Iran Update Morning Special Report: March 1, 2026

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Analyst Notes: Data Cutoff: 08:00 AM ET

The Institute for the Study of War (ISW) and the Critical Threats Project (CTP) at the American Enterprise Institute are publishing two updates daily to provide analysis on the war with Iran. The morning update will focus on US and Israeli strikes on Iran and Iran and the Axis of Resistance's response to the strikes. The evening update will be more comprehensive, covering events over the past 24-hour period and refining items discussed in the morning update.

Key Takeaways

1. The US-Israeli combined force appears to be increasingly targeting the Iranian internal security apparatus, which is consistent with the US-Israeli stated objective of toppling the Iranian regime.
2. The regime has formed a leadership council to temporarily assume the responsibilities of the supreme leader. The council includes the president, the judiciary chief, and a senior hardline cleric.
3. The IDF outlined a three-phase plan to achieve air superiority over western and central Iran, which will enable the combined force to achieve its objectives. This approach mirrors what Israel did in June 2025.
4. Iran may have started attacking maritime traffic around the Strait of Hormuz. Iran seeks to impose a cost on the United States and its partners and compel them to pursue a ceasefire before toppling the regime.
5. Iran has sustained its missile and drone strikes across the region, some of which have impacted civilian locations around the Gulf and Israel.

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Toplines

The US-Israeli combined force appears to be increasingly targeting the Iranian internal security apparatus after killing Iranian Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei on February 28. The targeting of internal security institutions is consistent with the US and Israeli stated objective of toppling the Iranian regime.[1] The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) struck the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps Ground Forces Sarallah Headquarters in Tehran, which is responsible for security in the capital region and plays a significant role in suppressing internal dissent.[2] The Sarallah Headquarters oversees the 10th Seyyed ol Shohada Operational Division in Karaj, Alborz Province, and the 27th Mohammad Rasoul Ollah Operational Division in Tehran City.[3] The combined force also struck the Law Enforcement Command (LEC) headquarters in Tehran. The LEC is the regime's first line of defense against protests.[4] The combined force killed LEC Intelligence Chief Gholamreza Rezaian on

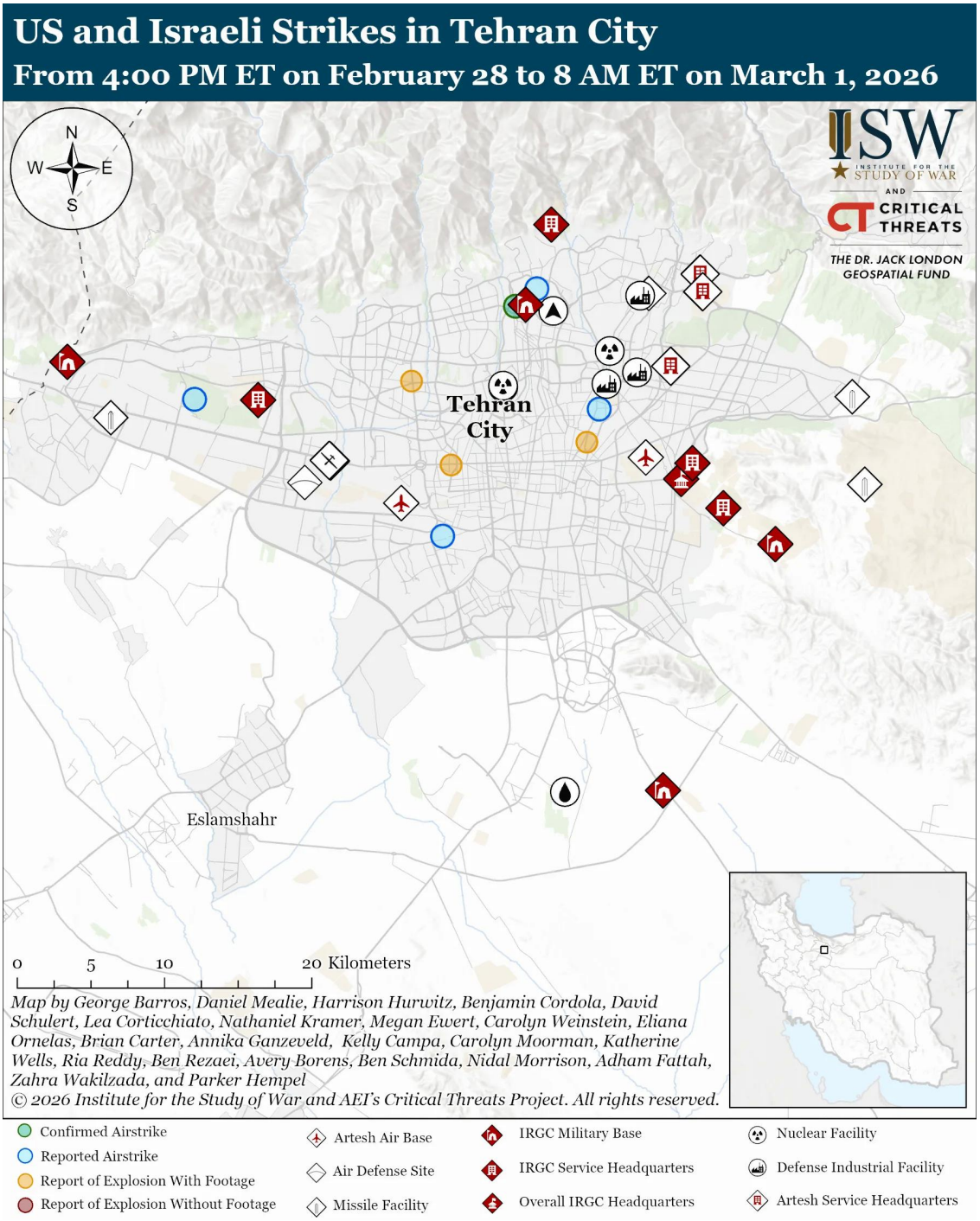
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February 28.[5] Anti-regime media separately reported that the combined force destroyed the Tehran Revolutionary Court and published a video of explosions near the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB) headquarters in Tehran.[6] IRIB is the Iranian state broadcaster that the regime uses to disseminate propaganda.[7] The IDF struck the IRIB headquarters in the 12-day war in June 2025.[8]

The combined force also struck internal security targets that played a role in suppressing the December 2025-January 2026 protest movement. The combined force reportedly struck Basij bases in Kermanshah and Tehran provinces, including bases that were reportedly involved in the suppression of the December 2025-January 2026 protests.[9] The targeting of Iranian internal security institutions could degrade Iranian security forces' ability and willingness to quell potential internal unrest against the regime. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu announced on March 1 that Israel will strike "thousands" of targets in the coming days and called on Iranians to "free themselves from the chains of tyranny."[10]



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The combined force has continued its decapitation campaign targeting senior Iranian leadership. The decapitation campaign likely seeks to limit Iran's ability to conduct retaliatory attacks by disrupting Iran's command-and-control and set conditions for regime change by removing senior leaders. The IDF confirmed that it killed Armed Forces General Staff (AFGS) Chief Major General Abdol Rahim Mousavi.[11] Mousavi replaced former AFGS Chief Mohammad Bagheri after Israel killed Bagheri in June 2025.[12] Iranian state media separately reported on March 1 that the combined force killed 12 IRGC members in Kashan, Esfahan Province.[13] It is unclear how the IRGC members died, although Kashan is home to several Iranian military sites, such as the IRGC Aerospace Force Shahid Karimi Drone Base.[14] The *New York Times* reported on March 1 that Iran's "top intelligence chief" survived a targeted strike but that "Iran's intelligence agencies were decimated."[15] This report follows reports on February 28 that the IDF may have killed Iran's "intelligence chief."[16] ISW-CTP previously noted that "intelligence chief" likely refers to either Iranian Intelligence Minister Esmail Khatib or IRGC Intelligence

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Organization Chief Majid Khademi.[17]

The Iranian Expediency Discernment Council appointed Ali Reza Arafi, who was a trusted member of Khamenei's inner circle, as the third member of the Leadership Council.[18] The Iranian constitution stipulates that the president, the judiciary chief, and a member of the Guardian Council will **assume** the responsibilities of the supreme leader when he dies until the Assembly of Experts convenes to select a new one.[19] Arafi is a senior Iranian cleric who has served as a member of the Assembly of Experts since June 2021.[20] Khamenei has promoted Arafi to senior positions within the regime in recent years, highlighting Khamenei's trust and satisfaction with Arafi. Khamenei appointed Arafi as the Qom Friday Prayer Leader in 2015, head of all seminaries across Iran in 2016, and a member of the Guardian Council in 2019, for example.[21] The Guardian Councill is responsible for supervising elections and screening legislation.

The IDF outlined a three-phase plan to achieve air superiority over western and central Iran.[22] Achieving air superiority over these areas will help the combined force achieve their stated objectives.[23] The first phase involves dismantling Iranian air defense systems and missile launchers in western Iran, the second phase involves achieving air superiority over western Iran and "paving the way to Tehran," and the third phase involves achieving air superiority over Tehran.[24] The IDF used a similar approach during the June 2025 Israel-Iran War.[25] This strategy enabled the IDF to achieve air superiority over large parts of Iran and subsequently achieve its objectives of degrading the Iranian nuclear and ballistic missile programs. The IDF continued to target Iranian missile launchers and air defense systems in Iran on March 1.[26]

Iran may have started attacking vessels around the Strait of Hormuz in retaliation for the combined strike campaign.Iran seeks to impose a cost on the United States and its partners and compel them to pursue a ceasefire before achieving the objective of toppling the regime. United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO) reported that a vessel was struck by an unspecified projectile around 17 nautical miles northwest of Mina Saqr, the United Arab Emirates, on March 1.[27] The strike caused a fire, but the vessel's crew was able to extinguish the fire and resume their journey.[28] UKMTO separately reported that an unspecified projectile struck a vessel around 50 nautical miles north of Muscat, Oman.[29] The strike caused a fire in the vessel's engine room, but the vessel's crew was able to get the fire under control.[30] A European Union official told Reuters on February 28 that the IRGC warned vessels transiting through the Strait of Hormuz that "no ship is allowed to pass the Strait of Hormuz."[31] TankerTrackers assessed that Iran hit one of its own vessels.[32] ISW-CTP cannot verify this claim.

The combined force has continued to strike Iranian missile launchers to limit Iran's ability to conduct retaliatory attacks targeting US bases, Israel, and other targets. The IDF struck a missile base north of Qom City, Qom Province, on March 1.[33] The IDF said that Iran stores and launches Ghadr 1-H ballistic missiles at the site.[34] Ghadr missiles are medium-range ballistic missiles with a range of 1,950 kilometers.[35] Iran previously used Ghadr missiles during its April and October 2024 attacks on Israel.[36] The IDF struck the Qom site in June 2025. The IDF also confirmed that it struck a ballistic missile launch site at the Khomein Missile Base in Markazi Province on February 28.[37] The IDF struck this base at least twice during the June war.[38] Commercially available satellite imagery captured on March 1 shows damage to two structures at a missile site in Garmdareh, Alborz Province.

