



IRAN:

View from the LEFT

Sep 2026

N0.81

Word of the Month: The Houthi offensive

By: Majid Siadat

The Houthis have captured a port and a couple of islands overlooking Bab el-Mandeb at the southern end of the Red Sea. This is a major chokepoint for international maritime trade, particularly oil, and an alternative route to the Strait of Hormuz.

The event is widely considered to be timed—and perhaps coordinated with the Islamic Republic—and may give the Iranian side an additional advantage in its ongoing negotiations with the United States. Nevertheless, the Western media generally portrays the Yemeni government (the Houthis) as proxies of the Islamic Republic. In reality, the two—the Yemeni Houthis and the Islamic Republic—are allies but remain independent of one another. At its core, this is a struggle between Yemen and Saudi-backed proxies. The Houthis' conflict with the Saudis has a history that long predates the establishment of the Islamic Republic.

The recent Houthi advance is partly due to a lack of coordination among the three components of the anti-Houthi coalition. The roots of this lack of coordination can best be traced to tensions between Saudi Arabia and the UAE.

Meanwhile, this event offers a chance to evaluate the Saudi defence strategy.

Pakistani and Turkish authorities have declared a joint naval force to protect maritime traffic in the Red Sea. In practice, this is clearly also intended to protect Saudi Arabia, but it demonstrates the extent of the Mecca Accord involving Pakistan, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia.

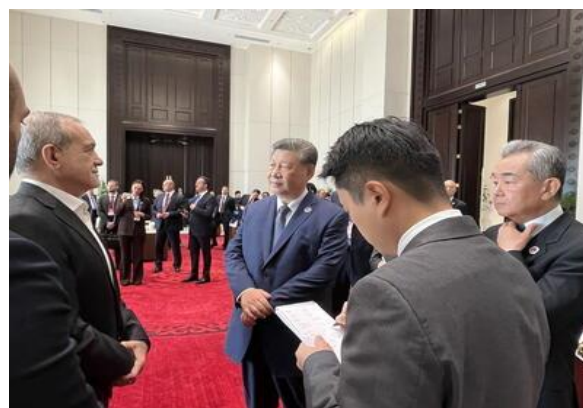
It has also been reported that Prince Mohammed bin Salman, following the attack on Saudi Arabia's East-West oil pipeline. Beyond the combined weight of the three pact signatories, two main regional powers in the Middle East are: Israel and Iran. While much depends upon the outcome of the current US/Iran war, a 3-way political power struggle between pact members, Israel and Iran, is likely. Given Israel's posture towards Turkey, especially over Syria, and its genocidal aggression, there is significant scope for regional dynamics to develop into a struggle for peace in the Middle East vs. Israeli expansionism.

“Operation Economic Ostracism” in the Light of Shanghai

Ali Pournaghavi

Only one week after the U.S. Treasury imposed what it called “the heaviest sanctions in U.S. history” on Iran, under the title “Operation Economic Ostracism,” the 25th Summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) was held in Bishkek, the capital of Kyrgyzstan. This close coincidence in timing inadvertently turned the Shanghai

summit into a test of the sanctions' actual effectiveness—a sanctions campaign that Trump has likened to the Allies' largest-ever attack on Nazi Germany.



The newly announced sanctions package places five additional sectors of Iran's economy under secondary sanctions, and U.S. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent explicitly warned that countries conducting business with Iran could themselves face secondary sanctions. Against this backdrop, Iran received considerable political support at the Shanghai summit: in the "Bishkek Declaration," the member states condemned the military attacks by the United States and Israel, supported Iran's right to a peaceful nuclear program under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), and opposed "unilateral coercive measures."

On the sidelines of the Bishkek summit, Masoud Pezeshkian met with Xi Jinping. Even though the meeting was brief, it carried a political message: precisely at the height of a campaign whose stated objective, in Bessent's own words, was the "complete ostracism" of Iran, China demonstrated that it did not regard Iran as either an ostracized or an unwelcome country.

With China's continued cautious approach in mind, it should now be clear that the argument that China will ultimately choose the United States over Iran because the volume of its economic exchanges with the United States is vastly greater than those with Iran is not, by itself, sufficient to explain Beijing's foreign policy toward the two countries. In Beijing's long-term view of the global order, economic calculations alone do not determine every dimension of its foreign policy. Considerations such as China's position within the multipolar order it seeks to promote, its strategic relationship with Russia, potential regional partners, and the management of its image as a power independent of U.S. pressure play just as important a role in Beijing's calculations as trade figures do.

