iran's warning of a broad response show that the conditions for negotiation are not yet in place.
- Sub-item: The naming of Pakistan alongside Qatar is new on an Iranian front page. External reporting has the terms conveyed through Qatar, with Qatar and Pakistan both working to revive the channel since the memorandum of understanding lapsed last month, so the page is accurate and is ahead of the rest of the batch in saying so.
- Right rail: «همزمان با حفظ تعداد حملات هوایی عربستان به صنعا، یمن دست به ترسیم معادله‌ای جدید زده است / حمله به صنعا = حمله به ریاض», as Saudi Arabia maintains the tempo of its air strikes on Sanaa, Yemen has drawn a new equation: an attack on Sanaa equals an attack on Riyadh.
- Banner: The top of the page is given not to the war but to «حذف اضطراب از برنامه کلاس اولی‌ها», removing anxiety from the first-graders' program, a psychologist's advice on the start of the school year, beside a report on a student dormitory opening in Mashhad.
- Sub-item: «پایان دوران صعود همگانی در بورس», the end of the era of across-the-board gains on the stock exchange, and «بررسی چرایی خروج ۶ همت پول حقیقی و ریزش شاخص کل», an examination of why six thousand billion tomans of retail money left and the index fell.

ANALYST NOTE Qods is the only title in the batch that states the mediation route and the obstacle in the same box, and it declines to sell the diplomacy: the page's own judgment is that the conditions for negotiation are not yet in place. That an Astan Quds title is more exact about the channel than the government daily is the finding, and it fits the pattern in which the most specific sourcing in this press keeps appearing on religious-foundation rather than official mastheads. The coffin photograph is the counterweight, a threat made with an American image rather than an Iranian claim.

Kayhan

Hardline; published under the supervision of the Supreme Leader's office, managing editor Hossein Shariatmadari

SEVERE: explicit extension of the target list from American forces to any regional state that assists them

"Khatam al-Anbia Headquarters: regional countries that go along with America will be targeted" «قرارگاه خاتم‌الانبیا(ص): کشورهای منطقه اگر با آمریکا همراهی کنند هدف قرار می‌گیرند»


کیهان

کشورهای منطقه اگر با آمریکا همراهی کنند هدف قرار می‌گیرند

شلیک یمن به قلب آل‌سعود

ریاض دست به دامان ترامپ و نتانیاهو شد

- Main: The banner gives the whole width of page one to the Khatam al-Anbia Central Headquarters statement that states in the region which assist an American action will themselves be placed on the target list. The paper's own rendering adds that Washington took the decision at a closed meeting with Israeli and Arab military officials held in Germany, a specific placing that no other title in the batch supplies and that this monitor could not corroborate; external reporting of the same statement, carried by Mehr on 20 September, puts it only as intelligence of American planning after consultations with regional partners, with no venue named.
- Banner: «شلیک یمن به قلب آل‌سعود / ریاض دست به دامان ترامپ و نتانیاهو شد», Yemen's shot into the heart of the House of Saud, Riyadh throws itself on Trump and Netanyahu. The second lead treats Ansarullah's missile fire at the Saudi capital as an accomplished fact and Saudi appeals to Washington and Tel Aviv as the proof of its effect; no Saudi source appears anywhere in the item.
- Right rail: «گزارش روز دویست و پنجم جنگ: اقیانوس هند هم برای آمریکا ناامن می‌شود», report of the two hundred and fifth day of the war: the Indian Ocean too is becoming unsafe for America. The paper is running its own war-day counter, and it is printing 205 where this monitor's fixed calendar count gives 202, which dates Kayhan's day one to 1 March 2026, the day after the assassination.
- Right rail: «وزارت اطلاعات خبر داد: انهدام سه کانون عملیاتی وابسته به گروهک‌های تروریستی», the Intelligence Ministry announces the destruction of three operational centers linked to terrorist groupuscules; and a masthead ear reporting that, on a prosecutor's order, an illegal center tied to the French embassy in Tehran and operating under cover of language instruction has been sealed.
- Kicker: A boxed address to the president, «آقای پزشکیان! در نیویورک مراقب نسخه‌های خطرناک جریان غربگرا باشید», Mr Pezeshkian, in New York beware the dangerous prescriptions of the pro-Western current. It is the only reference in the whole batch to the president's presence at the United Nations General Assembly.
- Op-ed: The «یادداشت روز» slot carries «این شکستنی‌های گردن‌گیر!», roughly 'these breakables that end up round your neck'. The full text was not retrievable from the paper's channel at the time of compilation, so the title is reported as printed and the argument is not characterized here.
- Sub-item: A photograph of a western pop concert under a FREE PALESTINE banner heads «ستارگان پاپ جهان همچنان برای فلسطین می‌خوانند», the world's pop stars go on singing for Palestine, alongside a

domestic item on the opening of the north-to-west stretch of the Yadegar-e Emam expressway.