The IDF also struck IRGC bases to degrade the Iranian ballistic missile program. The IDF likely struck the IRGC Aerospace Force Bakhtaran (Panj Pelleh) underground missile base near Kermanshah City, Kermanshah Province.[39] An Iranian journalist posted footage of smoke rising **from** the hills near the IRGC Najaf-e Ashraf Operational Base on March 1.[40] The Bakhtaran (Panj Pelleh) underground

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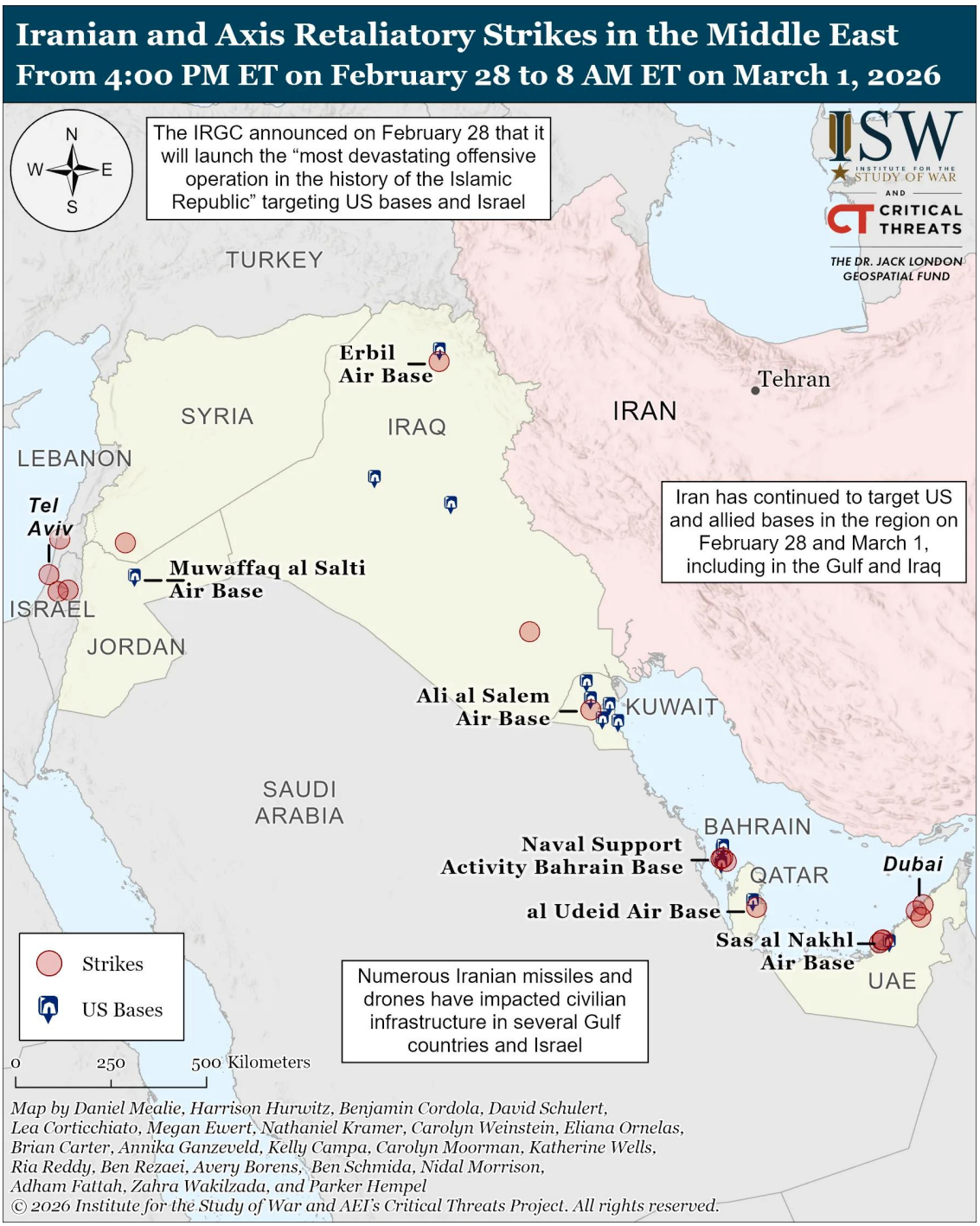
missile base is located about two kilometers east of the Najaf-e Ashraf Operational Base. The Bakhtaran (Panj Pelleh) underground missile base reportedly stores Qiam-1 and Fateh-110 ballistic missiles.[41]

Iranian Retaliation

The IRGC announced on February 28 that it will launch the "most devastating offensive operation in the history of the Islamic Republic" targeting US bases and Israel.[42] The IRGC made this announcement several hours after Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei was confirmed killed.[43] Iran has continued to target US and allied bases in the region on February 28 and March 1, including in the Gulf and Iraq.[44] Satellite imagery captured on February 28 showed several fires at the Ali al Salem Airbase in Kuwait, which hosts both US and Kuwaiti forces.[45] An Iranian drone also struck a naval base in Abu Dhabi, the UAE, that hosts French forces.[46] The Artesh announced that the Artesh Air Force targeted US bases in the Gulf.[47]

The Artesh also announced on March 1 that it conducted strikes targeting the Iraqi Kurdistan Region.[48] Iran fired projectiles targeting Erbil Airport, as evidenced by social media footage showing air defenses engaging unspecified projectiles over the airport and satellite imagery captured on February 28 showing smoke rising over the airport.[49] Iran previously launched ballistic missiles and drones at the US Consulate in Erbil, a US base at the Erbil Airport, and the United States' Harir Airbase in Erbil Province on February 28, but air defense systems intercepted the munitions.[50]

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Iranian missiles and drones have continued to impact civilian infrastructure in several Gulf countries on February 28 and March 1. Iranian ballistic missiles and drones have struck civilian infrastructure, including airports, hotels, and ports, in Bahrain, the UAE, Qatar, and Oman since ISW-CTP's last data cutoff.[51] The Emirati Defense Ministry reported that Iran launched 332 drones, 28 ballistic missiles, and two cruise missiles at the UAE on March 1.[52] Twenty-one Iranian drones struck civilian sites in the UAE, including the Dubai Airport, Dubai's Zayed Port, and other civilian buildings, in Abu Dhabi.[53] OSINT accounts on X have estimated that Iran has launched between 300 and 500 missiles and between 270 and 500 drones since the US and Israeli campaign began on February 28.**[54]**

Iran has continued to fire missile barrages that have impacted populated areas in Israel. ISW-CTP has not observed any impacts on Israeli military positions as of this writing. An Iranian missile hit Beit Shemesh, west of Jerusalem, killing nine people.[55] Iranian missiles or interceptor fragments also impacted Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, and Haifa.[56] An Iranian missile and drone crashed in southern Syria,

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likely en route to Israel.[57]

Protesters attempted to storm the Green Zone in Baghdad following the combined force's killing of Iranian Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei.[58] The US Embassy is located in the Green Zone. Some of the protesters displayed flags of Iranian-backed Iraqi militias and chanted anti-American slogans.[59] Police fired tear gas and stun grenades at the protesters.[60] The US Embassy in Baghdad issued a nationwide security alert on March 1 and suspended consular services.[61]

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Iran Update Evening Special Report, March 1, 2026

Avery Borens, Benjamin Schmida, Adham Fattah, Ria Reddy, Kelly Campa, Annika Ganzeveld

Analyst Notes: Data Cutoff: 4:00 PM ET

The Institute for the Study of War (ISW) and the Critical Threats Project (CTP) at the American Enterprise Instituteare publishing two updates daily to provide analysis on the war with Iran. The morning update will focus on US and Israeli strikes on Iran and Iran and the Axis of Resistance's response to the strikes. The evening update will be more comprehensive, covering events over the past 24-hour period and refining items discussed in the morning update.

Key Takeaways

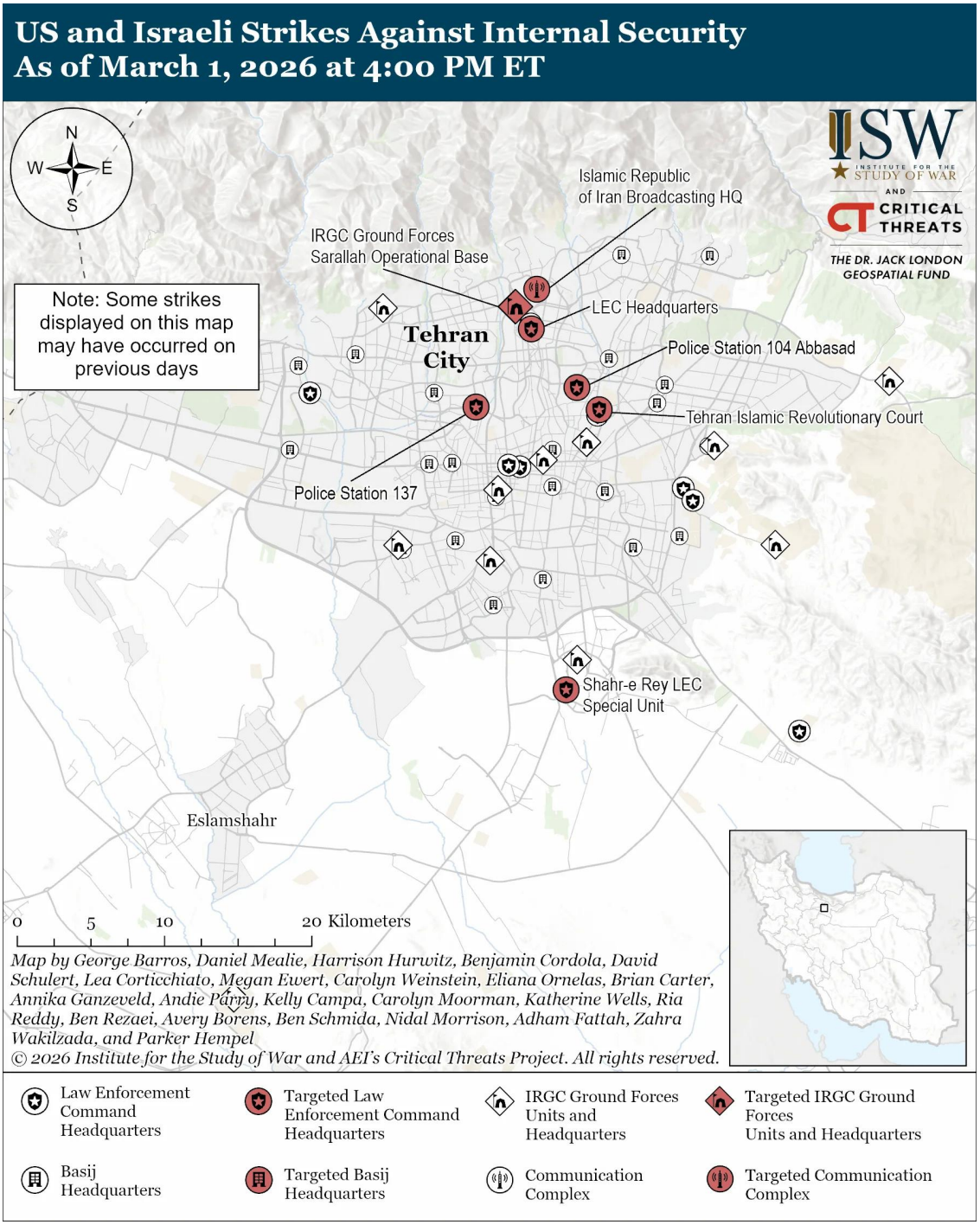
1. The combined US-Israeli force has struck over 2,000 targets in Iran and achieved air superiority over Tehran. The combined force has continued to target Iranian internal security institutions responsible for maintaining stability and suppressing protests, including security forces along Iran's northwestern borders with Turkey and Iraqi Kurdistan.
2. Ali Reza Arafi, who is a member of the Expediency Discernment Council and a newly appointed member of the Leadership Council, has long maintained a close relationship with Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei. Arafi likely played a key role in consolidating Khamenei's religious authority across Iran.
3. The inconsistency of Iran's retaliatory attacks on March 1 suggests that Iranian units may be struggling to coordinate large-scale attacks. Iran appeared to fire significantly less munitions at Israel on March 1 than on February 28, which suggests that US-Israeli efforts to degrade Iran's retaliatory capabilities are succeeding.
4. ISW-CTP is monitoring early reports that Lebanese Hezbollah fired rockets into Israel. This attack would mark the first Hezbollah rocket attack into Israel since the November 2024 Israel-Hezbollah ceasefire agreement. Other members of Iran's Axis of Resistance, specifically Iranian-backed Iraqi militias, have threatened to retaliate and conducted some attacks targeting Israel and US forces.