<https://bepish.org/fa/node/14409>

Victory of the Left Party in the Berlin Election



Germany's Left Party (Die Linke) won 25.7 percent of the vote in the Berlin state election held on September 20, 2026, becoming the largest party in the capital by a significant margin for the first time since the fall of the Berlin Wall

Details of the Berlin Election Results

- The Left Party (Die Linke): 25.7 percent (led by Elif Eralp)
- Christian Democratic Union (CDU): 18.8 percent
- Alternative for Germany (AfD): 16.3 percent
- The Greens (Grüne): 14.3 percent
- Social Democratic Party (SPD): 12.1 percent

Implications and the Government Formation Process

Mayoral candidate: Elif Eralp, a politician of Turkish descent from the Left Party, has emerged as the leading contender for the position of Governing Mayor of Berlin.

Coalition process: The Left Party has announced that it intends to invite the Greens and the Social Democratic Party (SPD) to preliminary talks on forming a coalition.

Challenges: According to Deutsche Welle, the potential coalition partners—the Greens and the Social Democrats—as well as political rivals, are closely scrutinizing the Left Party’s positions and its approach to issues related to antisemitism and the conflicts in the Middle East. They have made the formal launch of coalition talks conditional on clarification and resolution of these concerns.

Policies: During the election campaign, the Left Party put forward significant social and economic promises, including efforts to nationalize large housing companies and properties. One of the most controversial proposals was the potential nationalization of 220,000 housing units in an effort to control the housing market.

The most recent state elections in Germany this year have brought about significant changes in the country’s political landscape. The Left Party has emerged as the strongest political force in Berlin, while the right-wing Alternative for Germany (AfD) secured the largest share of votes in Mecklenburg–Western Pomerania.

Germany’s latest state elections this year have effectively redrawn the country’s political map. The Left Party has become the dominant political force in Berlin, and the right-wing Alternative for Germany (AfD) has taken first place in Mecklenburg–Western Pomerania.



Ending War and Tensions: The Only Way to Ensure Security Across the Region

Mehdi Ebrahimzadeh

1. The United Nations General Assembly

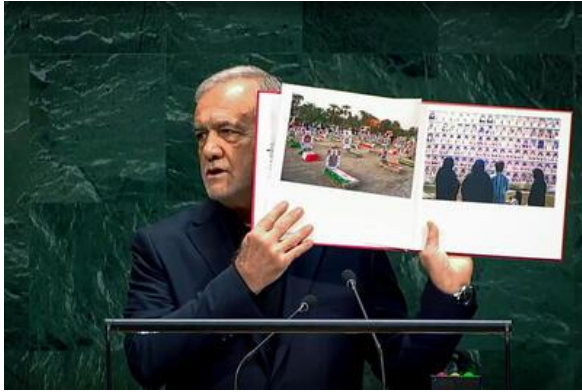
The annual session of the United Nations General Assembly began on Tuesday, September 22, 2026. Some heads of state, including the leaders of China, Russia, and India, are not attending this year’s session. Nevertheless, the war between the United States and Iran, the reopening of the Strait of Hormuz, and the presence of Donald Trump and Masoud Pezeshkian, the presidents of the United States and Iran, respectively, have attracted considerable international attention.

Regardless of what the two presidents said in their speeches, the United States’ renewed declaration of its readiness to engage in talks with Iran—and the Iranian side’s undeclared willingness to negotiate, albeit on the sidelines of the General Assembly—are among the important issues surrounding this year’s session.

In his address to the UN General Assembly, Trump once again spoke of the possibility of reaching an agreement with Iran, while also threatening military action, including his warning that Iran could be “sent to hell.” Why Trump is once again threatening Iran, and how realistic the possibility of these threats being carried out actually is, are questions that merit serious consideration. Trump’s interest in dialogue has reportedly been conveyed to Iran through Steve Witkoff, via Pakistan and Qatar.

A day after Trump’s speech, Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian, referring to what he described as U.S. and Israeli crimes in the attack on Iran and the killing of people in Gaza, emphasized: “Iran is ready for dialogue based on equality, but it will never understand the language of force.” Addressing Iran’s neighboring countries in the region, he said: “No one in this region will have security on their own. Either we will build security together, or we will all endure insecurity together.”

At the conclusion of his speech, responding to Trump’s reference to the possibility of dialogue,



the Iranian president again stressed: “Iran is ready for dialogue based on equality, but it will never understand the language of force.”

Meanwhile, Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, who traveled to New York alongside Pezeshkian, has held meetings with several European leaders, including the EU foreign-policy chief, as well as the Italian prime minister and foreign minister and the German foreign minister, who sought talks with the Iranian representative.