> **ANALYST NOTE** Kayhan is doing two jobs on one page. It gives the military's deterrent threat the full banner, and it adds a venue, Germany, that the underlying statement does not carry, which is the paper's standing habit of hardening an official text by one specific detail. The second job is the boxed warning to Pezeshkian before New York: the Leader's office daily is fencing in the president's UN week in advance, on the morning the rest of the batch is printing Iran's terms for talks. Track whether the Germany detail appears in any non-Iranian account, and whether Kayhan's 205 counter persists.

Seda-ye Iran

Principlist; masthead carries KHAMENEI.IR branding and a martyr portrait, «شهید عقیل محمدی», in the nameplate

HIGH: targeting threat repeated, with an uncorroborated cumulative drone-kill claim presented as externally sourced

“A Trumpian show to save the gas-pump display” «نمایش ترامپی برای نجات نمایشگر پمپ بنزین»



- Main: The page's dominant image is an American editorial cartoon reprinted whole, credited on the page to Ramirez of the Las Vegas Review-Journal for the Washington Post, 2026: a filling-station price board whose grades read REGULAR KIDNEY, PLUS ARM, SUPREME ARM & LEG and DIESEL FIRSTBORN, all at 9/10. The Iranian headline reads it as «تحلیلی بر آخرین مواضع رئیس جمهور آمریکا», an analysis of the American president's latest positions.
- Main: Using an American paper's own cartoon about American fuel prices as the front-page proof of American distress is the sourcing move of the day, and it is a stronger rhetorical device than an Iranian claim because the evidence is the adversary's. The cartoon is a cartoonist's commentary, not a price series, and the page does not say so.
- Right rail: «قرارگاه مرکزی حضرت خاتم‌الانبیا(ص): خطا کنید هدف حملات دردناک قرار خواهید گرفت», the Khatam al-Anbia Central Headquarters: make a mistake and you will be the target of painful strikes. A fifth surface in the batch carrying the same statement.
- Sub-item: «پهپادهای MQ-9 آمریکایی در تیررس نیروهای مسلح جمهوری اسلامی ایران», American MQ-9 drones within range of Iran's armed forces, illustrated not with a photograph but with a screenshot of an English-language post on X which itself quotes a Fars News Agency item claiming the IRGC has downed its fifty-second American MQ-9 since the start of the war, with a comparison to a pre-war American inventory figure.
- Op-ed: «جنگ ایران و فشار هزینه‌ها بر آمریکا», the Iran war and the pressure of costs on America, argues the war has become a test of endurance between two economies and returns to the audited Pentagon figure this monitor has tracked since 19 September.

ANALYST NOTE The drone item is the most instructive sourcing artifact this series has recorded: an Iranian wire's claim is exported into English on a social platform and then re-imported onto an Iranian front page as a screenshot, so a single unverified Iranian assertion arrives at the reader wearing the clothes of foreign confirmation. The claim of fifty-two downed MQ-9s is not corroborated anywhere outside the Iranian press and should be carried as a claim only. The same page's use of a genuine Washington Post cartoon shows the masthead can source real adversary material when it exists, which makes the laundering on the drone item a choice rather than a limitation.

Iran

Official daily of the government, published by IRNA

“Ghalibaf: the war-or-negotiation dichotomy is not real; one must both fight and negotiate” «قالیباف: دوگانه جنگ یا مذاکره واقعی نیست / هم باید جنگید هم مذاکره کرد»

MODERATE: dual-track doctrine, war and negotiation framed as complementary



- Main: The government daily leads on the Speaker of Parliament, Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, dissolving the choice the rest of the press has been arguing about: there is no real dichotomy between war and negotiation, and Iran must do both. The line is carried on the paper's own channel as «قالیباف: هم باید جنگید و هم مذاکره کرد» (item 507475).
- Kicker: Directly above the headline the page runs «قرارگاه خاتم‌الانبیا نسبت به ماجراجویی احتمالی آمریکا هشدار داد», the Khatam al-Anbia Headquarters warned of possible American adventurism. The government daily prints the same military statement that leads Kayhan, but as the subordinate line above a political lead rather than as the banner.
- Sub-item: «هم‌افزایی و انسجام مسیر عبور از چالش‌ها», synergy and cohesion are the route through the challenges, over a photograph of a meeting of political figures, executive managers and parliamentarians, the standard unity-of-institutions image this paper runs when a contested decision is being prepared.
- Right rail: «مدارس در فصل بیماری‌ها: از تهویه و واکسن تا شیر و تغذیه رایگان», schools in the season of illness, from ventilation and vaccines to free milk and nutrition, and «بازسازی راه‌های آسیب‌دیده در کریدور شمال-جنوب», reconstruction of damaged roads on the north-south corridor.
- Op-ed: «طرح مقابله با ناشنوا: از ابهام حقوقی تا تلاش برای اصلاح» treats the contested counter-infiltration bill as a legal-drafting problem rather than a political one; the paper's channel (item 507477) carries the same debate with the objections of academic and intellectual bodies attached.
- Sub-item: The lower half of the page is given to state tender notices, which is where this title routinely absorbs space on a day when it does not want a second political lead.

