

GLOBAL SECURITY AND DEFENSE DEVELOPMENTS DAILY

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Executive Assessment

U.S. military operations against Iran are entering a more intensive phase marked by increased strike volume, expanded electronic warfare integration, and reinforcement of naval presence. The use of multiple bomber platforms, including B-1B and B-52H, reflects a sustained ability to conduct coordinated long-range strikes against a broad target set. The introduction of EA-37B electronic warfare aircraft indicates a shift toward more advanced suppression of enemy air defenses and electromagnetic dominance. Concurrently, the continued deployment of A-10C aircraft, persistent airlift operations, and expanded aerial refueling capacity demonstrate preparation for prolonged operations with flexible escalation options. The deployment of USS George H.W. Bush to replace USS Gerald R. Ford, combined with USS Tripoli operations and the addition of mine warfare-capable littoral combat ships in the Strait of Hormuz, highlights a multidomain posture aimed at securing maritime routes while maintaining strike pressure.

Strategic signaling from both sides reflects a calibrated but unstable escalation dynamic. U.S. leadership is indicating that operational objectives are approaching a decisive phase while maintaining the option to intensify strikes against additional target categories, including strategic infrastructure and command networks. At the same time, conditional openness to a limited pause suggests continued reliance on coercive diplomacy. Iran has maintained its position against negotiations under pressure while emphasizing flexible escalation thresholds and the ability to respond across the region. Israeli operations are increasingly focused on long-term degradation of Iranian capabilities, including strikes on logistical corridors and dual-use infrastructure, indicating a shift toward sustained disruption of mobility and sustainment networks rather than isolated target destruction. Controlled Iranian missile and UAV activity continues to prioritize signaling and persistence, avoiding rapid escalation while maintaining deterrence credibility.

Maritime security and energy stability remain central to the broader conflict environment. The Strait of Hormuz continues to function as a key pressure point, with elevated risk perceptions driving shipping delays, rerouting, and rising insurance costs. Iran's framing of maritime disruption as a conditional tool linked to ongoing military activity reinforces the strategic importance of sea lines of communication. Gulf states are maintaining heightened readiness and reinforcing defensive measures around critical infrastructure, while external actors continue to emphasize de-escalation and energy security through diplomatic channels. Information domain activity, including cyber operations and influence efforts, is intensifying alongside military operations, contributing to a complex and multidimensional conflict environment.

U.S. ATTACK ON IRAN - MIDDLE EAST DEPLOYMENT

- The aircraft carrier USS George H.W. Bush (CVN-77) has departed Naval Station Norfolk for a scheduled deployment. The carrier is expected to deploy to the Middle East to support ongoing Operation Epic Fury against Iran and replace USS Gerald R. Ford.
- The U.S. Air Force has begun conducting strike missions against Iran using bombers deployed to RAF Fairford in the United Kingdom. Five B-1B and two B-52H strategic bombers reportedly carried out strike missions and subsequently returned to RAF Fairford.
- 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.
- U.S. Central Command announced that the EA-37B, the most advanced electronic warfare platform in the U.S. Air Force inventory, has joined ongoing operations against Iran. Two EA-37B aircraft were recently deployed to RAF Mildenhall in the UK ahead of their forward deployment to the Middle East.
- The U.S. Air Force continues deploying A-10C close air support and attack aircraft to bases in the UK. A total of 18 aircraft have been stationed at RAF Lakenheath, with additional A-10Cs reportedly being prepared at bases in the United States. The aircraft are assessed to be intended for eventual deployment to the Middle East.
- The U.S. Air Force has deployed 18 A-10C attack aircraft from the continental United States to RAF Lakenheath in the UK. The aircraft are expected to be deployed to the Middle East in the coming days.
- Additional aerial refueling tanker aircraft have been deployed to multiple bases across the Middle East and Europe.
- The U.S. Navy deploys Independence-class LCS with Mine Warfare System to secure Strait of Hormuz after Avenger-class mine hunters Retirement.

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- Donald Trump said U.S. military objectives in Iran are nearing completion under Operation Epic Fury. Speaking from the White House, he said operations would intensify in the coming weeks as the campaign approaches its final stage.
- Donald Trump stated that the United States is prepared to intensify strike operations against Iran if current pressure does not produce rapid political outcomes, emphasizing that additional target categories remain under consideration, including strategic infrastructure and command networks.
- Trump also indicated that a limited operational pause remains possible if Iran demonstrates willingness to engage under revised conditions, while maintaining that military pressure will continue until credible guarantees are achieved.
- Donald Trump has threatened to stop sending weapons to Ukraine to pressure European allies into joining a coalition to reopen the Strait of Hormuz.
- Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei reiterated that Iran will not enter negotiations under coercion, warning that continued strikes will trigger proportionate and regionally widespread responses targeting U.S. and allied interests.
- Senior Iranian officials stated that escalation thresholds remain flexible, highlighting that both direct and indirect responses are being calibrated to avoid predictable patterns while sustaining deterrence.
- Iran continued to frame maritime disruption in the Strait of Hormuz as a controlled strategic instrument, linking the security of shipping lanes directly to the cessation of U.S. and Israeli military activity.
- Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu confirmed that operations against Iranian military infrastructure will continue in successive waves, focusing on long term degradation of capability rather than short term tactical gains.
- Israeli forces conducted a precision strike on a key bridge in the Karaj region, assessed to be part of a logistical corridor supporting military movement and infrastructure connectivity near Tehran. The strike reflects an expansion of target sets to include critical transportation nodes.
- Israeli defense officials stated that targeting priorities increasingly include dual use infrastructure linked to military logistics, indicating a broader operational approach aimed at disrupting mobility and sustainment networks.

