STRAIT OF HORMUZ MONITOR

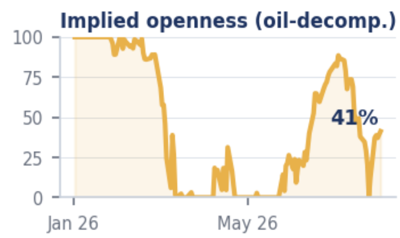
How open · how fast

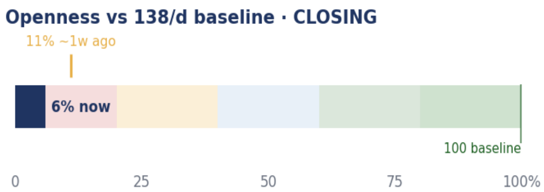
The headline question: how open is Hormuz, and how fast is it reopening? We lead with what we can OBSERVE; dark-share hides the rest.

Hormuz ~6% open (observable) · **Phase 2/5 — Fragile ceasefire** · **CLOSING** -5.0 pts/wk

Backing out SPR releases, OPEC+ slack and demand destruction ($12/bbl combined, per Global Oil S/D v12), today's Brent implies Hormuz is 41% open. Observed visible openness is 6%, total flow estimate 20%; the residual Hormuz risk premium in Brent is $20/bbl. Forward Brent has the premium decaying to $0/bbl by 12m (99% implied openness).

Of the ships we can SEE, only 68% are AIS-off — but the visible count is itself a fraction of true flow: 8 transits/day vs 138 baseline (~6%), with most traffic running dark/unobserved (50-80% on an all-traffic basis). Estimated total ~20% of 20 mb/d throughput (est., low-confidence).





SYNTHESIS — three-sentence headline

HOLD — Phase 2. DE-ESCALATION RESUMING, with the FIRST physical thaw. No new strikes on Iran soil since ~27 Jul; the 10-day ceasefire (Qatar/Egypt/Oman) is PROPOSED and RECEIVED by Iran but NOT signed. Brent has fallen to ~$86.99 (openness ~41%). The constructive tell: the anchored fleet is beginning to MOVE — Qatar's Al Areesh LNG exited 30 Jul (first in ~3 weeks), an ADNOC carrier reappeared, US Navy escorting some tankers. But a dark/escorted TRICKLE, not a reopening: ~6-10 transits/day (~90% below), ~24 still at Kharg. HOLD Phase 2 — the flow finally, tentatively FOLLOWS the price; don't over-upgrade on a trickle. Tell to Phase 3: the ceasefire SIGNED + the fleet clearing. Forward (CO12 $74.48) ~99%. HOLD — Phase 2. DE-ESCALATION RESUMING, with the FIRST physical thaw. No new strikes on Iran soil since ~27 Jul; the 10-day ceasefire (Qatar/Egypt/Pakistan/Oman) is PROPOSED and RECEIVED by Iran but NOT signed. Brent has fallen to ~$86.99 (openness ~41%) on the de-escalation + first shipping resumption. The constructive tell: the anchored fleet is beginning to MOVE — Qatar's Al Areesh LNG exited 30 Jul (first in ~3 weeks), an ADNOC carrier reappeared, US Navy escorting some tankers. But a dark/escorted TRICKLE, not a reopening: ~6-10 transits/day (~90% below), dark ~68%, ~24 still stacked at Kharg. HOLD Phase 2 — the flow finally, tentatively FOLLOWS the price (the Phase-3 tell); don't over-upgrade on a trickle. Tell to Phase 3: the ceasefire SIGNED + the fleet clearing. Tail to Phase 1 (receding): a Kharg strike / mine. Forward (CO12 $74.48, ~99%) prices normalization. Hormuz flow is ~4 mb/d (~15-20% of the ~20.9 norm) — still severe, but for the first time the direction is UP, not flat: the anchored fleet is beginning to trickle out (Qatar's Al Areesh LNG exited 30 Jul, the first shipment in ~3 weeks; an ADNOC carrier reappeared; the US Navy is escorting some tankers). The price led (openness ~41% at $86.99) and the flow is now, tentatively, following. But a dark/escorted TRICKLE, not a reopening — ~24 tankers still stacked at Kharg, war-risk still elevated. Severely throttled, but the fleet is finally starting to clear.