ANALYST NOTE The government's own paper is the one that refuses to choose, and it uses the Speaker rather than the President to say so. Reading it beside Khorasan and Sobh-e No, which print the same formula in their own words on the same morning, the fight-and-negotiate doctrine is the day's real convergence: it lets the security council's seven conditions and the military's targeting threat sit on the same page without contradiction. Note the placement, the military warning demoted to a kicker, which is this masthead's way of carrying a threat without endorsing its prominence.

Khorasan

Conservative, Mashhad-based, national circulation

“The logic of battle and understanding” «منطق نبرد و تفاهم»

MODERATE: war and negotiation presented as complementary instruments of one policy



- Main: «اظهارات اخیر رضایی و قالیباف بار دیگر واقعیت مهمی را آشکار کرد که جنگ و مذاکره دو ابزار مکمل برای تأمین منافع ملی‌اند», the recent statements of Rezaei and Ghalibaf have once again revealed an important reality, that war and negotiation are two complementary instruments for securing the national interest. This is the day's doctrine stated as analysis rather than as quotation.
- Main: The headline «کار نشد ندارد», roughly 'nothing is impossible', runs over a photograph of a cleric addressing a seated audience, above «چرا احداث کلان پروژه مدرن خوابگاه دانشجویی حضرت نجمه خاتون(س) از اقدامات زیرساختی و ماندگار آستان قدس رضوی به شمار می‌آید؟», why the modern Najmeh Khatoun student dormitory counts as lasting infrastructure of the Astan Quds Razavi. Qods carries the same building on its own banner the same morning, so the two Mashhad titles are running one foundation's construction project in parallel on a war morning.
- Right rail: «صعود به عروس قله‌های ایران», the ascent of the bride of Iran's peaks, a mountaineering feature, and «حاتم طایی شهر خراسان», with a column «در آستانه تصمیم: از این مرز تا تصمیم».
- Sub-item: «چرخ پیشران‌ها در چاله رکود», the wheel of the growth drivers in the pit of recession, and «دست بانک‌ها در جیب مردم!», the banks' hand in the people's pocket, place the economic argument on the page without naming the war as its cause.
- Op-ed: The foot of the page carries «در روابط تهران - پکن چه خبر است؟», what is going on in Tehran-Beijing relations, signed by Mostafa Ghani Zadeh, the only sustained treatment of China anywhere in the batch.

> **ANALYST NOTE** Khorasan is the title that names the mechanism instead of the news: it reads Rezaei's conditions and Ghalibaf's dichotomy together and states, as its own headline, that the two are one policy. A provincial conservative daily arriving at the analytic formulation before the national titles do is a recurring feature of this file and is worth weighting accordingly. The China column, standing alone in the batch, is the item to track: if Beijing starts appearing on covers, the diplomacy thread has acquired a second address.

Nobonyad

Conservative / principlist

LOW-MODERATE: domestic economic damage published in full, with the negotiating exit rejected on the same page

“Minus 10 percent” «منفی ۱۰٪»