Toplines

The combined force continued to target Iranian internal security institutions responsible for maintaining stability and suppressing protests. Iranian media reported on March 1 that the combined force targeted the West Azerbaijan Provincial Border Guard.[1] West Azerbaijan Province is located along Iran's border with Turkey and Iraqi Kurdistan. Iranian media separately reported on March 1 that the combined force struck the Mehran Border Regiment in Ilam Province, killing 22 security

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personnel.[2] Mehran is also located along the Iran-Iraq border. The combined force may have struck the IRGC Ansar ol Mehdi Unit, which is an IRGC Ground Forces unit in Zanjan Province.[3] The regime has historically deployed IRGC Ground Forces units to suppress internal unrest.[4] The combined force also targeted the Shahr-e Rey Law Enforcement Command (LEC) Station in Tehran, which may have played a role in the violent crackdown on protesters in Tehran during the most recent protest wave in December 2025 and January 2026.[5] The combined force has also conducted cyberattacks as part of its stated objective to topple the regime. Reuters reported on March 1 that likely US and Israeli hackers hacked multiple Iranian news sites and a common religious calendar app with the message, “it’s time for reckoning.”[6][7] The messages also urged security forces to disarm and join Iranian civilians.[8]



The Iranian regime has continued its efforts to maintain internal stability. Internet monitor Netblocks reported on March 1 that the regime has maintained its nationwide internet blackout, with the Iranian internet only operating at one percent connectivity.[9] The regime likely imposed the internet

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shutdown to prevent Iranians from coordinating efforts to organize demonstrations against the regime amid the US and Israeli strikes. Restoring access to the internet is crucial to achieving the United States' stated objective of toppling the Iranian regime. The *Wall Street Journal* reported on March 1 that the LEC set up checkpoints across Tehran to prevent people from gathering on the streets.[10] The report added that Basij members staged anti-US protests at unspecified Iranian universities.[11] The Basij is a paramilitary force that is responsible for civil defense and social control.[12]

The IDF announced that it has started "systematically dismantling" Iran's nuclear infrastructure.[13] The Institute for Science and International Security reported airstrikes near the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran headquarters in Tehran, which is where the Tehran Research Reactor is located.[14] The Institute assessed that the reactor is "not expected" to be a US or Israeli target and noted that the reactor did not appear to have been attacked as of 2:00 AM ET on March 1.[15] US officials stated before the start of the combined strike campaign that Iran had attempted to rebuild its nuclear weapons program.[16] US President Donald Trump, when announcing the combined strike campaign on February 28, vowed that the United States will never allow Iran to develop a nuclear weapon.[17]

Ali Reza Arafi, who is a member of the Expediency Discernment Council and a newly appointed member of the Leadership Council, has long maintained a close relationship with Ali Khamenei. Arafi likely played a key role in consolidating Khamenei's religious authority across Iran. ISW-CTP reported in its March 1 morning update that the Expediency Discernment Council appointed Arafi as the third member of the Leadership Council.[18] He will serve alongside President Masoud Pezeshkian and Judiciary Chief Gholam Hossein Mohseni Ejei. The Leadership Council will assume the supreme leader's responsibilities until the Assembly of Experts convenes to select a successor. ISW-CTP noted that Arafi belongs to Khamenei's inner circle.[19] Khamenei has repeatedly appointed Arafi to influential religious positions within the regime in recent decades.[20] Khamenei appointed Arafi as the Qom Friday Prayer Leader, one of the most influential religious posts in Iran, in 2015, for example.[21] Khamenei's appointment of Arafi to such an influential position, among other positions, highlights his trust in Arafi. Arafi likely served as a liaison among clerical leaders in Qom and may have helped Khamenei maintain control and loyalty within the clerical establishment. Arafi was also selected as one of the seven members of the Supreme Council of the Qom Seminary in 2016.[22] This institution coordinates seminaries across Iran.[23] This position may have strengthened his ability to reinforce Khamenei's religious authority. The Expediency Discernment Council's decision to appoint Arafi to the Leadership Council suggests that Khamenei's network continues to hold influence over senior positions within the regime. The Leadership Council reportedly held its second meeting on March 1.[24]

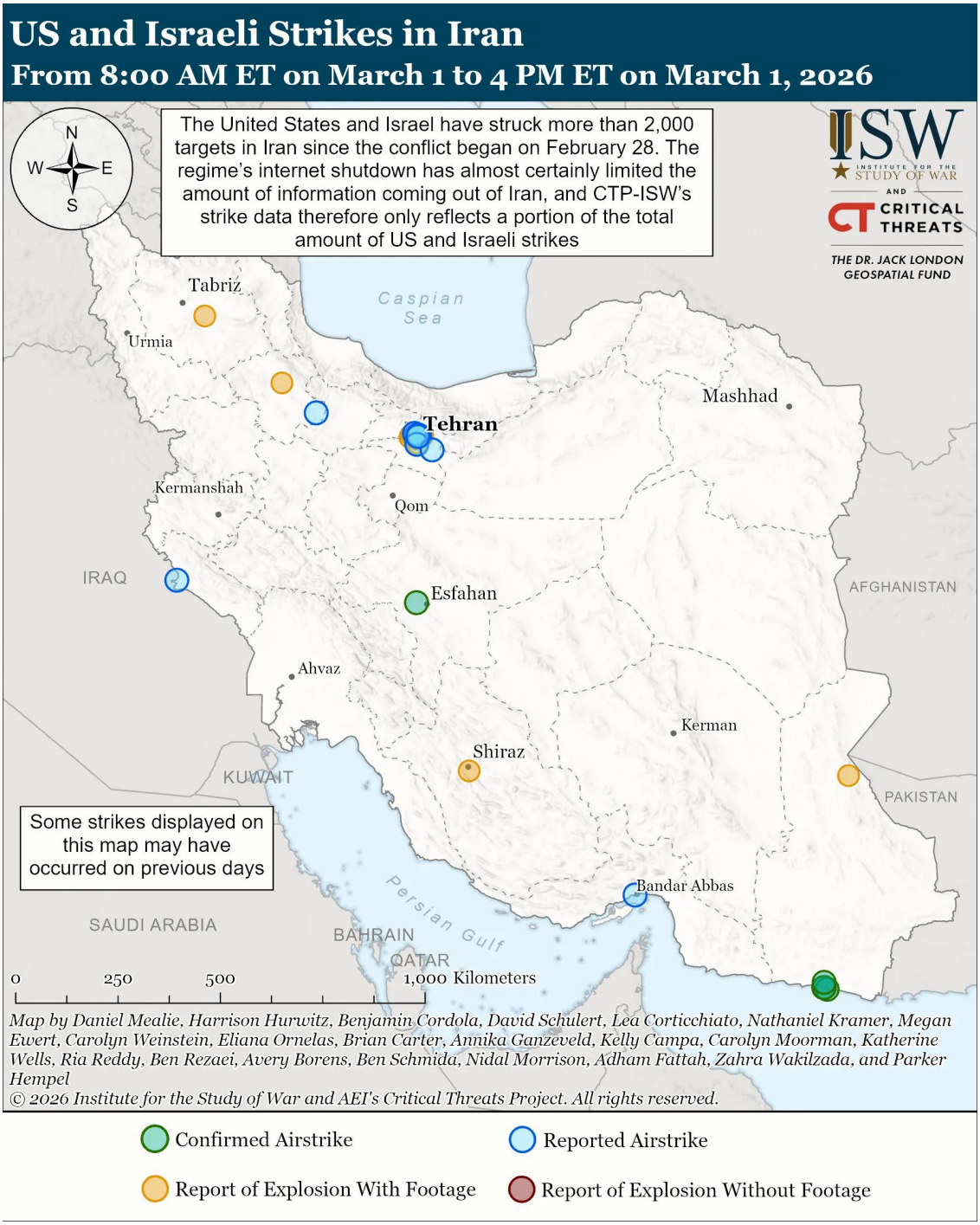
Supreme National Security Council Secretary Ali Larijani and Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf delivered televised speeches following Khamenei's death.[25] Ghalibaf emphasized that the targeted killing of Khamenei crossed a red line for Iran.[26] Ghalibaf and Larijani's speeches follow a recent *New York Times* report that Khamenei tasked Larijani with "steering the country" during the recent protests and that Larijani has effectively been running Iran since then.[27] The same report identified Ghalibaf as a member of Khamenei's inner circle and stated that Khamenei designated him as a "de facto deputy" to command the Iranian armed forces in the event of a US attack. An Iranian official stated in October 2025 that Ghalibaf had assumed a senior military command role during the June 2025 Israel-Iran War after Israel killed several senior Iranian commanders.[28] ISW-CTP previously assessed that moderate and pragmatic hardliners, including Larijani and Ghalibaf, have led the regime's restructuring efforts since the June 2025 Israel-Iran War.[29]

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US and Israeli Air Campaign

The combined force has struck over 2,000 targets in Iran and achieved air superiority over Tehran as it continues to pursue several lines of effort to achieve its stated campaign objectives.[30] A US official told the *New York Times* on March 1 that the United States and Israel have struck more than 2,000 targets in Iran since the conflict began on February 28.[31] The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) also announced that it achieved air superiority over Tehran.[32] The IDF previously targeted Iranian air defenses at the start of the 12-day war, which enabled it to rapidly establish and sustain air superiority over much of Iran.[33] US forces and the IDF have divided their lines of effort in accordance with their respective strengths. US strikes have focused on targeting strategic infrastructure, such as air defenses, command and control nodes, logistics networks, industrial facilities, and Iran's military structure, while the IDF has focused on targeting ballistic missile launchers and Iranian leadership, according to a US analyst.[34] These lines of effort are not mutually exclusive, as shown by the US deployment of four B-2 stealth bombers to strike unspecified underground ballistic missile sites in Iran on March 1.[35]

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The combined force is pursuing three main lines of effort:

1. Suppressing Iranian air defenses.

The combined force continued to suppress Iranian air defenses to achieve and maintain air superiority over Iranian airspace on March 1. The Israeli Air Force (IAF) destroyed one Iranian F-4 and two F-5 fighter jets preparing to take off from the Artesh Air Force 2nd Tactical Airbase in Tabriz, East Azerbaijan Province, on March 1.[36] The airbase houses three Iranian squadrons (the 21st, 22nd, and 23rd Tactical Fighter Squadrons) that fly MiG-29 and F-5 aircraft, according to OSINT social media accounts.[37] Iranian F-4 and F-5 jets retain air-to-air capabilities that could threaten US and Israeli aircraft despite the F-4 and F-5 jets' age and technological short comings compared to fourth- and fifth-generation aircraft.[38] IAF strikes previously destroyed several buildings and damaged the runway of the Artesh Air Force 2nd Tactical Airbase at the beginning of the 12-day war.[39] The combined force separately destroyed a likely

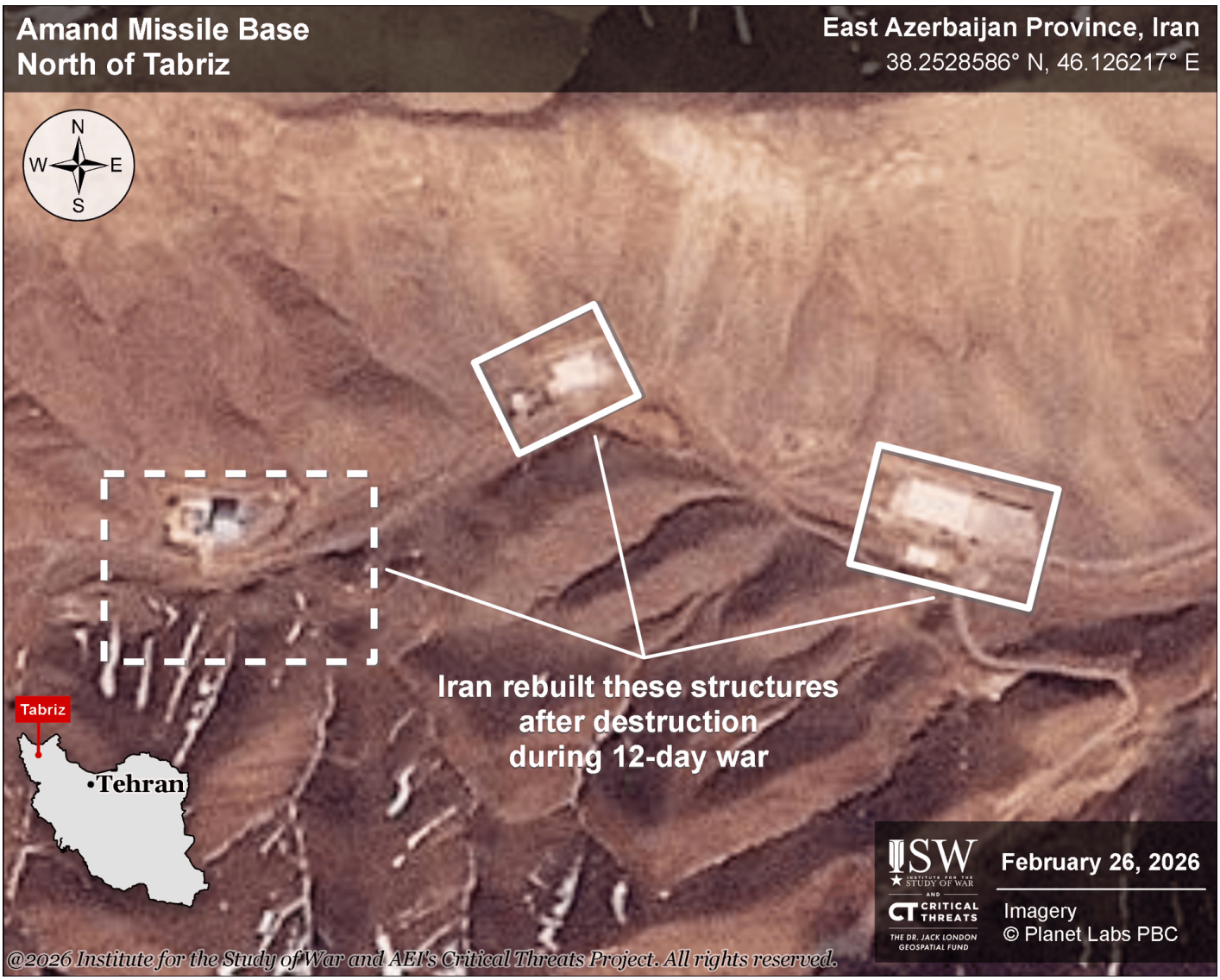
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mobile radar system at the IRGC Ground Forces Shahid Ali Arabi Airbase in Zahedan, Sistan and Baluchistan Province, according to commercially available satellite imagery published on March 1.[40] This strike marks the first strike on the airbase since the IRGC opened it in May 2023 to house IRGC helicopters and drones.[41] The combined force may have also struck the 7th Artesh Air Force Tactical Airbase in Shiraz, Fars Province, according to a video published by an Iranian OSINT account.[42] The 7th Artesh Air Force Tactical Airbase is co-located with the Shiraz International Airport and hosts a fighter squadron that flies 12 Russian SU-22 fighter jets and a helicopter squadron.[43]

