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GLOBAL SECURITY AND DEFENSE DEVELOPMENTS DAILY

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Executive Assessment

U.S. military posture toward Iran continues to expand through sustained strike operations and a significant buildup of forward-deployed capabilities. Strategic bomber activity from RAF Fairford remains active, with additional B-1B deployments increasing overall strike capacity, while F-35C fighter movements reinforce tactical airpower in the region. Continuous airlift operations and the deployment of additional aerial refueling assets are enabling a high operational tempo. Amphibious forces centered on USS Tripoli and USS Boxer, alongside Marine Expeditionary Units, remain positioned for rapid escalation, supported by the reported presence of Tier 1 special operations elements and enhanced operational security measures such as removal of aircraft identifiers.

U.S. policy reflects a controlled escalation approach, with the extension of the suspension on strikes against Iranian energy infrastructure to ten days aimed at testing Iran’s response while preserving deterrence. Despite this pause, ISR activity and aerial refueling operations remain elevated, indicating sustained readiness for renewed strikes. Iran has rejected the extended suspension as coercive and continues to frame U.S. military presence and surveillance activity as escalatory, while maintaining defensive preparations and signaling readiness to respond to any renewed targeting of its energy sector.

Iranian-aligned militia activity and maritime behavior indicate continued reliance on calibrated, asymmetric pressure. Indirect fire incidents against U.S. positions in Syria and persistent harassment of commercial shipping through GPS spoofing and close-range maneuvering reflect an effort to impose operational friction without triggering full-scale escalation. Israeli operations against Iranian-linked infrastructure in Syria continue independently, maintaining pressure on supply routes supporting Hezbollah. Concurrent disruptions to maritime traffic and elevated risk conditions in the Strait of Hormuz are contributing to instability in energy transit flows, while the broader conflict environment is reinforced by sustained Russian offensive operations in Ukraine and continued global emphasis on missile defense, autonomous systems, and industrial-scale weapons production.

U.S. ATTACK ON IRAN - MIDDLE EAST DEPLOYMENT

- The U.S. Air Force has begun conducting strike missions against Iran using bombers deployed to RAF Fairford in the United Kingdom. Three B-1B strategic bombers reportedly carried out strike missions and subsequently returned to RAF Fairford.

- Eight U.S. Marine Corps F-35C fighter jets have departed RAF Lakenheath in the UK to deploy to the Middle East.

- U.S. Air Force logistical airlift operations to the Middle East and the Gulf continue. C-17 and C-5 cargo aircraft are conducting regular flights to support regional deployments.

- The USS Tripoli amphibious assault ship and a Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) consisting of at least 2,200 U.S. Marines are continuing their deployment toward the Middle East. It is stated that the ship will remain on standby, ready to deploy to the region for potential ground operations.

- The USS Boxer Amphibious Ready Group and the 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit departed from California for deployment to the region. The group is expected to serve as the second amphibious task force in the area, potentially providing support for possible ground operations.

- The U.S. Air Force has begun removing unit markings and tail numbers from aircraft operating in the Middle East to enhance OPSEC and reduce identification risk in the event of a shootdown.

- The U.S. Air Force has deployed three additional B-1B strategic bombers to RAF Fairford in the UK, bringing the total to 15 B-1Bs and 6 B-52Hs at the base.
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- Additional aerial refueling tanker aircraft have been deployed to multiple bases across the Middle East and Europe.

- Reports indicate that Tier 1 U.S. special operations forces, including units such as the 160th SOAR, have been deployed to various bases across the Middle East.

GLOBAL SECURITY DEVELOPMENTS

- Donald Trump announced an updated extension of the suspension on U.S. strikes targeting Iranian energy infrastructure, stating that attacks on refineries, export terminals, and power generation facilities would be halted for ten days to test Iran's response in the maritime domain and proxy activity.

- Trump emphasized that the initial five day pause had been expanded after internal assessments indicated a temporary reduction in immediate escalation risks, while maintaining that U.S. forces remain fully authorized to resume strikes if Iranian actions threaten global energy flows.

- Iranian officials declared that the U.S. pause does not represent de-escalation and asserted that Iran will continue defensive preparations to protect energy infrastructure and maritime approaches.

- Iranian officials rejected the ten day suspension framework and stated that U.S. policy remains coercive, declaring that Iran will not alter its regional posture under pressure and will respond to any renewed strikes against its energy sector.

- Iranian leadership signaled that continued U.S. ISR presence and force posture in the Gulf constitutes escalation, despite the suspension of direct strikes on energy facilities.

- Iranian-backed militia groups increased indirect fire incidents targeting U.S. facilities in eastern Syria, assessed as calibrated signaling rather than large-scale escalation.

- Israeli aircraft conducted precision strikes against suspected Iranian weapons storage facilities in western Syria, targeting supply routes linked to Hezbollah.

- Israeli defense authorities stated that operations against Iranian entrenchment will continue regardless of U.S. operational pauses related to energy infrastructure.