- Main: The cover is the number. «جدیدترین گزارش مرکز آمار از میزان رشد اقتصادی کشور در بهار ۱۴۰۵ منتشر شد», the Statistical Center's latest report on the country's economic growth in spring 1405 has been published, set over a photograph of President Masoud Pezeshkian holding a sectoral bar chart up to a conference room. The figure is the state's own and it is externally confirmed: real gross domestic product for the quarter running 21 March to 20 June 2026 fell by about 10 percent against the same quarter a year earlier, with crude oil and natural gas down roughly a quarter and mining and manufacturing down roughly a seventh. That quarter is the first full quarter of the war.
- Main: The accompanying text declines the obvious excuse. It concedes that the contraction is unsurprising given the war, then argues that the policy choices of the current and previous governments made it the worst possible outcome, and notes that service and trade sectors held up better than expected while the extraction sectors carried the fall.
- Op-ed: The top of the page carries «اصرار بر خطای مذاکراتی», insistence on the negotiating error, beside a portrait, arguing against the terms now being advertised elsewhere in the batch: the page reads the seven conditions as a mistake being repeated rather than a position being taken.
- Right rail: «ماجرای ادامه‌دار تهدید به خروج از NPT», the continuing saga of the threat to withdraw from the Non-Proliferation Treaty, signed by Peyam Hosseini, which keeps the nuclear ambiguity recorded in the previous edition alive on a front page in its own right.
- Sub-item: «ضربه کاری به تروریست‌ها», a telling blow to the terrorists, reporting the Intelligence Ministry's claim of American and Israeli-linked operatives killed or detained across 21 provinces, and «پشت پرده هشدارهای جنگی آمریکا», behind the curtain of America's war warnings.
- Sub-item: «کاری که لیاخوف نتوانست بکند؛ عده‌ای با تعطیلی مجلس انجام دادند», what Liakhov could not do, some achieved by shutting parliament, a constitutional-history reproach invoking the Russian colonel who bombarded the first Majlis in 1908.

ANALYST NOTE This is the hardest domestic number the Iranian press has put on a front page in this series, it is the government's own statistic, and it is externally confirmed, which makes it the edition's one unambiguous piece of verified fact. The placement is what matters: a principlist title runs the war's economic cost as its entire cover while arguing on the same page that negotiating to end the war is an error. Holding both is only coherent if the cost is meant to be read as the price of endurance, which is how the Liakhov analogy and the NPT column frame it. This is the cover to watch for whether the economic number migrates to titles that would use it to argue the other way.

Shargh Reformist

MODERATE: escalation treated as a question, with the military claim of an American decision reported at one remove

"One step from an escalation of tension?" «یک قدم تا تشدید تنش؟»



- Main: The lead is a question, not a claim, and the sub-kicker supplies its basis: «قرارگاه خاتم‌الانبیا(ص): آمریکا بار دیگر تصمیم گرفته با چراغ سبز برخی کشورهای منطقه در نشست مشترکی در یکی از کشورهای اروپایی، اقدامات را علیه ایران از سر بگیرد», the Khatam al-Anbia Headquarters says America has decided once more, with the green light of some regional countries at a joint meeting in one of the European countries, to resume actions against Iran. Shargh prints 'one of the European countries' where Kayhan prints Germany, from the same statement.
- Main: The kicker above says the paper is examining the region's recent movements and the signs of entry into a new phase, which places today's military statement inside a trend argument rather than treating it as an announcement, the standard reformist handling of a military communique.
- Banner: The largest photograph on the page is not Iranian. Soldiers lift a body bag beside burnt-out cars under «حمله گسترده بیش از هزار پهپاد در آخرین روز انتخابات پارلمانی روسیه», a mass attack of more than a thousand drones on the final day of Russia's parliamentary elections, headlined «رأی‌گیری زیر سایه پهپادها», voting in the shadow of drones. The reporting is accurate: external accounts put the overnight Ukrainian launch above a thousand drones, the largest of the war on Moscow, with the State Duma vote running 18 to 20 September.
- Op-ed: «آینده ایران از مدرسه آغاز می‌شود», Iran's future begins at school, and «ضرورت آموزش حضوری دانشگاه و مدارس», the necessity of in-person teaching at universities and schools, carry the paper's domestic argument through the school-year opening rather than through the war.
- Right rail: A dense column of signed commentary runs the height of the page, with «هزینه‌ها: دستاورد کم» and «سازماندهی قانونی که برای فوق‌العاده‌ها واکنش ۲۳ هزار به جا نیست» among the boxed items, and a rail note on «تومانی از یک میلیون گذشت».

ANALYST NOTE Shargh is the one title in the batch that declines to convert the day's military statement into a verdict, and it is also the one that gives its largest image to a war that is not Iran's. Read against the previous edition, where the reformist press had just lost ownership of the negotiation argument to the security council, this is a paper stepping back from the domestic argument altogether and demonstrating competence on foreign reporting instead. The Germany detail is the item to track: Shargh's vaguer wording is the closer match to the statement as external reporting carries it.