2. Degrading Iranian retaliatory capabilities.

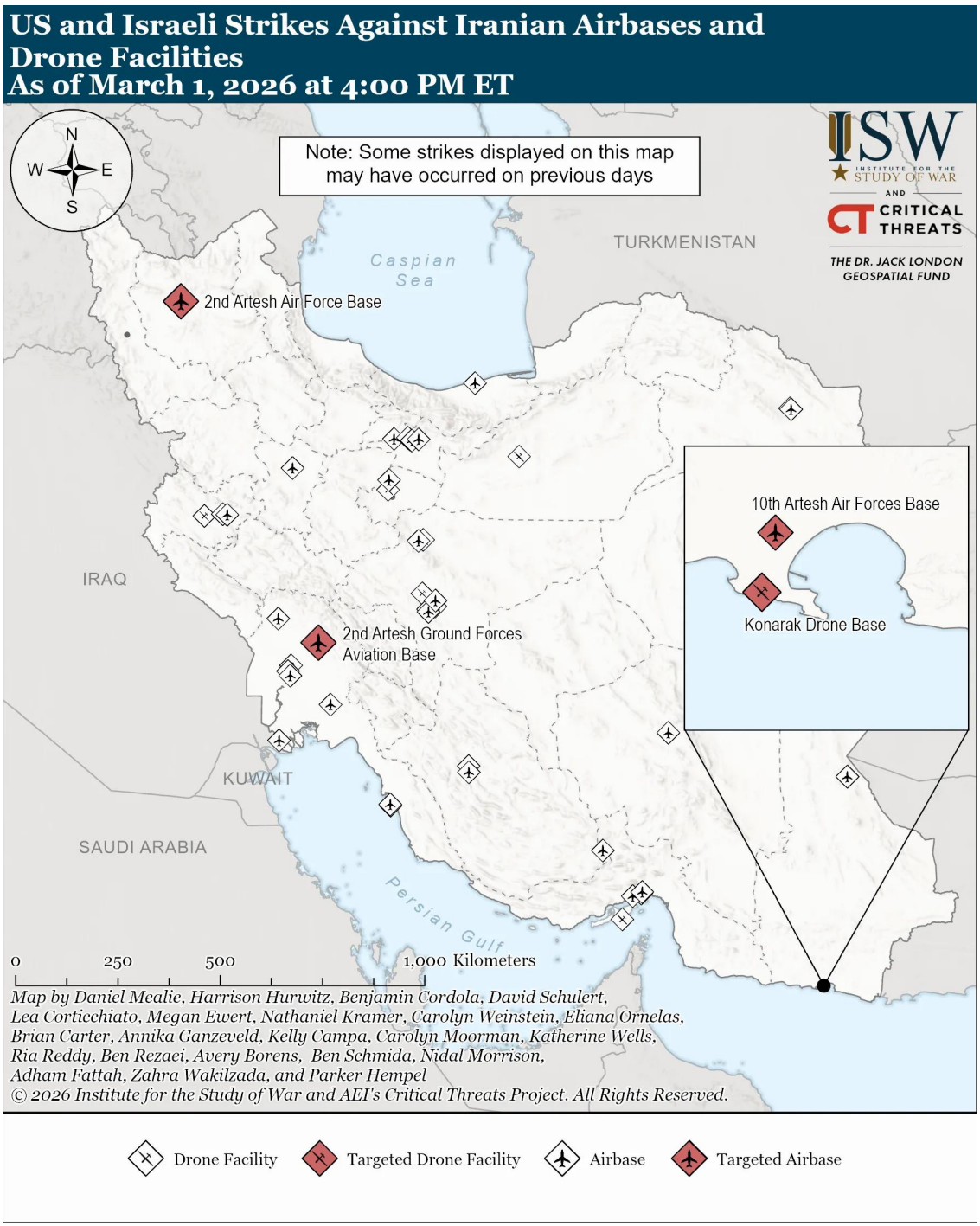
The combined force continued to disrupt Iran's ability to conduct retaliatory attacks targeting US bases, Israel, and other targets by striking Iranian missile launchers, missile bases, and drone launch facilities on March 1. The combined force destroyed a launcher and a likely missile storage facility at the Esfahan North Missile Base near Najafabad, Esfahan Province, according to satellite imagery published on March 1.[44] The IDF previously struck the likely missile storage facility during the 12-day war.[45] The combined force also struck a likely Iranian underground ballistic missile facility and several nearby buildings at the Amand Missile Base, according to satellite imagery published on March 1.[46] The Amand Missile Base reportedly stores Ghadr medium-range ballistic missiles, and the IDF previously struck the base during the 12-day war.[47] The combined force separately struck the Imam Hussein Missile Base near Yazd City in central Iran, according to satellite imagery published on March 1.[48] The base reportedly houses long-range Khorramshahr ballistic missiles in underground tunnels. Iranian forces previously launched 60 ballistic missiles, including one with a cluster munition warhead, at Israel from this base during the 12-day war.[49]

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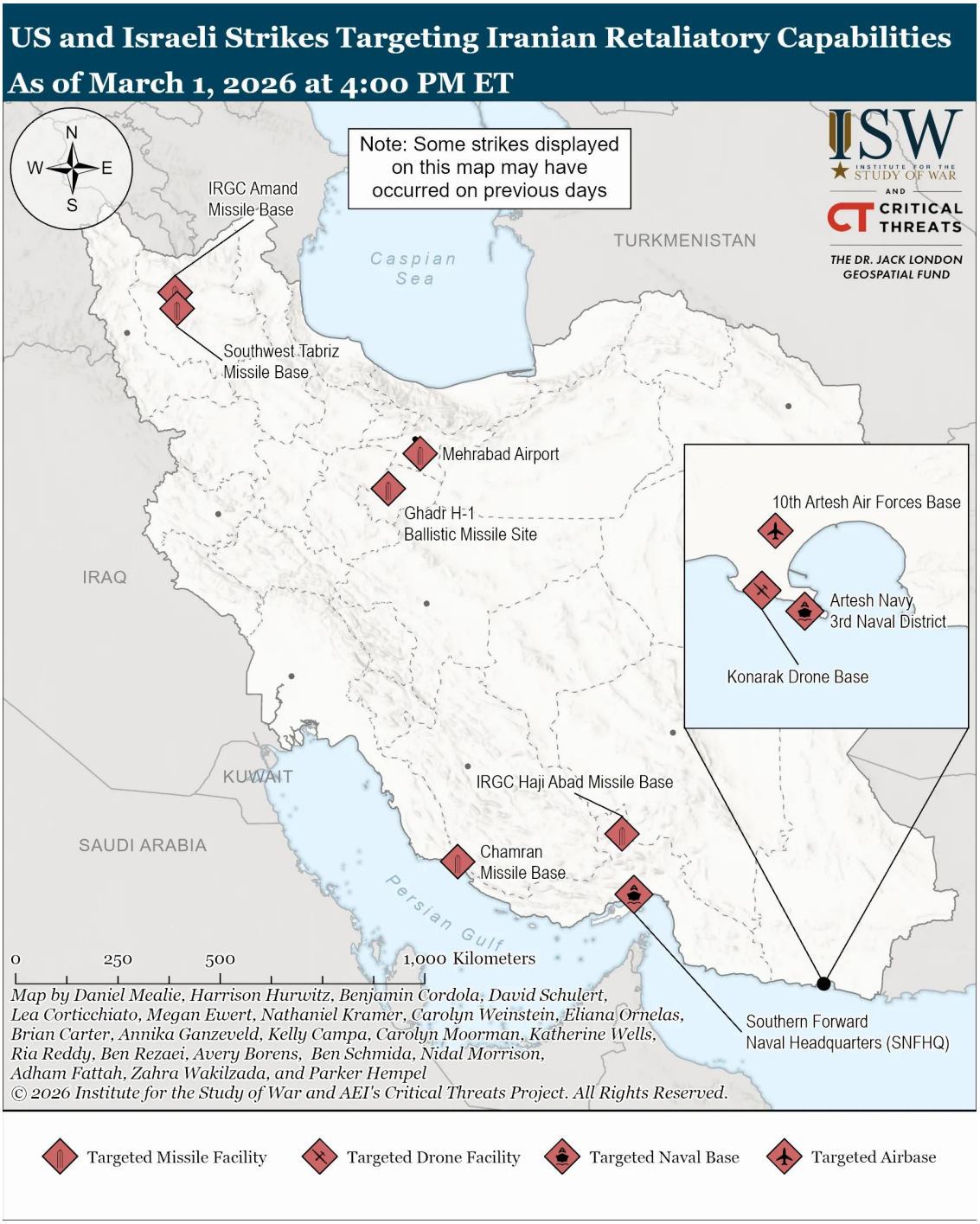


The combined force conducted several strikes targeting Iranian drone launch facilities in southeastern Iran that Iran likely used to launch drones at its Arab Gulf neighbors. Satellite imagery published on March 1 shows that the combined force struck three separate drone launch and storage facilities near Konarak, Sistan and Baluchistan Province.[50] The imagery shows that combined force airstrikes destroyed a likely drone storage facility at a drone launch site near Konarak.[51] The imagery also shows what appear to be long-range Shahed-129 drones on the launch site's runway, suggesting that Iranian forces were preparing to use them for offensive operations.[52] The combined force also struck at least six likely drone storage facilities less than a kilometer away from the drone launch site.[53] An Israeli analyst reported that these sites were instead Iranian Navy ammunition bunkers, which is also plausible given the sites' close proximity to the ocean.[54] The combined force also struck at least eight drone storage sites at the nearby 10th Artesh Air Force Airbase, which is co-located with the Konarak International Airport, according to satellite imagery.[55] The imagery suggests that the combined force utilized bunker-buster bombs to penetrate fortified concrete hangars that were likely storing drones at the airbase.[56] The imagery also shows what appear to be three Iranian Shahed-136 one-way attack drones and one Shahed-129 drone.[57] Iran may have used all three of the facilities that the combined force struck to prepare and launch drone attacks against Iran's Arab Gulf neighbors. The Shahed-136 has a range of at least 2,000 kilometers, while the Shahed-129 has a range of 1,700 kilometers.[58]