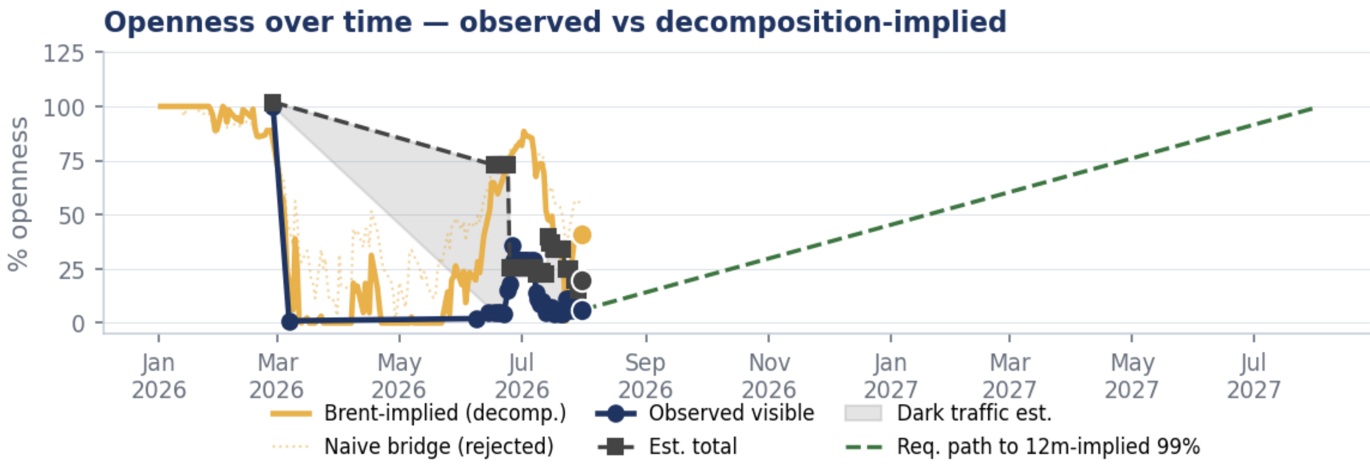
As of 2026-07-31 · **Sources:** visible transits (Windward / hormuzmonitor) · dark-share (Vortexa) · throughput (EIA Q1 avg) · Brent (ICE) · diplomatic (analyst principal-scored). Baselines: 138 ships/day · 20 mb/d.

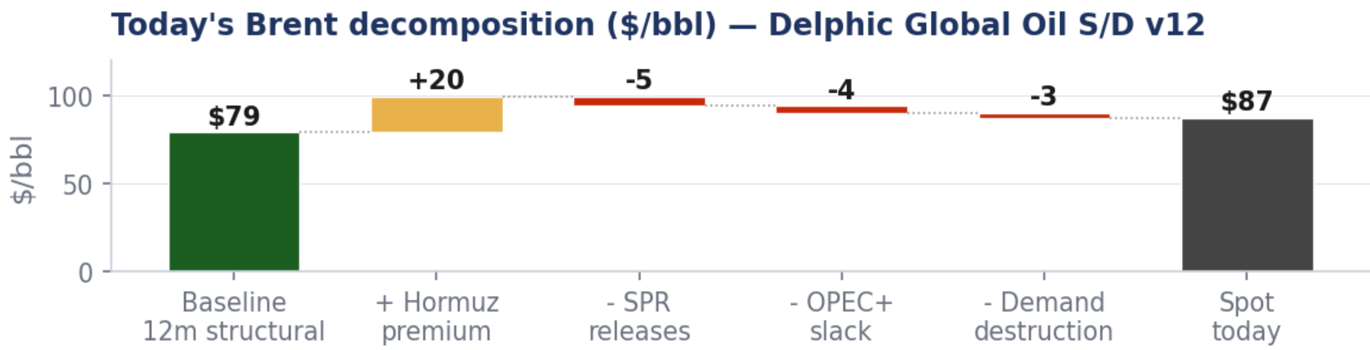
SYNTHESIS

What this means · oil-pricing consistency check

Two readings — the physical openness curve and the oil pricing curve — tell parallel stories. The gap between them is the central tension and the value of the monitor.

Backing out SPR releases, OPEC+ slack and demand destruction ($12/bbl combined, per Global Oil S/D v12), today's Brent implies Hormuz is 41% open. Observed visible openness is 6%, total flow estimate 20%; the residual Hormuz risk premium in Brent is $20/bbl. Forward Brent has the premium decaying to $0/bbl by 12m (99% implied openness).





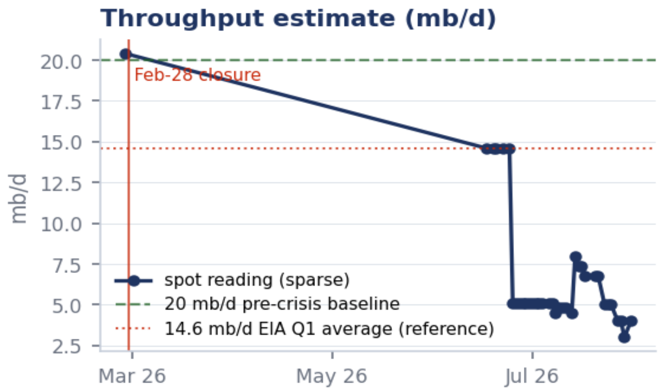
HOW BRENT TRANSLATES TO OPENNESS — Delphic decomposition

