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# Middle East ceasefire threatened as US rejects Iran peace offer

New sanctions imposed on companies behind Iranian oil exports



Donald Trump says the ceasefire is on life support. Photo: The White House

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The five-week ceasefire in the Middle East was threatened on Tuesday after the US described an Iranian proposal to end the conflict as “garbage”.

President Donald Trump said the uneasy truce was on “life support” and claimed that he did not read the Iranian proposal to the end.

The latest dispute increases the prospect of a return to full-scale conflict amid deep-seated disagreements over control of the Strait of Hormuz, compensation for war damage and the state of the US naval blockade.



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“I would call it the weakest right now, after reading that piece of garbage they sent us. I didn’t even finish reading it,” Trump told reporters.

Iran has called for an end to fighting before dealing with other issues, such as its nuclear programme.

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The dimming prospect of peace adds to concerns for more than 20,000 seafarers who remain trapped in the Middle East Gulf with ships still at a standstill owing to the threat of attack.

More than 30 seafarers have been killed — at least 20 reported by Iran — and about 40 ships attacked since the US-Israeli bombardment began on 28 February.

Iranian media reported that small submarines had been deployed to act as an “invisible guardian” of the Strait of Hormuz. Iran has at least 16 midget submarines, Bloomberg reported.

The US increased the pressure on Tehran by blacklisting businesses connected to the sale and shipment of Iranian oil to overseas buyers.

The Treasury imposed economic sanctions on nine businesses and three individuals, citing their role in shipping oil on 10 tankers.

Treasury secretary Scott Bessent said: “Treasury will continue to cut the Iranian regime off from the financial networks it uses to carry out terrorist acts and to destabilise the global economy.”

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