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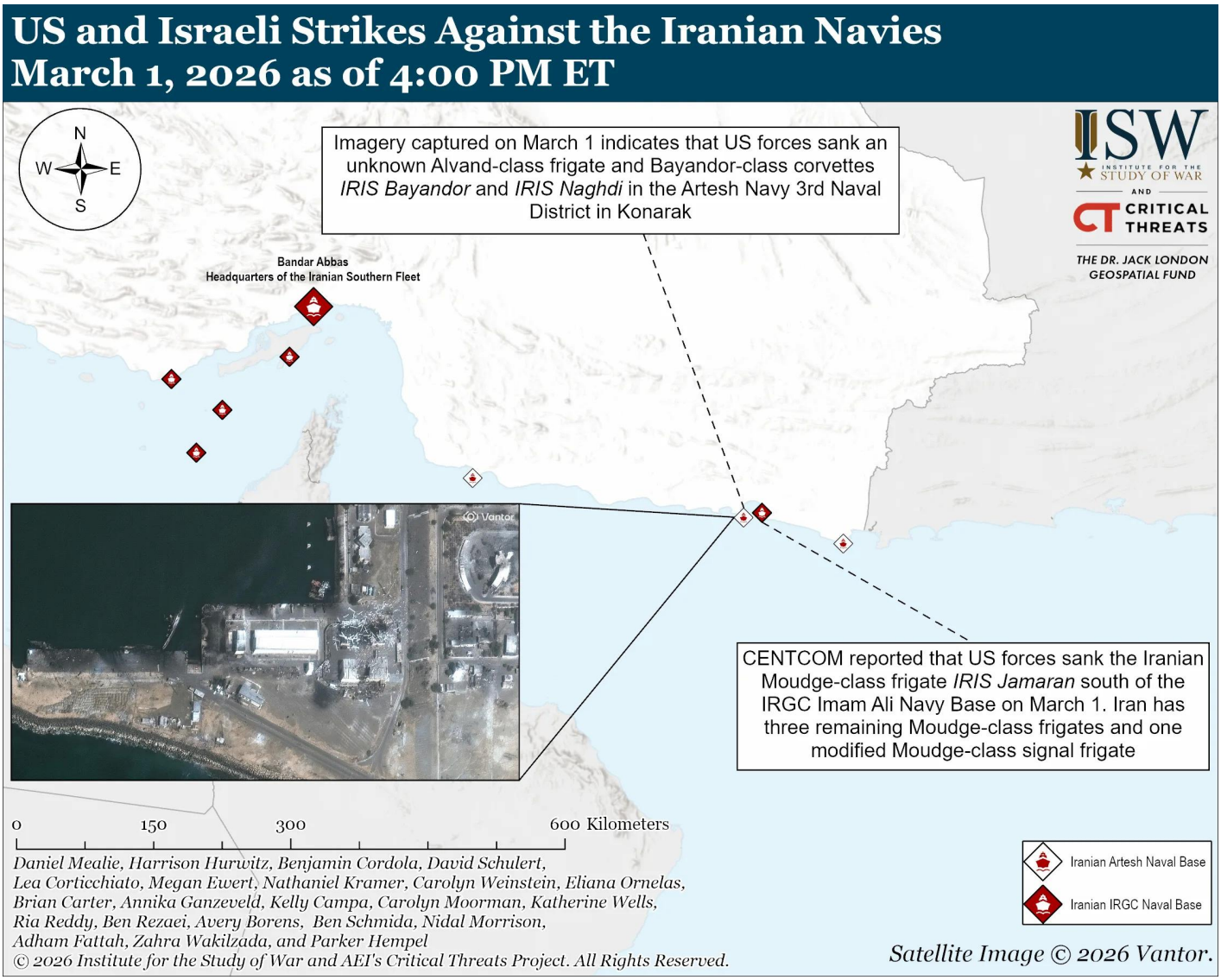


The combined force seeks to disrupt the Iranian navies' ability to attack international shipping and US Navy vessels. Commercially available satellite imagery captured on March 1 shows that US strikes on the Artesh Navy 3rd Naval District base in Konarak, Hormozgan Province, sank the IRIS *Bayandor* and IRIS *Naghdi*. The IRIS *Bayandor* and IRIS *Naghdi* were Iran's two remaining Bayandor-class patrol frigates.[59] These Bayandor-class corvettes were used for coastal patrol, surveillance, and escort missions in the Persian Gulf and Gulf of Aden.[60] These corvettes were also equipped with modern radar, 76-millimeter and 40-milimeter guns, and anti-ship missiles.[61] The United States struck the base on February 28.[62] The United States also sank the IRGC Navy *Jamaran* frigate near the IRGC Navy Imam Ali Base in Chabahar, Sistan and Baluchistan Province, which US forces struck on February 28.[63] The *Jamaran* is a Moudge-class frigate.[64] The *Jamaran* previously seized two US unmanned surface vessels in September 2022 and operated around the Red Sea during at least parts of the Houthis' campaign against international shipping during the October 7 war.[65] Iran has three remaining Moudge-

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class frigates and one modified Moudge-class signal frigate.[66]

US President Donald Trump stated on March 1 that US forces have sunk nine Iranian naval vessels and "largely destroyed" the Iranian naval headquarters.[67] Israel and the United States struck the Southern Forward Naval Headquarters in Bandar Abbas, Hormozgan Province, on March 1, which may be the headquarters Trump was referring to.[68] The Southern Forward Naval Headquarters oversees the Southern Fleet and coordinates operations for the Artesh Navy's 1st, 2nd, and 3rd naval regions.[69] It is unclear which six other vessels Trump was referring to. Trump stated that US forces will go after Iran's remaining naval vessels and that "they will soon be floating at the bottom of the sea."[70] US Central Command (CENTCOM) also confirmed on March 1 that the United States has struck Iranian submarines.[71] It is unclear what submarines the United States has struck. Iran has two kilo-class submarines that are currently undergoing repairs and one kilo-class submarine that appears to be idle, according to commercially available satellite imagery captured on February 26. ISW-CTP cannot assess whether the idle submarine moved before the conflict.



The United States and Israel conducted several attacks targeting Iranian-backed Iraqi militias in Iraq on March 1 to degrade the militias' ability to conduct retaliatory attacks against US forces and Israel. The Iraqi Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) announced on March 1 that the United States and Israel struck one of its headquarters in Diyala Province, eastern Iraq, killing four PMF fighters.[72] Several Iranian-backed Iraqi militias operate under the PMF and answer to Iran instead of

the Iraqi prime minister.[73] The United States and Israel reportedly conducted multiple airstrikes targeting PMF sites in al Qaim, killing two PMF fighters.[74] An Iraqi OSINT account reported additional strikes on Jurf al Sakhr, south of Baghdad, on March 1.[75] The combined force previously conducted airstrikes targeting Kataib Hezbollah in Jurf al Sakhr on February 28, killing two Kataib Hezbollah fighters.[76] Kataib Hezbollah is a member of the Islamic Resistance in Iraq.[77] The United States has previously conducted pre-emptive airstrikes targeting Iranian-backed Iraqi militias in Iraq to prevent the militias from launching attacks.[78]

3. Disrupting Iranian command-and-control.

The combined force's decapitation campaign against senior Iranian leaders is likely disrupting Iran's ability to effectively retaliate against the combined strike campaign. Iranian media confirmed on March 1 that the combined force killed Armed Forces General Staff (AFGS) Logistics and Support Deputy Major General Mohsen Dareh Baghi, Supreme Leader Office Deputy head Major General Akbar Ebrahim Zadeh, AFGS Planning and Operations head Major General Bahram Hosseini Motlagh, and AFGS Logistics Department head Major General Hassan Ali Tajik.[79] ISW-CTP previously reported that the IDF confirmed that it killed AFGS Chief Major General Abdol Rahim Mousavi.[80] Unspecified sources told anti-regime media that parts of Iran's chain of command have been disrupted, which has led to issues in relaying directives and operational coordination.[81] The sources added that some military commanders and lower-ranking personnel have stopped reporting to their bases and military centers due to fears of strikes. Israeli strikes targeting Iranian leaders during the first day of the June 2025 Israel-Iran War delayed Iran's initial retaliation due to command-and-control disruptions.[82]

Iranian media also confirmed that the combined force killed former hardline President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in an airstrike targeting his residence in Narmak, Tehran Province, on February 28.[83] Ahmadinejad was a member of Iran's Expediency Discernment Council, which is an administrative assembly appointed by the Supreme Leader to resolve differences between the Iranian Parliament and the Guardian Council. Israeli officials told *Axios* on February 28 that Israel is targeting the "entire Iranian leadership," including current and former officials.[84] The United States sanctioned Ahmadinejad in September 2023 for supporting Iran's Ministry of Intelligence and its efforts to take US nationals hostage.[85]

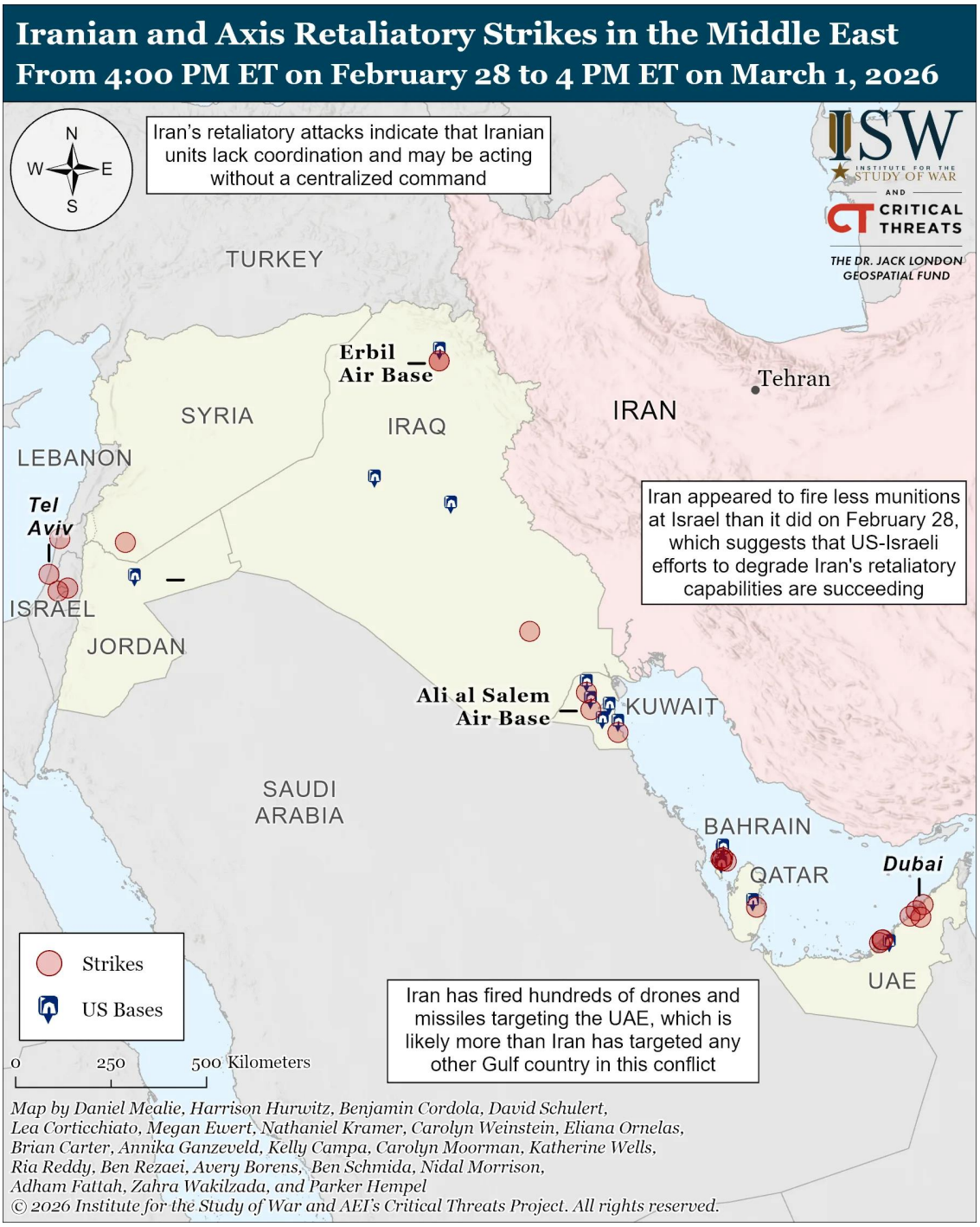
Iranian Retaliation

Iran appeared to fire significantly fewer munitions at Israel on March 1 than on February 28, which suggests that US-Israeli efforts to degrade Iran's retaliatory capabilities are succeeding. IDF warnings to Israeli citizens suggest that Iran launched at least 20 distinct barrages of missiles targeting Israel on February 28.[86] Iran only appeared to launch four distinct missile barrages targeting Israel between February 28 at 4:00 PM ET and March 1 at 4:00 PM ET, however.[87] Several of these missiles struck civilian areas in Israel and caused Israeli casualties. The significantly lower rate of Iranian missile launches, as observed through IDF alert warnings to civilians, suggests that US-Israeli strikes on Iranian missile launchers and storage facilities have limited Iran's ability to launch munitions targeting Israel. Combined force strikes on Iranian command-and-control networks may also be limiting Iran's response. The IRGC announced after Khamenei's death was confirmed that it was about to launch the "most devastating operation" in the Islamic Republic of Iran's history targeting Israel and US bases.[88] Iranian strikes have killed at least nine people in Israel.[89]