- **DECOMPOSITION** — Brent_spot = baseline + Hormuz_premium - non-Hormuz_offset. Baseline = $79/bbl (Delphic 12m structural fair-value, full normalization). Peak Hormuz premium = $34/bbl (Strike scenario vs baseline). Solving for premium and mapping linearly 0..peak gives implied openness 0..100%.
- **NON-HORMUZ OFFSETS TODAY** — $12/bbl backed out of today's Brent (per Global Oil S/D v12): $5 from active US/IEA SPR releases (172 mb US commitment, ~164 mb of 400+ mb deployed by May 8); $4 from deployed OPEC+ slack (UAE coiled-spring flush, Saudi paper quota); $3 from permanent demand destruction (~0.5-0.8 mb/d, teapot exits + electrification).
- **SPOT vs FORWARD** — SPOT $87: implied premium $20/bbl, openness 41%. 12m-FORWARD $74: offsets shrink to $5/bbl (SPR refill demand reverses release pressure above $85; demand recovers +1.0 mb/d by 12m); premium $0/bbl, openness 99%.
- **WHY NOT THE NAIVE BRIDGE** — A linear bridge from observed crisis-peak ($118) to pre-crisis avg ($64) would imply 58% openness today — attributing 100% of Brent's decline to Hormuz reopening. That is analytically wrong: SPR / OPEC+ / demand destruction have done the heavy lifting. The decomposition method (41%) is the honest answer.

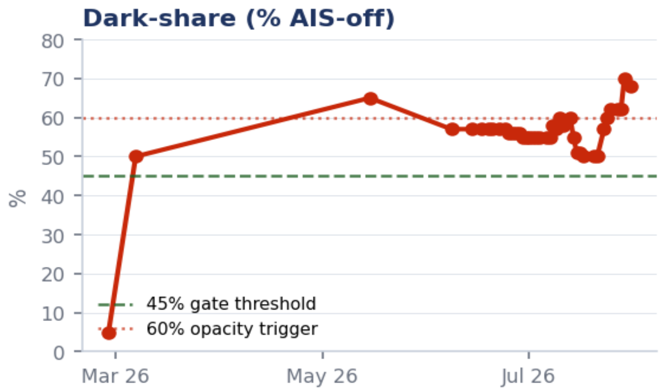
TRAJECTORY

Where we are vs where we have come from

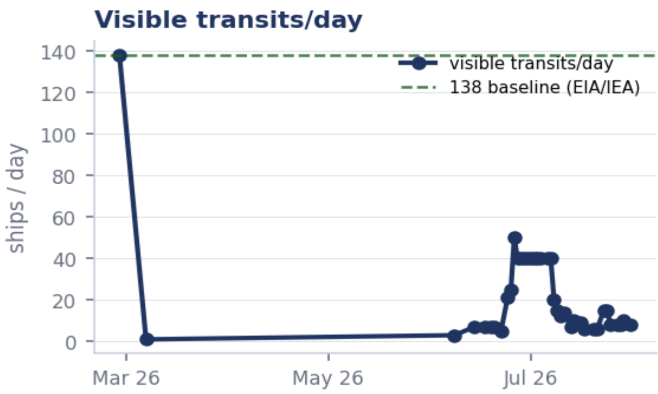
Dark-share and visible transits are the reliable trajectory signals. Throughput is shown as a reference (EIA Q1 average), not a daily spot.



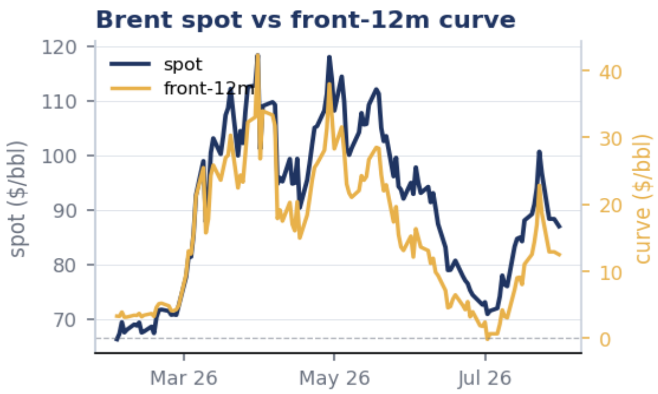
Throughput estimate vs 20 mb/d baseline · 14.6 EIA-Q1 reference line is an average, not a spot. The line is sparse because daily spot is genuinely uncertain while dark-share is high.



% of vessels with AIS off — the observability gap (Vortexa). Falling = visibility returning. Gate clears below 45.



Visible transits/day vs 138 baseline — the reopening curve and the headline openness metric (Windward / hormuzmonitor). The slope is the reopening velocity.



Brent spot + front-12m curve over the last 6 months (ICE, parquet). Falling spot + flattening curve = war-premium discharging.