There is little doubt that the central issues in these meetings are economic matters, and specifically the reopening of the Strait of Hormuz. At the same time, experience has shown that European officials occasionally raise the issue of human rights violations in Iran during such meetings. Denying the issue or removing it from the agenda does not help build mutual trust. We should also remember that diplomacy is, by its nature, a bilateral or multilateral process, and Iran itself needs European cooperation and support.

Conclusion

The picture presented above clearly demonstrates the importance and role of diplomacy compared with war and military threats. A look at the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, BRICS, and the United Nations General Assembly highlights the central importance of security and economic considerations.

Iran’s participation in international summits is particularly significant at a time when the country is struggling under the weight of severe sanctions. But the central question remains: How, and by what means, can Iran navigate these difficult and dangerous circumstances in a way that safeguards the country’s security and national interests?

There is no doubt that any effort aimed at opposing war and preventing the outbreak of a new war against Iran would serve this objective. At the same time, however, there is a worrying possibility that the Islamic Republic could become overconfident because of the balance that has emerged in the region in its favor, and once again squander opportunities.

However valid the idea that “no one in the region can achieve security alone” may be, it cannot justify the proposition that “we should share our insecurity with others.”

Ensuring security and providing citizens with a dignified life are the duty and responsibility of every government. Unfortunately, however, the Islamic Republic has, through what can be described as its adventurist policies, repeatedly placed the fate of the country and its people at risk and exposed them to threats and danger.

Read More: <https://bepish.org/en/node/14499>

Open Letter to the Board of Trustees of the Friedrich Naumann Foundation

Recognition of the Iranian People’s Struggle, Yes; Representing Reza Pahlavi, No!

Dear Members of the Board of Trustees,

Your commendable decision to recognize the Iranian people’s struggle against the Islamic Republic and to support this struggle with the aim of strengthening the foundations of freedom and democracy deserves our sincere appreciation and gratitude.

Likewise, your decision to award the Foundation’s 2026 Prize to the people of Iran is highly commendable and represents a meaningful gesture of solidarity with the Iranian people’s struggle for freedom and democracy. However, the decision to present this award to Mr. Reza Pahlavi, as a representative of the broad spectrum of Iran’s pro-democracy movement, warrants serious criticism and reconsideration.

While Reza Pahlavi is a well-known figure in the opposition to the Islamic Republic and is regarded as a supporter of a monarchical alternative, he

does not represent the broad and diverse spectrum of Iran's republican, democratic, and secular opposition. Moreover, his conduct, as well as that of some of his supporters—including verbal attacks and insults directed at democratic and republican opponents of the Islamic Republic—has contributed to deepening divisions among opposition forces and undermining solidarity and unity in the Iranian people's struggle.

In light of these considerations, awarding this prize to Reza Pahlavi as a symbol of the Iranian people's struggle does not appear to be fully consistent with the inclusive and non-partisan purpose of this recognition.

We therefore propose that the Friedrich Naumann Foundation's 2026 Prize instead be awarded to one of the political and human rights figures such as Parastou Forouhar, Saeed Madani, Narges Mohammadi, Nasrin Sotoudeh, Sepideh Gholian, or Reza Khandan—individuals who, through enduring imprisonment, torture, security pressures, and deprivation of their fundamental rights, have paid a heavy price in the pursuit of freedom, human dignity, and democracy in Iran.

Awarding this symbolic prize to Iran's political prisoners could more accurately reflect the broad and inclusive nature of the Iranian people's struggle and reaffirm the Foundation's commitment to the universal values of freedom, human rights, and democracy.

We thank you for your attention and solidarity with the people of Iran and wish you continued success in supporting the values of freedom and democracy.

Respectfully,

Environment in Iran

Greenpeace: Five Major Oil Spills in the Strait of Hormuz

Greenpeace has reported, based on satellite imagery, the presence of five major oil slicks in the Strait of Hormuz, including pollution near Qeshm Island in Iran and along Oman's southern coast, which has been attributed to the oil tanker Carolyn Bezangi.



The oil slick associated with the tanker expanded from approximately 400 square kilometers on September 11 to 600 square kilometers on September 12. There are also indications that some of the other slicks may be linked to the tanker Risco, although the disruption or shutdown of AIS signals has made it difficult to accurately identify the sources of the pollution.

At the same time, commercial shipping traffic through the Strait of Hormuz has fallen to its lowest level. Daily crossings have dropped from an average of around 125 vessels before the war to just four vessels on September 15.