Asr-e Iranian Conservative

LOW-MODERATE: adversary-decline argument with no operational content

"Trump's trap" «تله ترامپ»



- Main: The cover is given to a full-page illustration in which a small Donald Trump stands at a lectern, arms raised, casting an enormous horned shadow on the wall behind him, under «تله ترامپ» and the deck «طراحی تکراری ترامپ برای خروج از بن‌بست شکست», Trump's repeated design for escaping the dead end of defeat.
- Op-ed: «جهان در آشفتگی، ناچارها در خودباختگی», the world in turmoil, the helpless in self-abasement, signed by Hamid Lashgari, with the deck «افزایش نرخ‌های بهره و اعتراضات گسترده به قیمت‌های انرژی؛ تبعات مواجهه با قدرت ایران برای دنیا هر روز سنگین‌تر می‌شود», rising interest rates and wide protests over energy prices; the consequences of confronting Iran's power grow heavier for the world by the day.
- Op-ed: «برجام از همان ابتدا هم کارنمی‌کرد», the nuclear deal did not work from the very beginning either, signed by Yaser Salek Nia, arguing that a new American law on confiscated assets exposes what the agreement always was. On the morning three covers print Iran's conditions for talks, this page is prosecuting the last agreement.
- Sub-item: «سراب تابلوی سبز؛ بی‌رشد، بی‌داد», the mirage of the green board, no growth and no justice, over a stock-market chart, and «در مقابل ۲۰۰ سال قانون‌خواهی! معنای حقیقی و تاریخی», signed by Hossein Abbasi Far.
- Sub-item: «زن ایرانی؛ دو مسیر برای یک هدف؟», the Iranian woman, two paths to one goal?, by Roghayeh Aghazadeh, the only item on the page not organized around America or the market.

ANALYST NOTE This is the batch's purest rhetorical cover: no reported fact, one caricature, and three columns arguing that the adversary's weakness rather than Iran's position is what is driving events. Its function in the edition is to supply the argument that makes the seven conditions look like a demand from strength, and it does so without touching the conditions themselves. The devil-shadow device is worth logging as register: the illustration is the paper's own editorial claim, not a report, and should not be read as evidence of anything beyond the masthead's line.

Outlet channels, agency wires and the English press

Six newspaper channels (Kayhan, Vatan-e Emrooz, Jam-e Jam, Etemad Online, Iran, Sobh-e No), three agency wires (Defa Press, Fars News, Nour News) and the English-language titles

HIGH: a second maritime chokepoint under declared selective closure, alongside uncorroborated claims of strikes on American intelligence facilities

“Ansarullah: Bab al-Mandab is safe for everyone except the Saudis” «انصارالله: باب‌المندب به‌جز سعودی برای همه امن است»

- Main: Vatan-e Emrooz's channel (item 25729) carries the chair of Yemen's Supreme Political Council saying Bab al-Mandab is safe for all but Saudi vessels, and item 25743 has Ansarullah taking the Rasin heights west of al-Turbah. External reporting confirms Ansarullah completed control of the Bab al-Mandab approaches in September and that its Supreme Political Council has declared navigation secure except for ships of the Saudi enemy, framed as a blockade for a blockade, with American vessels explicitly excluded from the threat.
- Main: That is the falsification of the previous edition's own forecast, and in the direction the forecast named. On 20 September this monitor judged that the Hormuz bypass was being closed at its Red Sea outlet and that Bab al-Mandab had replaced the Aramco restoration timetable as the decisive variable. A second chokepoint is now under a declared and selective closure, aimed at one state rather than at world trade, which is a materially different instrument from the Hormuz closure it complements.
- Sub-item: The IRGC spokesman gave the day's interview, carried across Nour News (396163, 396164, 396165), Fars News (463325, 463326) and Etemad Online (534754): America has been defeated and lacks the courage to admit a historic and disgraceful defeat; American bases in the region can no longer even protect themselves; and, contrary to the picture painted, Washington's intelligence centers in the Gulf and northern Iraq were reachable and were struck. All three are claims of an Iranian official carried by Iranian outlets and none is independently confirmed. The name printed for the spokesman could not be verified against an independent source and is therefore not asserted here.
- Sub-item: Kayhan's channel (84551), Defa Press (67988) and Vatan-e Emrooz (25733) all carry the destruction of an American MQ-1 over the Strait of Hormuz, with Defa Press adding that the type had been retired in favor of the MQ-9 and that both are now being hunted. Kayhan (84533) separately claims images of an American strike on a vessel carrying public-transport buses, with seventeen buses destroyed. Neither claim is corroborated outside the Iranian press.
- Sub-item: Sobh-e No's channel is the batch's analytic surface. Items 116081 to 116084 run three pieces arguing that Iran must convert its position on two energy arteries into an institutional regional settlement before the window closes; 116085 puts Saudi air-defense requests to France, Britain, Pakistan and Egypt, with Egypt refusing, a four-country list where the same paper's cover yesterday carried a five-country list headed by America and Turkey; 116086 carries the Khatam al-Anbia warning; and 116096 shows its own front page for the day under «می‌جنگیم و مذاکره می‌کنیم», we fight and we negotiate, issue 2432.
- Sub-item: Jam-e Jam's channel (28391) carries the Iraqi Prime Minister, Ali al-Zaidi, saying Iraq faces exceptional economic difficulty from the war's consequences and the closure of the Strait while pursuing regional de-escalation. It is the only voice of a neighbouring state's government anywhere in the day's Iranian material, and it is a complaint about the closure carried without rebuttal.
- Op-ed: Etemad Online (534755) prices the school year against the war economy: food inflation at 127.5 percent year on year for Mordad 1405, daily student snack costs of 200,000 to 600,000 tomans,