ANALYSIS

Read · triggers

Thesis. HOLD — Phase 2. DE-ESCALATION RESUMING, with the FIRST physical thaw. No new strikes on Iran soil since ~27 Jul; the 10-day ceasefire (Qatar/Egypt/Oman) is PROPOSED and RECEIVED by Iran but NOT signed. Brent has fallen to ~$86.99 (openness ~41%). The constructive tell: the anchored fleet is beginning to MOVE — Qatar's Al Areesh LNG exited 30 Jul (first in ~3 weeks), an ADNOC carrier reappeared, US Navy escorting some tankers. But a dark/escorted TRICKLE, not a reopening: ~6-10 transits/day (~90% below), ~24 still at Kharg. HOLD Phase 2 — the flow finally, tentatively FOLLOWS the price; don't over-upgrade on a trickle. Tell to Phase 3: the ceasefire SIGNED + the fleet clearing. Forward (CO12 $74.48) ~99%.

READ — Openness * phase * velocity

- **IS IT OPEN? STILL SEVERELY THROTTLED (~a fifth), but the FIRST tankers are beginning to MOVE under escort — the earliest thaw** — Hormuz flow is ~4 mb/d (~15-20% of the ~20.9 norm) — still severe, but for the first time the direction is UP, not flat: the anchored fleet is beginning to trickle out (Qatar's Al Areesh LNG exited 30 Jul, the first shipment in ~3 weeks; an ADNOC carrier reappeared; the US Navy is escorting some tankers). The price led (openness ~41% at $86.99) and the flow is now, tentatively, following. But a dark/escorted TRICKLE, not a reopening — ~24 tankers still stacked at Kharg, war-risk still elevated. Severely throttled, but the fleet is finally starting to clear.
- **TRANSITS + THROUGHPUT — the FIRST thaw: ~6-10 transits/day (up off the lows), ~4 mb/d, ~24 stacked at Kharg (blockade day 17)** — On a dedicated dark-transit re-search (31 Jul): the physical is showing its FIRST recovery signal — throughput ~4 mb/d (~15-20% of the ~20.9 norm), visible AIS-on transits ~6-10/day (up off the ~3-6 lows) vs the ~88/day baseline, all-traffic dark share ~68% (easing slightly as escorted crossings begin, Lloyd's List). ~24 tankers remain stacked at Kharg, but the first named movements have begun (Al Areesh LNG, an ADNOC carrier, US-Navy escorts). Critically, the de-escalation has (finally) started to bring the fleet back — the first owners are testing escorted crossings. So the FLOW is at last beginning to follow the PRICE: still a trickle, ~90% below norm, but the anchored-fleet indicator — the thing we have watched for weeks — has turned up for the first time.
- **HOW OPEN — implied ~41% SPOT / ~99% FORWARD; the price led the de-escalation and the flow is now beginning to follow** — The oil-decomposition model reads implied openness ~41% at Brent ~$86.99 — UP from ~37% as the war premium unwinds; the war premium unwinds on the strike pause. But the PHYSICAL openness is still only ~17-25% (throughput ~4 mb/d, ~448 vessels anchored, no owners resuming). So for the FIRST time in the siege the PRICE (~41%) runs AHEAD of the FLOW (~17-25%) — the market is discounting a de-escalation the tankers have not yet delivered. That inverts the prior weeks, when the price lagged (or the Red Sea premium ran the price above the Hormuz flow). The 12m FORWARD (CO12 $74.48) has FIRMED to ~96% (from ~88% Friday) — the curve now prices near-full normalization, backwardation compressing to ~$13 (CO1-CO12), the classic de-escalation signature. The read: the relief is real but front-running the physical; the confirmation is the anchored fleet clearing and owners resuming Hormuz — until then, the openness the price implies is aspirational.
- **PHASE — HOLD Phase 2: the pause FRACTURED (missiles fired, strikes resumed) — but INTERCEPTED, so no upgrade on the price re-firing** — HOLD — Phase 2 (Fragile ceasefire, RE-ESCALATING). The brief strike pause has FRACTURED: on 28 Jul the IRGC fired ballistic missiles at US forces (all INTERCEPTED by CENTCOM, no damage) and the US + Saudi struck back at Iraqi militia sites — the strikes have resumed and Brent has firmed back to ~$86.99. The discipline that held Phase 2 works SYMMETRICALLY: just as we did not downgrade on the price RELIEF the physical never confirmed, we do not UPGRADE now on the price re-firing unless a physical Phase-1 trigger fires — and none has: the missiles were intercepted (no damage), Kharg is neither struck nor all-clear, no verified mine, the Strait not newly shut. The physical is UNCHANGED and severely degraded (~4 mb/d, ~10 transits/day, dark ~70%, ~21+ stacked at Kharg). HOLD Phase 2 — but the risk skew shifts BACK toward escalation. Tip to Phase 1: a Kharg/terminal strike, a verified mine, a genuine halt. Path to Phase 3 (now receding): a real ceasefire + the anchored fleet clearing.
- **VELOCITY — the strike PAUSE is the swing; the PRICE de-escalated first, the PHYSICAL is the confirmation still pending** — The siege ground into a FIFTEENTH day (blockade clock), but the vector this morning is DE-escalation on the strike clock: the US-Iran strike PAUSE took Brent down ~9% to ~$86.99 (openness ~41%). That is the first genuine de-escalation signal of the siege. But it has run AHEAD of the physical — throughput ~4 mb/d, ~448 vessels anchored, no owners resuming. The forward curve (12m $75.45, ~96% open) prices eventual normalization, and the spot is now catching toward it. The swing (24-72h): does the pause HOLD and the physical FOLLOW (fleet clears, transits rebuild to toward Phase 3), or does it BREAK (a re-strike / Kharg hit / verified mine to snap back toward Phase 1)? For the first time the skew is toward de-escalation — but it is fragile and unconfirmed by the flow.

