

US-Iran Standoff Shuts World's Biggest Oil Route, Markets on Edge

- A military conflict between the United States, Israel, and Iran has closed the Strait of Hormuz — the narrow waterway through which about one-fifth of the world's oil normally flows
- Oil prices have surged to their highest levels in years, with Brent crude reaching over \$113 per barrel, as traders worry about supplies running short
- The US Federal Reserve voted to keep interest rates steady, but with unusual disagreement among its members — a sign that even policymakers are uncertain about what comes next
- The UAE announced it is leaving the OPEC oil producers group from tomorrow, a historic move that adds another layer of uncertainty to global energy markets

KEY DRIVER

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WHAT TO WATCH

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MARKET INSIGHT

Stock Markets Split — Tech Holds Steady While Europe and Industrials Dip

- The S&P 500 is holding near flat at 7,136 points, showing resilience despite global uncertainty, as investors weigh strong tech earnings against inflation fears
- The Nasdaq 100 is up 0.43% at 27,187 points, buoyed by optimism ahead of Apple's quarterly results due this evening
- European markets are under more pressure — the FTSE 100 is down 1.16% at 10,213 points and Germany's DAX is off 0.49% at 23,955 points, as rising energy costs weigh on the region
- The Dow Jones Industrial Average is down 0.61% at 48,862 points, with industrial and financial companies sensitive to slower growth concerns

Key Economic Readings: Oil Surges, Gold Holds, Crypto Pulls Back

BRENT CRUDE OIL

\$113.41 per barrel (+2.01%)

Oil is rising sharply as the Strait of Hormuz remains largely closed to tanker traffic, tightening global supply

GOLD

\$4,558.40 per troy ounce (+0.08%)

Gold is holding near record highs as investors seek safety during geopolitical uncertainty — central banks bought 244 tonnes in Q1 alone

BITCOIN

\$75,513 (-2.26%)

Crypto markets are pulling back alongside other risk assets as investors move to safer ground amid global tensions

EUROZONE UNEMPLOYMENT

6.5% (forecast unchanged)

Europe's jobs market remains relatively stable even as growth concerns mount — today's official reading is expected to confirm the trend

Commodities and Crypto: What's Moving and Why

1

Brent Crude at \$113.41

Oil is surging on fears of prolonged supply disruption through the Strait of Hormuz, where tanker traffic has been severely restricted since late February

2

WTI Crude at \$109.57

US benchmark oil is also rising sharply, tracking global supply fears — some economists warn prices could reach \$190 per barrel by August if tensions continue

3

Silver at \$72.22

Silver is outperforming gold today, up 0.68%, benefiting from both its safe-haven appeal and strong industrial demand outlook

4

Bitcoin at \$75,513

Bitcoin dropped over 2% as investors reduced exposure to volatile assets — Ethereum fell even further, down 3.73% to \$2,241, in a broad crypto pullback

Where Markets Stand Right Now

ASSET CLASS	SENTIMENT	KEY DRIVER	DIRECTION
Oil and Energy	● BULLISH	Strait of Hormuz crisis limiting global supply; demand holding firm	▲
US Equities	MIXED	Tech earnings providing support; Fed dissent and oil costs creating drag	↕
European Equities	● BEARISH	High energy import costs and growth fears weighing on DAX and FTSE	▼
Gold and Silver	● NEUTRAL	Safe-haven demand strong; gold near record highs at \$4,558	↔
Forex (US Dollar)	● NEUTRAL	Fed's divided vote creating uncertainty; dollar range-bound against major peers	↔
Crypto	● BEARISH	Risk-off environment pushing Bitcoin and Ethereum lower; BTC down 2.26%	▼