and a monthly per-child cost running at between a quarter and a half of a typical worker's wage.

- Right rail: Late on 20 September and into 21 September, Jam-e Jam (28396), Nour News (396177) and Etemad Online (534754, 534756) all reported the death of Grand Ayatollah Seyyed Mousa Shobeiri Zanjani and the suspension of Qom seminary classes to the end of the week. External reporting confirms the death on 21 September at the age of 98. The timing places it after the presses closed, so its absence from every front page in this batch is a production fact and not an editorial one.

> **ANALYST NOTE** The channels carry three things the covers do not. First, the second chokepoint: Bab al-Mandab is now under a declared closure aimed at Saudi shipping alone while American ships are expressly exempted, which is a narrower and more negotiable instrument than the Hormuz closure and sits oddly beside the same morning's front-page threat to any regional state that assists America. Second, the IRGC spokesman's claim of penetrated American intelligence centers, which is the most operationally specific assertion in the day's material and the least verifiable. Third, the death of a senior marja, which reaches tomorrow's covers, not today's, and which lands into an unresolved succession. Carry all three forward.

Iran Daily (English)

English-language government daily, published by IRNA

"US cannot escape responsibility for war crimes by leaving UN rights council: Deputy FM"

LOW: stale edition, retained for coverage accounting only



- Main: The only English-language front page the pipeline could retrieve is two cycles old, dated Saturday 19 September, and is the same edition already read in the previous monitor. It is recorded here for completeness and carries no weight in today's judgments.
- Main: Its lead has the Deputy Foreign Minister arguing that American withdrawal from the United Nations Human Rights Council does not extinguish responsibility for war crimes; its second lead, «Sacrifice for Iran», reports Tehranis turning out for the mass drill this monitor tracked on 19 and 20 September.
- Sub-item: A signed interview, 'Ansarullah advances pave way for talks', argues that the movement's gains on the Red Sea coast strengthen the position from which talks can be held, which reads differently two days later, with Bab al-Mandab declared closed to Saudi shipping.
- Sub-item: Tehran Times, the other English-language daily in the source list, was not available at the time of compilation, so today's edition rests on the Persian pages and the outlet channels alone.

> **ANALYST NOTE** The English-language surface has now been stale or missing for three consecutive cycles, which is itself a finding: the titles aimed at foreign readers are the part of this press the monitor can least reliably see, at exactly the moment the Persian pages are publishing a negotiating position addressed to a foreign government. Nothing in this entry is treated as evidence of the 21 September posture.

Appendix A: The day's lead official text, and the Leader's continued silence

Khatam al-Anbia Central Headquarters statement, as carried on five surfaces: Kayhan page one and channel item 84550; Iran page-one kicker; Shargh page-one sub-kicker; Seda-ye Iran right rail; Sobh-e No channel item 116086

No message, speech, decree or directly quoted remark from Seyyed Mojtaba Khamenei appears on any of the ten scans or the nine channels read for this edition. This is the seventh consecutive cycle in which the serving Leader publishes nothing. The office's own publication site could not be reached at the time of compilation, and an independent search returns no statement attributed to him in September 2026. On the standing practice of this series, the absence is recorded as a finding and the day's lead official text is substituted, with the substitution flagged here.

The substituted text is the statement of the Khatam al-Anbia Central Headquarters, the joint operational command, which is the only official text to reach five separate surfaces in this batch. No single outlet printed it in full, so what follows is reconstructed from the renderings that were retrieved and is marked partial throughout. It is not a verbatim translation of an original the pipeline holds.

As Kayhan renders the operative sentence: «کشورهای منطقه اگر با آمریکا همراهی کنند هدف قرار می‌گیرند», the countries of the region, if they go along with America, will be placed on the target list.

As Seda-ye Iran renders the warning: «خطا کنید هدف حملات دردناک قرار خواهید گرفت», make a mistake and you will be made the target of painful strikes.