Iran also appears to be relying more heavily on its drones compared to its ballistic missiles in its strike packages targeting Gulf states. The UAE reported on March 1 that it has intercepted a total of 541 Iranian

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drones and 165 ballistic missiles.[90] Kuwaiti air defenses have intercepted 283 Iranian drones and 97 Iranian ballistic missiles since February 28.[91] Bahrain has similarly intercepted 145 Iranian drones and 45 Iranian ballistic missiles since the war started.[92] These reports indicate that Iran is firing far more drones at Gulf targets than ballistic missiles. Drones can reach the Gulf from Iran much faster than drones can reach Israel, which may explain why Iran is relying on its drone stockpile for attacks in the Gulf. Israel and the United States have also struck numerous Iranian ballistic missile bases and launchers since February 28.[93]



The inconsistency of Iran's retaliatory attacks on March 1 suggests that Iranian units may be struggling to coordinate large-scale attacks. Iran previously struggled to coordinate large-scale missile barrages during the Israel-Iran War and may again be struggling due to the disruption caused by US and Israeli strikes.[94] Iran's small waves of missiles targeting Israel appear poorly coordinated if they were intended to overwhelm Israeli air defenses. The IDF intercepted one drone in Israeli airspace on

February 28, and the drone did not appear calibrated to enter Israeli airspace at around the same time as any wave of ballistic missiles.[95] Iranian Foreign Affairs Minister Abbas Araghchi acknowledged the lack of coordination among Iranian military units in an interview with Al Jazeera on March 1. Araghchi stated that Iranian military units are "independent" and "somewhat isolated."[96] Araghchi also stated that an Iranian drone attack targeting Oman was "not our choice."[97]

Iran continued to conduct retaliatory drone and missile attacks targeting US forces, the Gulf states, and Israel on March 1. Israel and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) are bearing the brunt of Iran's attacks. US military officials announced on March 1 that Iran killed three US servicemembers at Camp Arifjan, a base in Kuwait that houses US troops.[98]It is unclear when Iran struck Camp Arifjan. US military officials told the *New York Times* that the Iranian strikes destroyed "major portions" of an army unit that manages housing for US troops.[99] Iran also launched a drone at the US Army Camp Buehring Base in northwestern Kuwait.[100] IRGC-affiliated media reported that an Iranian drone targeted the Israeli Embassy in Abu Dhabi, the UAE.[101] Iran reportedly struck the Zayed Port in Abu Dhabi, which serves as a major commercial hub and is located near the al Dhafra Airbase, which supports US operations in the region.[102] Iran also struck the Jabal Ali Port in Dubai, which houses French naval forces and serves as the US Navy's largest port of call in the Middle East.[103] The UAE has closed its embassy in Tehran in response to Iran's attacks on the UAE.[104]

Iranian ballistic missiles and drones have struck military and civilian infrastructure in Bahrain, Oman, the UAE, Qatar, and Kuwait since ISW-CTP's last data cutoff.[105] Two Iranian drones struck Duqm Port in Duqm, Oman, on March 1.[106] Duqm Port is a valuable asset for US logistics and shipping because the port can host military roll-on/roll-off ships, which is crucial for moving large-scale supplies and equipment to and from the theater.[107] The US Navy has had regular access to the port since 2019.[108] Iran similarly struck the Salman Port in Bahrain, which is home to the US Navy's Fifth Fleet and US Naval Forces Central Command.[109]

Gulf sources told Reuters on February 28 that Iran is "internationalizing the battlefield" by targeting the Gulf states.[110] The Emirati government noted on February 28 that the UAE will not sit "cross-armed" in the wake of Iran's attacks and will review its options.[111] Four unspecified sources told the *Washington Post* on February 28 that Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman made several private calls to US President Donald Trump in the last month to press for a US strike on Iran.[112] Saudi Arabia noted that it will take all necessary measures to defend its security, including the option of responding to Iranian attacks.[113]

Some European countries have indicated that they will support the United States and Israel's combined strike campaign against Iran. The United Kingdom, France, and Germany (the E3) issued a statement condemning Iran's "indiscriminate and disproportionate missile attacks" targeting countries across the Middle East.[114] The E3 warned that it may enable "necessary and proportionate defensive action to destroy Iran's capability to fire missiles and drones." The United Kingdom separately granted the United States permission to use Diego Garcia and Royal Air Force Fairford to strike Iranian missile facilities, according to a "person familiar" speaking to Bloomberg on March 1.[115]

British Defense Secretary John Healey said that Iran launched two missiles toward Cyprus on March 1, which UK forces intercepted.[116] Cyprus houses thousands of British soldiers.[117] Healey noted that he does not believe that Iran was attempting to target Cyprus or UK bases in Cyprus.[118]

Iranian drones and missiles struck several military bases in Iraqi Kurdistan on March 1. Iranian drones and missiles reportedly struck al Harir Airbase in northern Erbil Province, which houses US

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forces.[119] Iranian drones also struck the Erbil Airport, which similarly houses a US military base.[120] The Iraqi military said it shot down two Iranian drones near the Nasiryah Airbase, which serves as a joint US-Iraqi military base.[121]

Iran may have started attacking vessels around the Strait of Hormuz and the Persian Gulf in retaliation for the combined strike campaign.Iran seeks to impose a cost on the United States and its partners and compel them to pursue a ceasefire before achieving their objective of toppling the regime. United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO) reported on March 1 that an unspecified projectile exploded in "very close" proximity to a vessel around 35 nautical miles west of Sharjah, the UAE.[122] The vessel's crew is unharmed and authorities are investigating the incident.[123] Iran also reportedly conducted a drone attack targeting Sharjah on March 1.[124] UKMTO reported two additional attacks on March 1 that targeted a vessel near Mina Saqr, the UAE, and an oil tanker near Muscat, Oman.[125] The IRGC claimed that it struck three US- and UK-linked oil tankers with missiles in the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz, which may be referring to the three attacks reported by the UKMTO.[126]

The IRGC also claimed that it conducted several other attacks targeting US-linked vessels in the Strait of Hormuz and the Persian Gulf on March 1. The United States has not confirmed any of these attacks, however. The IRGC claimed that it struck a Maritime Security Program (MSP) vessel with four drones at Jebel Ali Port in the UAE.[127] The IRGC claimed that the MSP vessel was transporting ammunition for US vessels and that the strike rendered the MSP vessel inoperable.[128] The IRGC also claimed that it launched Qadr-380 medium-range, anti-ship cruise missiles and drones targeting a US Navy combat support vessel about 700 kilometers from Chabahar, Sistan and Baluchistan Province.[129] The US vessel was reportedly on a mission to supply fuel to US vessels in the Indian Ocean, according to the IRGC.[130] The IRGC noted that Iranian naval forces will continue operations against "enemy units."[131] The IRGC previously warned vessels transiting through the Strait of Hormuz that "no ship is allowed to pass the Strait of Hormuz."[132]

These attacks have reduced vessel traffic in the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz. Commercially available maritime data indicates that vessel traffic in the Persian Gulf has decreased by at least 33 percent as of March 1. Commercial vessel traffic has dropped by 70 percent in the Strait of Hormuz as of February 28, according to ship tracking platform MarineTraffic.[133] An energy analyst reported on February 28 that several large crude oil tankers have diverted from the Strait of Hormuz or "stopped."[134] Twenty percent of the global oil supply passes through the strait.[135] Iranian media claimed on March 1 that three major global shipping companies have suspended transit through the strait, insurance and transit costs have surged, and at least 200 tankers are currently anchored due to the war.[136] Iranian Foreign Affairs Minister Abbas Araghchi noted on March 1 that Iran has no intention of closing the Strait of Hormuz at "the present time" and does not have any plans to do "anything that would disrupt navigation at this stage."[137] It is unlikely that Iranian naval forces could successfully impose a blockade on the Strait of Hormuz, given that such a blockade would require a continuous military presence, according to a risk and compliance analyst.[138]

Axis of Resistance Response

ISW-CTP is monitoring early reports that Lebanese Hezbollah fired rockets into Israel.[139] This attack would mark the first Hezbollah rocket attack into Israel since the November 2024 Israel-Hezbollah ceasefire agreement.[140] Hezbollah Secretary General Naim Qassem stated on March 1 that Hezbollah would "confront the aggression" from the United States and Israel.[141] Hezbollah also issued a statement on March 1 mourning the death of Iranian Supreme Leader Ali

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Khamenei.[142] ISW-CTP previously assessed that Hezbollah would likely intervene in the current war because the United States and Israel seek regime collapse and have thus crossed Hezbollah's red line by killing Khamenei.[143] ISW-CTP also outlined Hezbollah's potential courses of action, including a symbolic attack targeting northern Israel, in a February 28 report (read the full report here: Hezbollah's Limited Options for Supporting Iran.)[144]

Other members of Iran's Axis of Resistance, specifically Iranian-backed Iraqi militias, have threatened to retaliate and conducted some attacks targeting Israel and US forces. Kataib Sayyid al Shuhada, which is a member of the Islamic Resistance in Iraq, mourned the death of Khamenei and threatened to attack the United States and Israel in a February 28 statement.[145] The Islamic Resistance in Iraq claimed 23 drone attacks targeting "enemy bases" in Iraq and the region on March 1.[146] Several Iranian-backed Iraqi militias launched ballistic missiles, rockets, and drones targeting the Erbil Airbase, which hosts US forces.[147] Iranian-backed Iraqi militia Saraya Awliya al Dam claimed that its fighters attacked a US base in Erbil with drones in support of Iran.[148] The Islamic Resistance in Iraq also reportedly targeted US forces in Erbil.[149] Harakat Hezbollah al Nujaba, which is also a member of the Islamic Resistance in Iraq, is reportedly mobilizing forces to attack US bases.[150] Harakat Hezbollah al Nujaba vowed to storm the US Embassy in Baghdad and kill Americans in retaliation for Khamenei's death.[151] Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al Sudani has reportedly granted Harakat Hezbollah al Nujaba head Akram al Kaabi a "luxurious residence within the presidential complex" inside the Green Zone in Baghdad to plan and coordinate these attacks.[152]

Protesters continued to attempt to storm the Green Zone in Baghdad following the combined force's killing of Iranian Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei.[153] The US Embassy is located in the Green Zone. A pro-Iranian social media account circulated a video of hundreds of Iraqi protesters waving flags and igniting fires near the US Embassy.[154] The protesters reportedly clashed with Iraqi security forces who fired tear gas and stun grenades at the protesters.[155]

The Houthis have not conducted any retaliatory attacks against Israel at the timing of this writing. The Houthis have only issued a statement confirming its solidarity with Iran.[156] The Houthis' inaction is notable given that the Houthis were the only Axis of Resistance member that participated in the June 2025 Israel-Iran War.[157] The group's inaction is also notable because Oman-based Houthi spokesperson Mohammad Abdulsalam reportedly told Iranian Supreme National Security Council Secretary Ali Larijani during a meeting in Oman on February 10 that the Houthis were ready to participate in any conflict targeting Iran.[158] The Houthis could decide at any time to attack US interests or Israel in response to the killing of Iranian Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, however.