OFFICIAL RECORD * SoH — Statements * decisions - as regards the Strait

- **THE FIRST PHYSICAL THAW — tankers begin to trickle out under escort; the periphery flare has quieted (blockade day 17)** — The decisive 30-31 Jul shift is on the PHYSICAL side, and it is constructive: for the first time the anchored fleet is beginning to MOVE. Qatar's Al Areesh LNG cargo exited Hormuz on 30 Jul — the first LNG shipment in ~3 weeks — an ADNOC crude carrier reappeared (29 Jul), and the US Navy is now escorting some tankers through. The 28-29 Jul periphery flare (the intercepted missile barrage, the US/Saudi Iraq strikes) has quieted, with no new strikes on Iranian soil since ~27 Jul. But this is a DARK/ESCORTED TRICKLE, not a reopening: still ~6-10 transits/day vs ~88 (~90% below), dark ~68%, ~24 tankers still stacked at Kharg. Brent has fallen to ~$86.99 on the de-escalation + the first shipping resumption. HOLD Phase 2 — the flow is finally, tentatively following the price.
- **KHARG SPARED — the one clean closure trigger, deliberately UNFIRED** — The US strikes (a seventh day) have pointedly SPARED Kharg — Iran's single export terminal (~90-96% of crude through one node). You do not spare the one asset whose loss would actually shut the corridor if your aim is to shut it. A confirmed strike on Kharg, a mine detonation, or the blockade cutting the through-corridor to

near-zero are the lines that convert this into a genuine supply loss. None is fired.

- **DIPLOMACY — the 10-day ceasefire (Qatar/Egypt/Pakistan/Oman) is PROPOSED and RECEIVED by Iran, but NOT yet signed — do not over-call a truce** — The off-ramp is advancing but unresolved. The 10-day ceasefire proposal to reopen both Hormuz lanes has been PROPOSED by the mediators (Qatar/Egypt/Pakistan/Oman) and RECEIVED by Iran — it is being negotiated, but NOT yet signed or accepted. Trump frames a 'good chance' of progress (while still warning Iran) — metered coercion de-escalating from strength. No new strikes on Iran soil since ~27 Jul, and the first tanker movements have begun under escort — the mediation and the physical are moving the same direction, tentatively. OFAC's GL X oil-waiver (to Aug 21) is intact. The end-game the channel points to is still a managed-corridor / fees regime reached from Iranian weakness — a 6-18 month horizon, now with the first steps visible. Watch for the ceasefire to be SIGNED.
- **THE RED SEA SECOND CHOKEPOINT — still contested but now BACKGROUND, no longer the price driver** — The Red Sea / Bab el-Mandeb front (the 23 Jul Houthi strikes on the Saudi tankers Encelia + Layla, Saudi's Red Sea pause, the Petroline bypass under fire) stays CONTESTED — but with no fresh weekend attack confirmed and the war premium discharging, it is now BACKGROUND rather than the driver. The driver has flipped from 'two chokepoints firing, oil through $100' (last week) to 'the strike pause holding, oil back to ~$88'. Worth watching (a fresh Red Sea escalation or a Yanbu hit re-arms a premium), but it is no longer setting the price.
- **FLOW — Hormuz ~4 mb/d (~17-25% of norm), still SHUT; ~24 tankers stacked at Kharg, no owners resuming** — The physical (dedicated dark-transit re-search): throughput ~4 mb/d (straits.live ~3.4 mb/d, ~17%; ~3.5-5 range), visible AIS-on transits <10/day vs the ~88-138 baseline, all-traffic dark ~60-65% (tanker AIS-off ~70%). Critically, ~24 tankers are now STACKED at Kharg awaiting the all-clear and ~448 vessels sit anchored region-wide — and the strike pause has NOT (yet) brought any of them back: no owners/charterers have confirmed resuming Hormuz, war-risk stays ~8x. So the FLOW is UNCHANGED even as the price relieves — the physical is not following the pause.
- **PRICE — Brent FIRMS back to ~$86.99 as the pause fractures — the war premium re-arming, unwind stalled** — Brent has firmed to ~$86.99 (off the ~$87.85 pause-low; still ~-12% below the ~$100.35 spike on 24 Jul) as the strike pause fractures and the war premium re-arms; WTI ~$83, CO12 $74.48 = backwardation ~$13. The unwind has STALLED. Bank targets (Goldman $120, JPM $120-130, >$150 tail) stay CONDITIONAL on an actual shut-in — which has not happened (the 28 Jul missiles were intercepted, no damage). A break decisively higher needs a physical trigger (a Kharg/terminal strike, a VERIFIED mine, the trickle stopping); a durable pause restoration re-opens the downside. The fractured pause is the swing to watch.