- Iranian missile and UAV operations against Israeli territory continued at a measured pace, with launches assessed to prioritize strategic signaling, air defense saturation testing, and persistence rather than large scale impact.
- Reports indicate continued Israeli strikes against Iranian affiliated positions in Syria and Lebanon, targeting supply routes and storage sites associated with the IRGC and allied formations.
- The United States and Israel continue strategic coordination, with U.S. officials maintaining a distinction between support for overall objectives and non participation in specific Israeli targeting decisions.
- Maritime security conditions in the Persian Gulf and Gulf of Oman remain highly unstable, with multiple commercial vessels delaying transit or rerouting due to elevated threat perceptions and uncertainty regarding escalation dynamics.
- Shipping insurance costs and risk premiums continued to rise, reflecting sustained concerns over drone attacks, potential naval interdictions, and the possibility of further infrastructure targeting in key maritime corridors.
- Global energy markets remain volatile, with oil price fluctuations driven by uncertainty surrounding supply continuity and the security of critical transit chokepoints.
- Gulf states have maintained elevated military readiness, including reinforced air defense deployments, increased naval patrols, and enhanced protection measures for energy infrastructure.
- European governments reiterated calls for immediate de escalation while avoiding direct military engagement, focusing on diplomatic initiatives and contingency planning for energy supply disruptions.
- Russia called for restraint and positioned itself as a critic of U.S. military actions, while continuing to align its messaging with broader opposition to Western intervention.
- China emphasized the importance of maintaining secure maritime trade routes and called for multilateral diplomatic engagement, reflecting concerns over energy security and global supply chain stability.

GLOBAL DEFENSE DEVELOPMENTS

- The U.S. State Department approved an \$83 million sale of M30A2 GMLRS rockets to Singapore, expanding its HIMARS strike capability. The package includes 45 M30A2 Alternative Warhead pods, equivalent to 270 rockets.
- Hanwha Defense USA has entered the U.S. Army's Mobile Tactical Cannon competition with a K9-based 155mm tracked howitzer designed for rapid deployment.
- The U.S. Air Force deployed its NT-43A RAT55 aircraft over Florida to track NASA's Artemis II launch. Operating from MacDill Air Force Base under callsign NASA522, the heavily modified Boeing 737 testbed flew within restricted airspace near Kennedy Space Center during launch operations.
- HII Ingalls Shipbuilding launched the future USS George M. Neal (DDG 131) on April 1, 2026, in Pascagoula, Mississippi, marking the transition of the 6th Flight III Arleigh Burke-class destroyer of the U.S. Navy into the water.
- Saronic Technologies secured \$1.75 billion to scale production of autonomous surface vessels and expand U.S. shipbuilding capacity.
- The U.S. Air Force has awarded Boeing a ceiling \$900 million contract to sustain and support the T-38C Talon avionics system, extending support for one of the service's core pilot training aircraft through March 31, 2036.
- The U.S. Army has awarded BAE Systems Land & Armaments a \$146 million contract to produce additional 155mm M776 cannon tubes for the M777A2 howitzer.
- The French defense procurement agency (DGA) ordered the fifth FDI frigate for the French Navy from Naval Group. The vessel, to be named Amiral Cabanier, will be built at the shipyard in Lorient.
- BAE Systems has been awarded a \$180 million contract by the Swedish Defence Materiel Administration for the Tridon Mk2 anti-aircraft system. The agreement covers delivery of a truck-mounted 40 mm system designed to address gaps in modern air defence.
- Saab has announced the opening of a new test and integration facility in Australia to support upgrades to the Hobart-class destroyers. The Hobart Australian Interface Reference Site has been established at Saab's Sovereign Combat Systems Collaboration Centre to enable system integration and testing ahead of installation on the vessels.

MINTEL WORLD

Conflict and energy consultancy

- Saab has received an order from the Swedish Defence Materiel Administration for a mobile and modular counter-unmanned aerial system. The contract, valued at approximately \$273.7 million, includes deliveries scheduled between 2027 and 2028.
- The United Kingdom and France formally launched a joint study to define a successor to the Meteor beyond-visual-range air-to-air missile, opening a new phase in European missile cooperation at a time of rising concern over high-end air warfare.
- China's second-generation Shaanxi Y-9Q maritime patrol and anti-submarine warfare (ASW) aircraft is confirmed to have entered People's Liberation Army (PLA) service after a Japanese military aircraft photographed the platform conducting a sortie over the East China Sea.
- Lithuania will receive the Kongsberg medium-range National Advanced Surface-to-Air Missile System (NASAMS) for the air defence of its 1st Division in April 2026.

FORWARD LOOK – NEXT 7 DAYS

- Continued U.S. and Israeli air operations targeting Iranian military infrastructure, including command networks, logistics corridors, and dual-use facilities.
- Increased integration of electronic warfare capabilities, particularly EA-37B platforms, to suppress Iranian air defenses and enable follow-on strike packages.
- Expansion of U.S. naval presence in the Gulf, including carrier strike group deployment and mine warfare operations aimed at securing the Strait of Hormuz.
- Sustained volatility in maritime traffic, with further rerouting or delays of commercial vessels depending on threat perceptions and security incidents.
- Continued elevation of military readiness levels among Gulf states, including enhanced air defense deployments and naval patrol operations.
- Ongoing diplomatic signaling and indirect mediation efforts, with limited prospects for immediate de-escalation despite conditional messaging from both sides.
- Additional defense procurement and industrial announcements reflecting increased demand for air defense, strike systems, and autonomous capabilities.