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Endnotes

[1] https://t.me/farsna/414157
[2] https://www.fardanews dot com/%D8%A8%D8%AE%D8%B4-%D8%B3%DB%8C%D8%A7%D8%B3%D8%AA-73/1391956-%D8%AD%D9%85%D9%84%D9%87-%D8%A7%D8%B3%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%A6%DB%8C%D9%84-%D8%A8%D9%87-%D9%85%D9%82%D8%B1-%D9%85%D8%B1%D8%B2%DB%8C-%D8%AF%D8%B1-%D9%85%D9%87%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%86-%DA%86%D9%86%D8%AF-%D9%86%D9%81%D8%B1-

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Iran Update Morning Special Report, March 2, 2026

Annika Ganzeveld, Avery Borens, Katherine Wells, Nicholas Carl

Analyst Notes: Data Cutoff: 8:00 AM ET.

The Institute for the Study of War (ISW) and the Critical Threats Project (CTP) at the American Enterprise Institute are publishing two updates daily to provide analysis on the war with Iran. The morning update will focus on US and Israeli strikes on Iran and Iran and the Axis of Resistance's response to the strikes. The evening update will be more comprehensive, covering events over the past 24-hour period and refining items discussed in the morning update.

Key Takeaways

1. The combined force continues to degrade Iran's retaliatory capabilities. Satellite imagery captured on March 2 shows damage to a missile base near Najafabad, Esfahan Province. The imagery shows three impact points likely caused by bunker buster bombs.
2. The combined force has continued to attack Iranian naval assets in order to prevent Iran's navies from being able to conduct retaliatory attacks against international shipping and US Navy vessels. Commercially available satellite imagery shows that the combined force struck the Artesh Navy IRIS Kurdistan in the Bandar Abbas Port in Hormozgan Province. Geolocated imagery also shows a smoke plume at the IRGC Navy 3rd Naval District in Bandar Mahshahr, Khuzestan Province. Bandar Mahshahr is located at the north of the Persian Gulf.
3. The combined force continued to target Iran's internal security apparatus. Commercially available satellite imagery shows that the combined force damaged a building at the Fifth Tehran Municipality Quds Basij Resistance Regional Base in northwestern Tehran in airstrikes on March 1. This base is one of the 23 Basij regional bases in Tehran. These bases operate under the IRGC Ground Forces Mohammad Rasoul Ollah Provincial Unit, which operates under the IRGC Ground Forces Sarallah Headquarters.
4. The IDF assesses that Iran is attempting to launch larger and more coordinated missile barrages at Israel but is struggling to do so because of IDF strikes on Iranian missile launchers. The IDF estimates that Iran has launched between nine and 30 missiles per attack over the past day, in contrast to between two and three missiles per attack on February 28. The IDF had destroyed about half of Iran's missile launchers as of March 1.
5. US sources told a US journalist that Iranian Shahed drones are "so far the most dangerous threat." The sources stated that Iranian Shahed drones are getting through some air defenses. CTP-ISW has not observed reports of drone impacts in Israel, but Iranian drones have struck several Gulf countries. Iran has primarily used ballistic missiles to attack Israel, but has relied on drones to attack Gulf countries.

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6. Iran is increasingly targeting energy infrastructure in Gulf countries, likely to impose a cost on international markets to compel the United States and its partners to pursue a ceasefire before achieving their objective of toppling the regime. Iran's attacks on Gulf energy infrastructure may cause the Gulf states to retaliate and join the conflict.
7. Hezbollah launched rockets and drones targeting the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) Mishmar al Karmel missile defense site in Haifa, northern Israel, on March 1. The IDF launched retaliatory airstrikes targeting Hezbollah leadership in Beirut's southern suburbs and Hezbollah sites across Lebanon on March 1 and 2. The strikes killed Hussein Mekeld and Mohammad Raad.

US and Israeli Air Campaign

The combined force has achieved air superiority over Tehran City and has conducted waves of airstrikes concentrated in Tehran City. Israeli Defense Minister Israel Katz announced on March 1 that the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) Air Force is striking targets in Tehran with "stand-in" munitions and that IAF fighter jets are dropping munitions directly over their targets for the first time in the war.[1] An Israeli military correspondent stated that the IDF had previously been deploying stand-off weapons from a distance and with smaller warheads.[2] Katz announced that the IAF will conduct "continuous powerful strikes" in Tehran City.[3]

The combined force has not damaged Iranian nuclear infrastructure thus far, according to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).[4] IAEA Director General Rafael Grossi stated on March 2 that the IAEA has "no indication" of any damage at "any nuclear installations, including the Bushehr Nuclear Power Plant, the Tehran Research Reactor, or other nuclear fuel cycle facilities."[5] The Institute for Science and International Security's assessment of satellite imagery on March 2 was consistent with the IAEA's assessment.[6] The Institute for Science and International Security circulated reports of strikes near the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran headquarters in Tehran, which is home to the Tehran Research Reactor, on March 1.[7] The combined force has not confirmed any strikes on this site, however. The Institute assessed that the Tehran Research Reactor is "not expected" to be a US or Israeli target.[8] The Institute confirmed that it is monitoring other Iranian nuclear facilities, including enrichment and testing sites such as the Esfahan Nuclear Technology Center, the suspected nuclear site at Kolang Gaz La Mountain, and the Taleghan 2 site at the Parchin Military Complex in Tehran Province.[9] The IDF Farsi spokesperson previously announced on March 1 that the IDF is "systematically dismantling" Iranian nuclear infrastructure.[10]

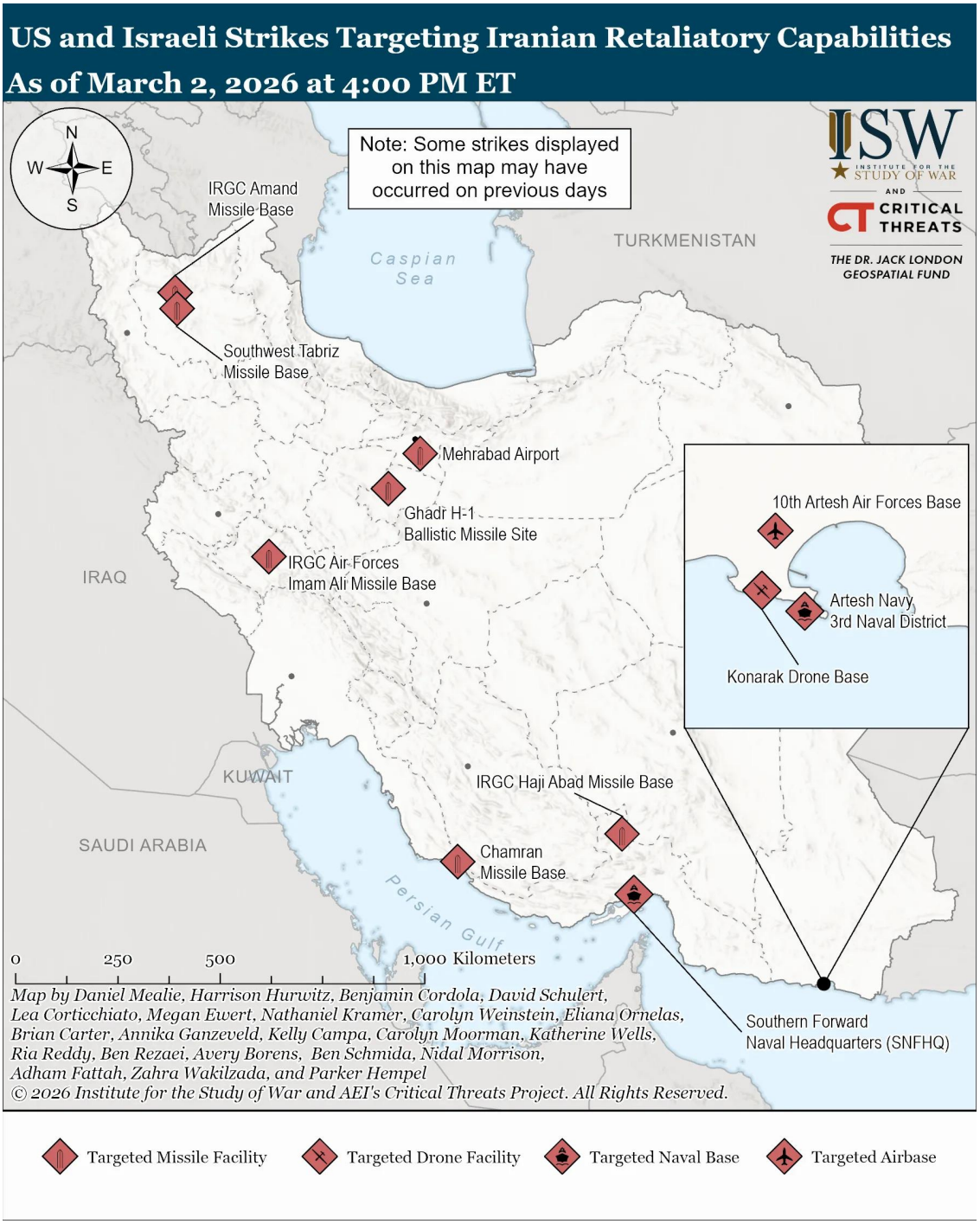
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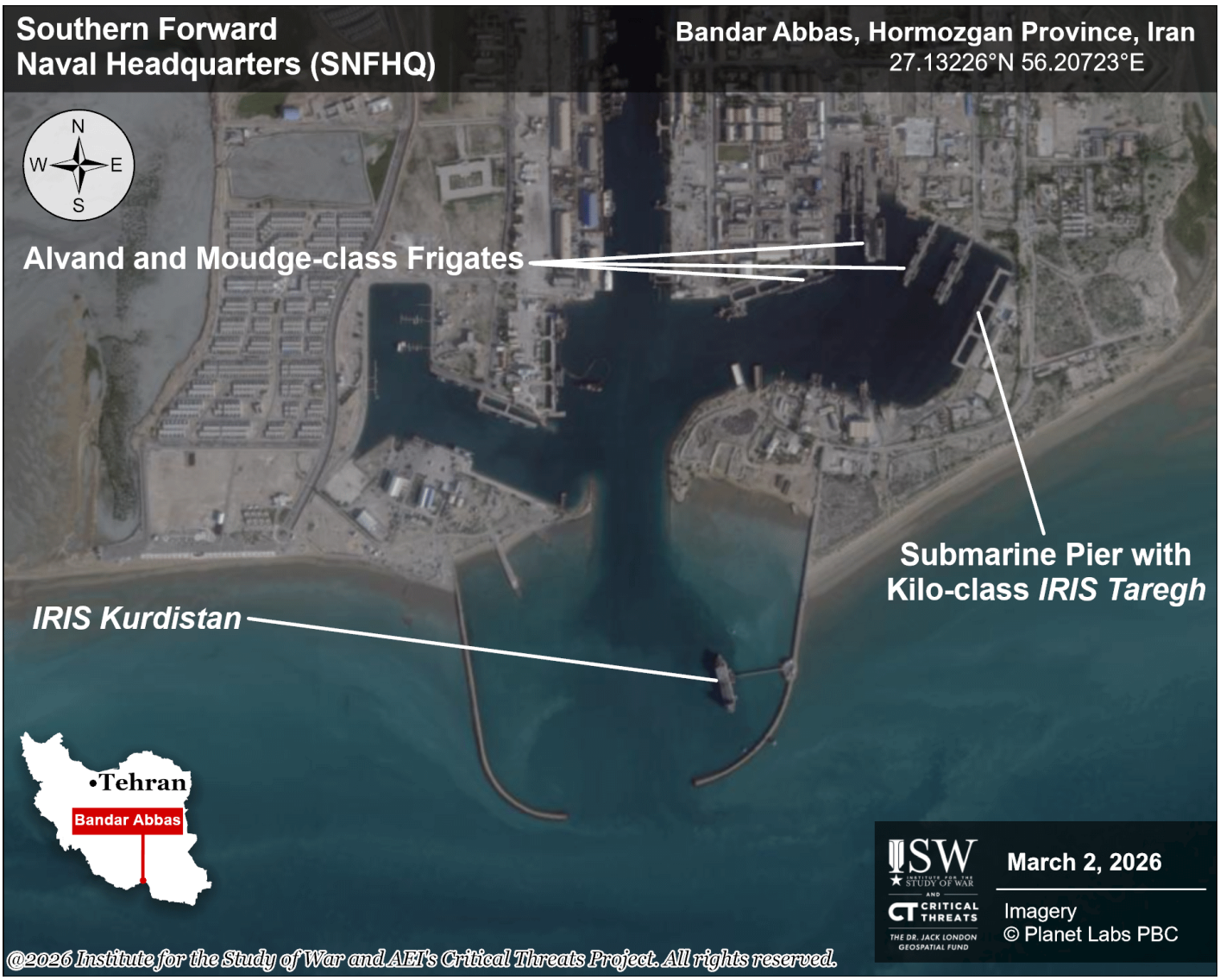
The combined force continues to degrade Iran's retaliatory capabilities. Satellite imagery captured on March 2 shows damage to a missile base near Najafabad, Esfahan Province. The imagery shows three impact points likely caused by bunker buster bombs. The IDF also struck the Yazd Missile Base in Yazd Province and the Khorgu Missile Base north of Bandar Abbas, Hormozgan Province.[11] The IDF struck the Yazd Missile Base during the June 2025 Israel-Iran War to destroy Khorramshahr ballistic missile storage facilities.[12] Khorramshahr missiles have a range of between 2,000 and 3,000 kilometers.[13]

The combined force has continued to attack Iranian naval assets in order to prevent Iran's navies from being able to conduct retaliatory attacks against international shipping and US Navy vessels. Commercially available satellite imagery shows that the combined force struck the Artesh Navy IRIS *Kurdistan* in the Bandar Abbas Port in Hormozgan Province. Bandar Abbas Port is home to the IRGC Navy Headquarters, the IRGC Navy 1st Naval District, and the Artesh Navy Southern Forward Naval Headquarters.[14] Commercially available satellite imagery also shows an unspecified Alvand-class frigate on fire in the Bandar Abbas Port. Geolocated imagery also shows a smoke plume at the IRGC Navy 3rd Naval District in Bandar Mahshahr, Khuzestan Province. Bandar Mahshahr is located at the north of the Persian Gulf.