WHERE WE'VE COME FROM — Trajectory

- **2026-07-07/11** — IRGC tanker strikes (7 Jul) and a two-way exchange (8 Jul) end the ceasefire era; a contained mourning-week cycle, oil to ~$76; a brief 10-11 Jul pause (Araghchi to Oman). Phase 4 -> Phase 3.
- **2026-07-13** — The policy track escalates: Trump floats a 20% Hormuz toll + a resumed blockade of Iranian ports; two UAE tankers struck (first fatality); Brent gaps ~+4% to ~$79. Phase 2 held — the vector turns sharply negative.
- **2026-07-14** — HOLD Phase 2 (escalating). Throughput corrected 4.5 -> ~8.0 mb/d (the 4.5 was a stale Q1 average); corridor open, no terminal struck, mining armed-not-fired, market not pricing closure. Brent ~$85. Phase-1 triggers arming, unfired.
- **2026-07-15** — The blockade FIRES — in force and biting (a vessel disabled off Bandar Abbas; Abadan/Mahshahr struck). But a MANAGED siege: Trump ABANDONED the 20% toll (Gulf states to invest in the US instead), Iran's Kuwait reply intercepted, Kharg SPARED, GL X intact. Flow is the feedback: throughput dipped 8.0 -> 7.0 mb/d (dark 55 -> 50) as the siege cuts Iran's exports. HOLD Phase 2. Brent ~$85. The read shifts to the Two-Clock frame — whose leverage runs out first.
- **2026-07-16** — Blockade in force, DAY 2 — the state holds: throughput ~7.0 mb/d (unchanged; the siege bites Iran's exports at the same rate), Kharg still spared, the through-corridor open, Brent ~$85. HOLD Phase 2. No new Phase-1 trigger fired; the Two-Clock grind continues — Iran's leverage drains as its arsenal spends down and the bypass build-out advances.
- **2026-07-17** — The siege INTENSIFIES: US strikes a THIRD day, the blockade reinstated, Iran hit TWO supertankers and struck US assets in Kuwait AND Bahrain; Hormuz transits collapsed to ~7/day as ships run dark. Throughput dips further to ~7.0 mb/d. But STILL Phase 2, not a closure: Brent ~$85 (a supply premium, not the $100-130 a shut Strait implies), Kharg spared, and Trump ABANDONED the 20% toll. A more kinetic, more-throttled siege on the same Two-Clock trajectory — Iran's leverage draining.
- **2026-07-18/19** — Weekend, blockade DAY 4-5 — the siege holds through the weekend: US strikes continue, the blockade in force, Kharg spared, throughput ~6.8-7.0 mb/d, transits low (~6/day, ships dark). Oil firms into Monday. HOLD Phase 2; no new Phase-1 trigger fired.
- **2026-07-20** — The OIL RE-BIDS — Brent GAPS to $88.10 (CO1, from Fri's $84.5 (17 Jul)) in STEEP backwardation (CO1-CO12 +$11.4, ~13% front/12m). The siege's SIXTH day; the oil market now prices an ACUTE near-term scarcity (spot ~38% open then, forward ~92%). Throughput ~6.8 mb/d, Kharg spared. STILL Phase 2, not a closure: $88 < the ~$95 trigger. The escalation tell is now the OIL — the closest to the trigger yet.
- **2026-07-23/24** — The SECOND CHOKEPOINT + the $100 print: Houthis strike the Saudi tankers Encelia + Layla in the Red Sea, Saudi PAUSES Red Sea oil, the Petroline bypass contested — Brent touches ~$100.35 intraday (first since May), then EASES to settle ~$97.3 (24 Jul). Hormuz's own flow held ~5 mb/d; the spike was the two-chokepoint premium, not a Hormuz shut-in. HOLD Phase 2.
- **2026-07-26/27** — The STRIKE PAUSE — the US and Iran pause strikes over the weekend; Brent TUMBLES ~6% to ~$88 as the war premium unwinds. A dedicated dark-transit re-search: the physical is UNCHANGED — ~4 mb/d, ~448 vessels anchored, no owners resuming. The price begins to front-run the flow. HOLD Phase 2.
- **2026-07-28 (AM)** — The pause holds into the morning; Brent eases to ~$87.85 (openness ~39%). Iran says NO active talks (a 10-day ceasefire proposed); the US warns it resumes absent a deal. Physical still SHUT — ~24 tankers stacked at Kharg, <10 transits/day. Price down, flow flat — the divergence widens. HOLD Phase 2.
- **2026-07-28 (PM)** — The PAUSE FRACTURES — the IRGC fires ballistic missiles at US forces (~5:45pm ET, all INTERCEPTED, no damage); the US + Saudi strike back at Iraqi militia sites. Strikes RESUME; Brent firms back to ~$86.99. Missiles intercepted — no Hormuz Phase-1 trigger. HOLD Phase 2, risk re-arming.
- **2026-07-29** — ESCALATION AT THE PERIPHERY: Iran fires a FRESH missile barrage (intercepted), and the US + SAUDI jointly strike militias in EASTERN IRAQ — Riyadh's FIRST strikes inside Iraq (~20 killed). The coalition/theater WIDEN. But a 5th straight night with NO strike on Iran soil, KHARG UNTOUCHED, no mine/closure. A new 10-day ceasefire push (Qatar/Egypt/Pakistan/Oman) to reopen