The military crisis has now raised serious environmental concerns for sensitive ecosystems, including mangrove forests and bird habitats.

Greenpeace Reports Five Major Oil Slicks

The environmental organization Greenpeace has reported, based on satellite imagery, that at least five major oil slicks have been observed in the Strait of Hormuz.

According to the organization, pollution has reached areas near protected zones around Iran's Qeshm Island, while another slick has been detected along Oman's southern coast.

Meanwhile, the oil slick caused by the stricken tanker Carolyn Bezangi continues to expand.

In a new report, Greenpeace said recent satellite images show that five major oil slicks are now visible in the Strait of Hormuz.

According to the organization, one of the polluted areas has reached the Iranian coastline near protected areas around Qeshm Island, a region known for its extensive mangrove forests, which are an important ecosystem.

Another oil slick has been detected in the southern part of the Strait of Hormuz, in Omani waters. This section of the Omani coastline, characterized by rocky terrain and numerous inlets, is an important resting and stopover area for birds.

Possible Link Between One of the Slicks and the Risco Tanker

Greenpeace has suggested that some of the observed oil slicks may be linked to the tanker Risco. The organization has nevertheless stressed that this remains only a possible scenario.

Greenpeace wrote in its report: "This could indicate that the vessel has sunk and is continuing to leak oil."

The U.S. military had previously announced that it had targeted the Risco and several other tankers linked to Iran.

Iran, meanwhile, has also attacked several vessels in the region during the recent fighting.

However, determining the exact source of the oil slicks remains difficult. One of the reasons is the limited availability or disruption of data from identification transmitters.

The Carolyn Bezangi Oil Slick Is Expanding

Meanwhile, a separate oil slick along Oman's southern coast is also continuing to expand.

The slick is linked to the tanker Carolyn Bezangi, a Russian oil tanker that ran aground in Omani waters. The vessel has been associated with Russia's so-called "shadow fleet" and is subject to European Union sanctions.

Based on Greenpeace's initial assessment of satellite imagery, the visible surface area of the oil slick was approximately 400 square kilometers on September 11, increasing to around 600 square kilometers on September 12.

The organization said the precise cause of the expansion remains unclear. Possible factors include further damage to the vessel, changes in weather conditions, and shifts in marine currents.

The Carolyn Bezangi had previously also been involved in an oil leak.

Reuters reported that the tanker was carrying nearly 800,000 barrels of Russian oil, and

concerns about its environmental impact have increased since it encountered problems near the Omani coast.

Shipping Traffic Through the Strait of Hormuz Has Plunged

At the same time as the increase in oil pollution, commercial shipping traffic through the Strait of Hormuz has fallen to its lowest levels.

According to data from the shipping analytics company Kpler, cited by Reuters on Tuesday, September 15, only four cargo vessels passed through the Strait of Hormuz on Monday.

The figure had been 10 vessels the previous day. Before the war began, the average daily traffic was reportedly around 125 vessels.

These figures do not include vessels that have switched off their tracking transmitters, meaning that the actual number of crossings could be higher.

Reuters also reported on September 9 that the average number of commercial vessels passing through the Strait of Hormuz over a 10-day period had fallen to approximately 10 vessels per day, compared with significantly higher levels before the war.

Under normal circumstances, the Strait of Hormuz is one of the world's most important energy routes, with approximately 20 percent of the world's oil and liquefied natural gas passing through the waterway.

Concerns Over Damage to Sensitive Ecosystems

The spread of oil slicks in the region has heightened environmental concerns, particularly because some of the pollution has been detected near protected areas.

The mangrove forests around Qeshm Island, Oman's coastline, and bird habitats in the southern part of the Strait of Hormuz are among the areas that could be affected if the oil slicks continue to spread.

At a time when shipping traffic has fallen sharply because of military clashes and attacks on oil tankers, tracing the exact sources of the pollution has also become more difficult. For this reason,

Greenpeace has cautioned against definitively attributing any particular oil slick to a specific vessel or attack.

Nevertheless, the growing number of slicks visible in satellite imagery, together with the expansion of the Carolyn Bezangi slick, indicates that the wartime crisis in the Strait of Hormuz has now developed consequences extending beyond disruptions to oil transportation and has become a serious environmental concern.

The repeated attacks on container ships and oil tankers in the Persian Gulf demonstrate how quickly the war in the region could also lead to an environmental catastrophe!

IRAN: "View from the LEFT" is published monthly for those interested in the Left Party of Iran's perspective on current issues.

IRAN: View from the LEFT may occasionally contain news from Iran that the media might not have drawn attention to.

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