As Shargh renders the premise: «آمریکا بار دیگر تصمیم گرفته با چراغ سبز برخی کشورهای منطقه در نشست مشترکی در یکی از کشورهای اروپایی، اقدامات را علیه ایران از سر بگیرد», America has decided once again, with the green light of certain regional countries given at a joint meeting in one of the European countries, to resume its actions against Iran.

As Sobh-e No renders the scope of the threatened response: «تمامی مراکز استقراری و منافع آن کشور در منطقه هدف حملات مستمر قرار خواهد گرفت», all of that country's basing centers and interests in the region will be subjected to continuous strikes.

Kayhan alone adds that the meeting in question took place in Germany and involved American, Israeli and Arab military officials. No other surface in the batch carries a venue, and external reporting of the same statement, carried by Mehr on 20 September and picked up abroad on 21 September, describes only intelligence of American planning following consultations with regional partners. The venue is therefore a single-source detail from the hardline flagship and is not adopted here.

Analyst flag: the substance of this statement is not new policy. In his only published statement, issued in March 2026 after he took office, Mojtaba Khamenei set out both the continued closure of the Strait of Hormuz and the targeting of neighbouring states that host American bases. What is new is the division of labour: six months on, the policy is being restated by the operational command and printed across the factional spectrum, while the office that set it has said nothing at all for seven cycles. The threat is being carried by the institution that would execute it rather than by the authority that authorized it.

Verification note: the Khatam al-Anbia statement itself is independently corroborated in outline by non-Iranian reporting of 20 and 21 September. The Germany venue is not. Nothing in this appendix should be reproduced as an authentic verbatim text of the original.

Appendix B: 'Time for a new architecture', the day's flagged commentary

Sobh-e No, channel item 116081, Monday 30 Shahrivar 1405; signed by Mahboobeh Niavaran

Author verification note: the byline is carried on the outlet's own channel post and is reproduced here as printed. The pipeline retrieved the item's argument and its key phrases but not a continuous full text, so this appendix renders the argument in sequence with the retained Persian retained in place, rather than presenting a sentence-by-sentence translation. The Kayhan «یادداشت روز» of the same morning, printed on page one under the title «این شکستنی‌های گردن‌گیر!», could not be retrieved from the paper's channel at the time of compilation and is therefore not the flagged editorial for this edition; its title is recorded as printed and its author is not asserted.

The premise: «ایران بر دو شریان حیاتی انرژی جهان تسلط دارد», Iran commands two of the world's vital energy arteries. The piece does not argue this as an aspiration but states it as the position from which everything else follows, and it is the first time in this series that an Iranian commentary has counted the chokepoints as two rather than one.

The concession: the author writes that Iran paid a heavy price over the forty days of concentrated fighting, and that the cost is not to be talked away. This is unusual placement. The admission comes before the argument rather than after it, which is the structure used when the author intends the cost to function as the reason for acting rather than as an objection to be rebutted.

The argument: the position on the arteries is a military fact that has not yet been converted into anything durable, and a military fact that is not converted decays. The author calls for a move «از راهبرد واکنشی به راهبرد فعال-ساختاری», from a reactive strategy to an active and structural one, meaning that Iran should be writing the region's new security rules rather than responding to rules written by others, and should treat its energy position as a thing to be traded for standing rather than displayed for morale.

The warning: the window is temporary. In the companion pieces on the same channel the same morning, Peyman Aref argues that the opportunity to institutionalize the war's gains will not stay open and that Washington's whole effort will go to preventing consolidation; Ehsan Salehi argues that regional states are already reconsidering American security guarantees and looking at multilateral and China-facing alternatives.

Analyst flag: this is the most explicit statement yet, from a principlist surface, that the closure of the straits is an asset to be spent rather than a victory to be celebrated, and it arrives on the morning three front pages print Iran's seven conditions and a fourth prints the war quarter's ten percent contraction. Read together with the economic press's turn recorded on 20 September, the argument for trading the chokepoints has now been made from both the commercial and the principlist side of this press within two cycles, while the hardline flagship's front page is still threatening the neighbours. The disagreement inside the Iranian press is no longer about whether the leverage exists. It is about whether to spend it.

Handling note: this is hostile-press commentary documented for defensive assessment. Its claims about the war's course, its costs and the regional response are the author's and are not adopted.