both lanes is ALIVE but UNACCEPTED. Physical still SHUT (~11%, ~10 transits/day, ~318 vessels stacked). Brent firm high-$80s, no blow-out. HOLD Phase 2 — periphery escalation, no Hormuz trigger.

- **2026-07-30/31** — DE-ESCALATION RESUMES — the FIRST physical thaw. No new strikes on Iran soil since ~27 Jul; the 10-day ceasefire (Qatar/Egypt/Pakistan/Oman) is PROPOSED and RECEIVED by Iran (not signed). The anchored fleet begins to trickle: Qatar's Al Areesh LNG exits 30 Jul (first shipment in ~3 weeks), an ADNOC carrier reappears, US Navy escorts some tankers. Brent falls to ~$86.99 (openness ~41%). But a dark/escorted TRICKLE (~6-10 transits/day, ~90% below, ~24 stacked at Kharg), not a reopening. HOLD Phase 2 — the flow finally, tentatively FOLLOWS the price (the Phase-3 tell).

WHERE IT'S HEADED — Direction * accelerants * reversers

- **DIRECTION — a clock, not a ladder; the brief price DE-escalation has STALLED, the physical never moved** — The brief price/diplomacy DE-escalation has STALLED: the strike pause FRACTURED (Iran's intercepted missile salvo, the US/Saudi response), and Brent has firmed back to ~$86.99 — while the PHYSICAL clock never moved at all (throughput ~4 mb/d, ~21+ tankers stacked at Kharg, ~10 transits/day, the fleet anchored). The frame is WHOSE CLOCK RUNS OUT FIRST: Iran's finite arsenal + the bypass build-out drain its leverage, and the forward curve (12m $75.44, ~96% open) still prices near-full normalization on a 6-18m horizon. Near-term the swing is whether the fracture ESCALATES to a physical trigger (a Kharg/terminal strike, a mine to Phase 1) or the pause is restored (to back toward a Phase-3 off-ramp). The risk skew has re-armed toward escalation.
- **TIP TO PHASE 1 (active closure)** — A confirmed strike on an oil-export TERMINAL (Kharg), OR a MINE DETONATION on a hull, OR the blockade widening from Iran's ports to the through-corridor, OR a Brent break decisively through ~$95. Any turns a throttled Iranian-export siege into a corridor supply-loss shock. Per the shifting-power tail, a DECLINING Iran is the one most tempted to a use-it-or-lose-it slip — the tail is highest where it looks managed.
- **PATH BACK TO PHASE 3** — A visible settlement-from-weakness signal: a strike pause, Tehran softening its posture, or a fees-regime understanding via the (still-live) Muscat channel, with the blockade eased. This is the medium-term base case — but on a 6-18 month horizon as the leverage transfer completes, not a this-week off-ramp.

SCENARIOS — Base * Bear * Bull

- **BASE** — Phase 2 holds, now DE-escalating on the price clock while the physical lags: the blockade grinds Iran's export trickle (throughput ~4 mb/d, the fleet stacked at Kharg) while the GCC corridor keeps flowing, Kharg untouched, no counterparty yet resuming; Brent high-$80s spot (the war premium discharging as the pause holds), the 12m forward pricing near-full normalization (~$75). A modern tanker-war of attrition metered by the two clocks — acute now, temporary.
- **BEAR** — Phase 1: a Kharg/terminal strike, a mine detonation, or the blockade widening to the through-corridor halts flow; Brent +$10-25 to $95-110, a genuine supply shock. The shifting-power tail — a declining Iran's use-it-or-lose-it slip — makes this live, but it is NOT the base.
- **BULL** — A visible settlement-from-weakness turn — now being TESTED, with the strike pause underway: a fees-regime understanding via Muscat, the blockade eased — re-establishing a fragile Phase 3 and bleeding the premium. The channel is alive and Iran's >60% inflation argues it wants the off-ramp; the 12m forward ($75.45, ~96% open) already prices this normalization — but it is the 6-18 month destination, not the near-term modal path.