- Israeli air defense units were placed on heightened alert following intelligence warnings of possible UAV launches from Iranian-aligned groups.

- A Marshall Islands flagged tanker reported sustained GPS spoofing interference while transiting the Gulf of Oman, forcing deviation from planned route.

- Russian forces intensified offensive pressure in eastern Ukraine, particularly along Donetsk axis, with increased artillery and mechanized assaults.

- Ukrainian forces conducted additional long-range UAV strikes against Russian fuel depots and logistics infrastructure in rear areas.

- Diplomatic engagement between Russia and Ukraine continued without breakthrough, with discussions limited to humanitarian mechanisms.

- Western support flows remained steady with continued deliveries of air defense systems and ammunition.

GLOBAL DEFENSE DEVELOPMENTS

- Raytheon was awarded a $773.5 million noncompetitive contract modification to expand an existing radar development program. The modification increases the total contract ceiling from $1.47 billion to $2.25 billion. The package includes research and development support for the AN/TPY-2 radar, covering system upgrades, performance enhancements, and continued engineering support.

- Raytheon also received a $193.2 million noncompetitive contract modification for spares replenishment and continued AN/TPY-2 support. This modification increases the value of a previously awarded task order from $145.9 million to $339.1 million. The package includes spare parts supply, sustainment activities, and ongoing technical support for the AN/TPY-2 radar system.

- Aircraft of the Royal Netherlands Air and Space Force (RNLASF) have deployed to Japan for the first time to participate in a Tokyo-led trilateral military exercise.

- The U.S. Army to begin M1E3 Abrams prototype operational testing in Summer 2026.

- Boeing Defense announced that the U.S. Air Force's T-7A Red Hawk has passed Hazards of Electromagnetic Radiation to Ordnance testing, confirming its ejection seat system will not be triggered by high-intensity electromagnetic energy.

- The U.S. Navy announced a new chapter of unmanned surface vessel acquisition that seeks to accelerate development of autonomous capabilities and ditch its previous program.
- Lockheed Martin is scaling its Javelin missile supply chain to support rising global demand and increased production rates.

- Northrop Grumman accelerates Sentinel missile silo prototype development with U.S. Air Force to support deployment.

- The U.S. Department of War announced that new contract to continue upgrading Boeing CH-47F Chinook heavy-lift helicopters to the Block II standard. The agreement, valued at $326 million, covers the modernization and delivery of six aircraft.

- U.S. Central Command confirms AH-64 Apache helicopters deployment against Iran under Operation Epic Fury.

- Greece has placed an order for RAM Block 2A missiles to equip its fast attack missile craft, with a second batch of RAM Block 2B missiles expected in the near future for integration on the FDI HN frigates.

- The UK Ministry of Defence has awarded nine contracts worth GBP 283.5 million to five companies to maintain and support around 3,000 boats used by the UK Armed Forces and MOD Police.

- Australia has launched a bilateral initiative with European industry to expand domestic production of guided weapons. The move strengthens sovereign missile capabilities and reduces reliance on fragile global supply chains.

- Rheinmetall Defence Australia has delivered the first seven locally built Boxer CRVs from its Queensland facility.

- South Korea's Hanwha Aerospace unveils its new 8x8 wheeled 155mm self-propelled howitzer, revealing a highly mobile artillery system that delivers K9-class tracked howitzer firepower in a road-ready format.

- Japan has equipped the Aegis destroyer Chokai to fire U.S.-made Tomahawk cruise missiles following upgrades completed in the United States.

- Mexico has selected the Canadian-made Roshel Senator MRAP armored vehicle following trials conducted by its armed forces and federal police at the end of last year.

- MBDA has announced a significant expansion in missile production and investment as demand for advanced weapons systems increases across Europe. The company said missile output doubled between 2023 and the end of 2025, with a further 40% rise planned for 2026.

- Hanwha Ocean has deployed a KSS-III submarine to Canada, marking a milestone in defence cooperation between Canada and the Republic of Korea. The vessel departed Jinhae Naval Base on 25 March and is scheduled to arrive in Victoria, British Columbia, in late May.

- KNDS and Elbit Systems establish EuroPULS joint venture to deliver rocket artillery systems for European armed forces.

FORWARD LOOK – NEXT 7 DAYS

• Continued U.S. and Israeli air operations targeting Iranian missile, drone, and military infrastructure across the country.

• Expansion of U.S. and allied naval operations in the Gulf focused on mine countermeasure missions and protection of maritime routes in the Strait of Hormuz.

• Possible further decline or disruption in commercial shipping traffic through the Strait of Hormuz depending on the security situation.

• Ongoing Iranian drone and missile operations targeting regional military installations and maritime infrastructure.

• Additional allied naval contributions or escort missions for tanker convoys in the Gulf region.

• Further announcements of defense procurement and military modernization programs linked to emerging operational requirements.