Appendix C: Methodology and sourcing notes

iran-press-digest pipeline, 21 September 2026

Scans. Nine Persian front pages were retrieved from the NewspaperTasnim kiosk album of Monday 30 Shahrivar 1405 (t.me/NewspaperTasnim/44673), posted 03:26 UTC on 21 September. The album's own printed Jalali date matches the target date, so the stale-batch guard passed on the first attempt and no fallback sources were needed. The nine titles are Shargh, Farhikhtegan, Asr-e Iranian, Khorasan, Qods, Nobonyad, Iran, Seda-ye Iran and Kayhan. Each masthead was identified by vision from the nameplate rather than from the album's ordering, and regions of interest were enlarged and re-read before any headline was quoted.

Text sources. Nine channels were read: six newspaper channels (Kayhan, Vatan-e Emrooz, Jam-e Jam, Etemad Online, Iran, Sobh-e No) and three agency wires (Defa Press, Fars News, Nour News). Agency material is used for corroboration and threat-signaling context and is labelled as claims; it is not treated as front-page evidence.

Coverage gaps, stated plainly. The single English-language front page available was Iran Daily of Saturday 19 September, two cycles old, and it is recorded for accounting only and carries no weight in the judgments. Tehran Times was not available at the time of compilation, as it was not available in the previous cycle. The Leader's office publication site was also not available. Kayhan's «یادداشت روز» of the day could not be retrieved from the paper's channel, so its title is reported as printed and no author or argument is attributed to it.

Verified externally. The contraction of about ten percent in real gross domestic product for the quarter ending 20 June 1405, reported by the Statistical Center of Iran and carried on Nobonyad's cover, is confirmed by international reporting of the same release, including the sectoral breakdown. The seven conditions, three disclosed and four withheld, conveyed to Washington with Qatar and Pakistan working the channel since the memorandum of understanding lapsed, are confirmed by external reporting of Mohsen Rezaei's remarks. The Khatam al-Anbia statement is confirmed in outline. Ansarullah's declared exemption of all but Saudi shipping at Bab al-Mandab is confirmed. The death of Grand Ayatollah Seyyed Mousa Shobeiri Zanjani on 21 September, at 98, in Qom, is confirmed. The scale of the Ukrainian drone attack during Russia's State Duma vote, as Shargh's photograph caption describes it, is confirmed.

Single-sourced and not adopted. Kayhan's placing of the American, Israeli and Arab military meeting in Germany appears on no other surface and in no external account. The claim that an American MQ-1 was destroyed over the Strait of Hormuz appears on three Iranian surfaces and nowhere outside the Iranian press. The claim, on Kayhan's channel, of an American strike on a vessel carrying seventeen public-transport buses is uncorroborated. The claim, carried on Seda-ye Iran's front page as a screenshot of an English social-media post quoting Fars News, that the IRGC has downed a fifty-second American MQ-9, is an Iranian wire claim in foreign dress and is uncorroborated. The IRGC spokesman's assertions that American bases cannot protect themselves and that American intelligence centers in the Gulf and northern Iraq were penetrated and struck are uncorroborated; the personal name printed for the spokesman could not be verified against an independent source and is therefore not asserted anywhere in this edition.

Named-person discipline. Every person named in this edition was read from the printed page or the retrieved channel item and then checked against an independent source where one exists: Mohsen Rezaei as Secretary of the Supreme National Security Council, Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf as Speaker of Parliament, Masoud Pezeshkian as President, Ali al-Zaidi as Prime Minister of Iraq, Ebrahim Zolfaghari as the Khatam al-

Anbia Headquarters spokesman in its September statements, and Seyyed Mousa Shobeiri Zanjani. Where a byline exists only on the page or the channel, it is reproduced as printed and labelled as such.

Succession evidence. The identification of the serving Leader as Seyyed Mojtaba Khamenei, following the assassination of Ali Khamenei on 28 February 2026, rests on his assumption of office on 8 March 2026 and on his first written statement, externally reported and read on state television, of 12 March 2026. No statement attributed to him in September 2026 could be found on any surface read for this edition or by independent search. His silence is treated throughout as evidence to be reported, not as an absence of information.

Day counter. This edition is Day 202 on the fixed calendar count used throughout this series, 118 days plus the days elapsed since 29 June 2026. Kayhan's own front page runs a separate counter and prints the two hundred and fifth day, which implies a start date of 1 March 2026. The two counters are noted rather than reconciled; this series does not change its epoch to match an outlet's.

Handling. This product documents and analyses hostile foreign-press rhetoric for defensive assessment only. Nothing in it endorses, amplifies or operationalizes that rhetoric. Unverified attributed quotations are not to be reproduced as authentic without primary-source confirmation.

Open-source material only. All translations from Persian/Arabic originals. Iranian claims are labelled as claims. Prepared for analysis and early warning; hostile content is documented for defensive assessment only, not endorsed.