Bottom line. HOLD — Phase 2. DE-ESCALATION RESUMING, with the FIRST physical thaw. No new strikes on Iran soil since ~27 Jul; the 10-day ceasefire (Qatar/Egypt/Pakistan/Oman) is PROPOSED and RECEIVED by Iran but NOT signed. Brent has fallen to ~$86.99 (openness ~41%) on the de-escalation + first shipping resumption. The constructive tell: the anchored fleet is beginning to MOVE — Qatar's Al Areesh LNG exited 30 Jul (first in ~3 weeks), an ADNOC carrier reappeared, US Navy escorting some tankers. But a dark/escorted TRICKLE, not a reopening: ~6-10 transits/day (~90% below), dark ~68%, ~24 still stacked at Kharg. HOLD Phase 2 — the flow finally, tentatively FOLLOWS the price (the Phase-3 tell); don't over-upgrade on a trickle. Tell to Phase 3: the ceasefire SIGNED + the fleet clearing. Tail to Phase 1 (receding): a Kharg strike / mine. Forward (CO12 $74.48, ~99%) prices normalization.

TRIGGERS — open materiality list (name · status · rule · source)

NAME	STATUS	RULE	SOURCE
RE-STRESS	FIRED	brent_1m > +8%	brent.parquet (ICE)
OPACITY	FIRED	dark_share > 60%	dark_share.json (Vortexa)
DIPLOMATIC DETERIORATION	FIRED	durability < 0	diplomatic_scores.json (analyst)
NEAR-CONFIRM	DORMANT	throughput > 12 mb/d AND dark_share < 50%	throughput_mbd.json + dark_share.json
DOWNGRADE-RISK	FIRED	brent_1m > +8% OR durability < -0.5	brent.parquet + diplomatic_scores.json

METHODOLOGY & SOURCES

How the monitor works

Reference page: indicator families, baselines, computed metrics, sources, and the phase state-machine rules. All upstream data lives in the Dropbox store at delphic-market-data/store/.

INDICATOR FAMILIES

- **PRICING (leads / warns)** — Brent spot + front-12m curve from ICE (parquet). War-risk premia from manual entry. Pricing leads the call — can trigger downgrades alone but cannot trigger upgrades without physical confirmation.
- **PHYSICAL (confirms upgrade / lags)** — Throughput estimate (EIA Q1 average, reference only). Dark-share % (Vortexa). Visible transits/day (Windward / hormuzmonitor). The physical gate gates upgrades past Phase 2.
- **DIPLOMATIC (durability)** — Five milestones scored -2..+2 by the principal: navigation freedom, nuclear / ballistic, sanctions / reconstruction, ceasefire compliance, succession stability. Composite is the weighted average.

BASELINES

- **138 ships/day** — Pre-crisis steady-state visible transits (EIA / IEA 2025 reference). Denominator for visible_pct.
- **20 mb/d** — Pre-crisis throughput baseline (EIA). Denominator for est_total_pct.
- **Brent endpoints (Delphic Global Oil S/D v12)** — Structural fair-value baseline $79/bbl (12m, full normalization, no Hormuz premium). Peak Hormuz premium $34/bbl (Strike scenario $113 vs baseline $79). Non-Hormuz offsets today: SPR $5 + OPEC+ slack $4 + demand destruction $3 = $12/bbl. Used by the decomposition on the synthesis page.

COMPUTED METRICS

- **visible_pct** — = visible_transits / 138 — the OBSERVABLE openness headline.
- **est_total_pct** — = throughput_mbd / 20 — estimated total including covert flow. Labelled low-confidence whenever dark-share > 30%.
- **observability_gap** — = est_total_pct - visible_pct — the unobserved share.
- **velocity_pts_per_week** — = visible_pct now minus visible_pct ~7 days ago (nearest non-today entry within +/-3 days), normalised. Labels: ACCELERATING > +3, RECOVERING +0.5..+3, STALLED within +/-0.5, CLOSING < -0.5.
- **implied_openness (Delphic decomposition)** — Brent_spot = baseline + Hormuz_premium - non-Hormuz_offset. Solve for Hormuz_premium, then implied_openness = clamp(100 * (1 - premium / peak_premium), 0, 100). Same formula on 12m-forward Brent with shrunk offsets. The naive linear bridge (without backing out non-Hormuz factors) is REJECTED.
- **phase (state machine)** — UPGRADE requires physical confirmation (throughput > 12 AND dark-share < 45) AND durability >= 0 AND pricing momentum > 0. DOWNGRADE may fire on pricing or durability alone (asymmetric).

SOURCES

- **Visible transits** — Windward and hormuzmonitor public counts; written to store/soh/visible_transits.json
- **Dark-share** — Vortexa AIS-off coverage; written to store/soh/dark_share.json
- **Throughput estimate** — EIA Q1 2026 average mb/d; written to store/soh/throughput_mbd.json. Not a daily spot reading.
- **Brent + front-12m curve** — ICE daily prints, mirrored to store/commodity/brent.parquet and store/commodity/brent_co12.parquet.
- **Diplomatic scores** — Analyst principal-scored, store/soh/diplomatic_scores.json.
- **History** — store/soh/history.jsonl. Seeded with public-record anchors (EIA, Vortexa, Windward, press). Appended every build.