Trump". "If I wasn't in the White House, | world today. Too many innocent people are being killed. And I think someone | Trump described ... "disgraceful".

# Oil prices surge as US begins naval blockade of Iran ports

BY REUTERS

**WASHINGTON.** Global energy markets were shaken yesterday after the United States announced it would begin enforcing a naval blockade targeting Iranian maritime activity, escalating tensions in the Gulf.

The move follows the breakdown of weekend negotiations between Washington and Tehran and comes amid a fragile ceasefire after weeks of conflict in the region.

The decision marks a sharp escalation in US efforts to restrict Iran's oil exports, which remain a critical source of national revenue and geopolitical leverage.

If effective, the strategy could significantly weaken Iran's bargaining power in any future talks with the United States by limiting its ability to move crude through key maritime routes, particularly the Strait of Hormuz.

In theory, constraining Iranian exports could stabilise prices over time by reducing uncertainty over supply disruptions. However, analysts caution that the risks of escalation may outweigh any potential market stabilisation.

## Impact

Dana Stroul, a former senior Pentagon official, warned that the operation is unlikely to be straightforward.

"This mission is difficult to execute alone and likely unsustainable over the medium to long term," she said, adding that the US appears to be seeking a "quick fix" to a complex geopolitical challenge.

The US military has not yet provided key operational details, including the number of warships involved, the role of air power, or whether regional allies in the Gulf will support enforcement.

Under the announced plan, vessels entering or leaving Iranian ports would be subject to interception, while

### AT A GLANCE

The Iran war has disrupted the Strait of Hormuz, a critical global shipping route, by effectively blocking or restricting vessel movement. Iran has threatened and attacked ships, declared parts of the strait closed, and imposed controls on which vessels can pass.

ships transiting the Strait of Hormuz to non-Iranian destinations would not be directly blocked. However, US officials have indicated that vessels suspected of paying transit fees to Iran could also be targeted.

Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps has already warned that any military action near the Strait of Hormuz would be treated as a violation of ceasefire conditions and met with a "decisive" response..

Markets reacted immediately to the announcement. Brent crude rose more than seven percent in early Asian trading, briefly exceeding $100 a barrel. The US dollar strengthened as investors moved toward safe-haven assets, while US stock futures declined amid fears of prolonged instability and higher energy costs.