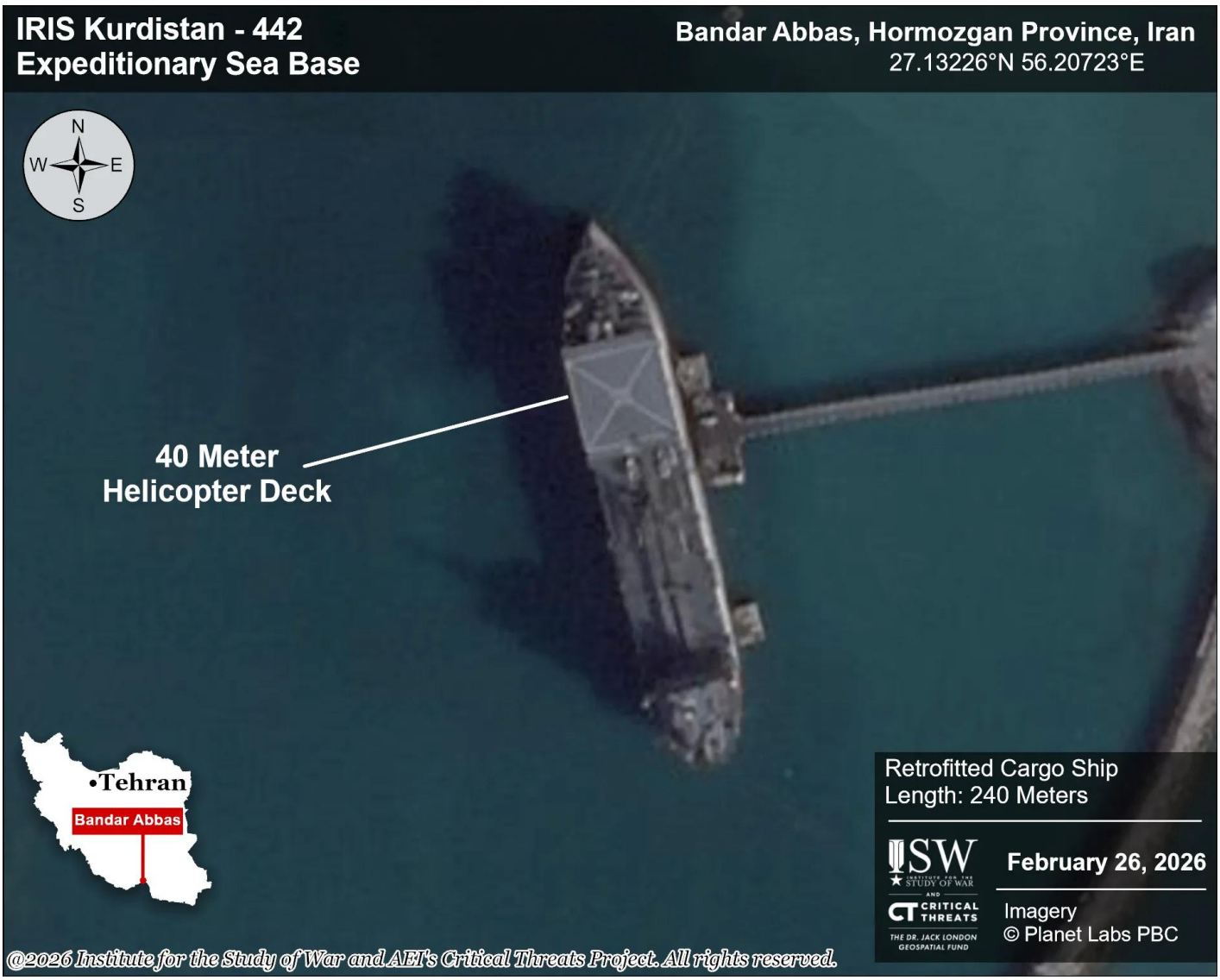
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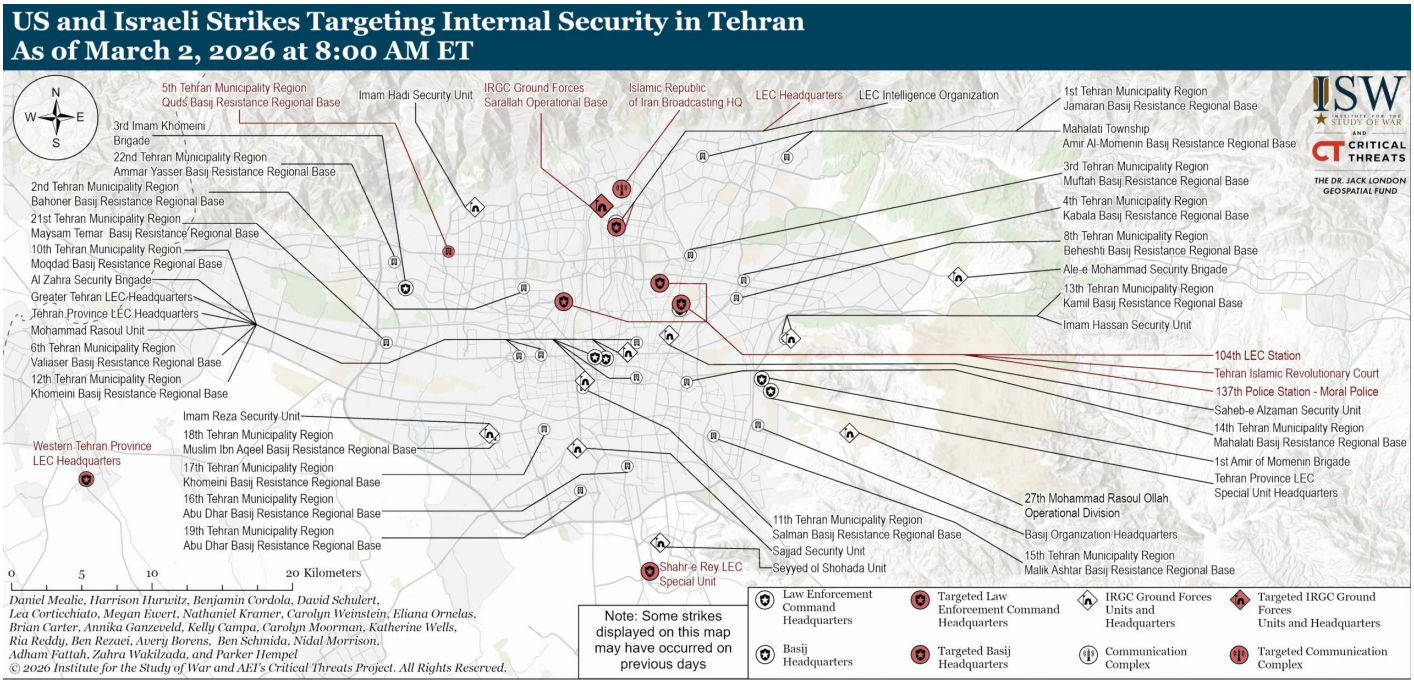


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The combined force continued to target Iran's internal security apparatus. The IDF killed numerous senior Intelligence Ministry officials, including the Intelligence Ministry's internal security deputy (see below).[15] Commercially available satellite imagery shows that the combined force damaged a building at the Fifth Tehran Municipality Quds Basij Resistance Regional Base in northwestern Tehran in airstrikes on March 1. This base is one of the 23 Basij regional bases in Tehran.[16] These bases operate under the IRGC Ground Forces Mohammad Rasoul Ollah Provincial Unit, which operates under the IRGC Ground Forces Sarallah Headquarters.[17] The IDF struck the Sarallah Headquarters on March 1.[18] OSINT accounts have reported explosions at another Basij base and two LEC sites in Tehran Province and one LEC site in Kurdistan Province since CTP-ISW's last data cutoff at 4:00 PM ET on March 1.[19] Read more about the structure of Iran's internal security apparatus in CTP's December 2021 Iranian internal security report Whatever It Takes to End It.

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The United States and Israel have continued to mobilize forces. US Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman General Dan Caine stated on March 2 that “this is not a one-night operation.”[20] Caine stated that the United States is continuing to send reinforcements and that “additional forces” will arrive in the Middle East today.[21] The IDF stated on March 2 that it has mobilized approximately 110,000 reservists.[22]

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Decapitation Campaign

US President Donald Trump told Fox News on March 2 that the US-Israeli combined force killed 49 senior Iranian leaders in the first round of strikes on Iran on February 28.[23] The Israeli Air Force (IAF) confirmed on March 2 that the combined force killed senior Iranian Intelligence Ministry officials, including Deputy Intelligence Minister for Israel Affairs Yahya Hamidi and Espionage Division head Jalal Pour Hossein.[24] An Iranian open-source analyst reported that the IAF also killed Intelligence Ministry Internal Security Deputy Seyyed Yahya Hosseini Panjaki.[25] The analyst stated that Panjaki was responsible for the Intelligence Ministry's targeted killings abroad, including killings of journalists and political activists.[26] CTP-ISW recorded an airstrike in the vicinity of the Intelligence Ministry in Tehran on March 1.[27]

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Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian appointed Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) officer Majid Ibn Reza as the acting Defense and Armed Forces Logistics Minister on March 2 after the combined force killed former Defense and Armed Forces Logistics Minister Brigadier General Aziz Nasir Zadeh on February 28.[28] Majid Ibn Reza previously served as the chief executive for the Social Security Organization of the Armed Forces (SATA), which is a subsidiary of the Defense and Armed Forces Logistics Ministry.[29] The US Treasury sanctioned a SATA subsidiary company in 2020 for facilitating Iran's illicit oil trade to generate billions of US dollars in revenue for SATA to fund pensions, insurance, and welfare services for IRGC, Artesh, and Law Enforcement Command (LEC) personnel.[30]

Iranian Retaliation

The IDF assesses that Iran is attempting to launch larger and more coordinated missile barrages at Israel, but is struggling to do so because of IDF strikes on Iranian missile launchers.[31] The IDF estimates that Iran has launched between nine and 30 missiles per attack over the past day, in contrast to between two and three missiles per attack on February 28.[32] The IDF also noted that Iran's effort to conduct larger attacks has caused larger pauses between each wave of Iranian missile attacks. The IDF announced a wave of Iranian missile attacks around 0:00 AM ET and another wave of missile attacks around 5:00 AM ET on March 1.[33] The IDF noted that Iran is struggling to conduct larger attacks because the IDF is systematically targeting Iranian missile launchers. The IDF had destroyed about half of Iran's missile launchers as of March 1.[34] A nuclear analyst assessed on March 1 that Iranian security personnel may be abandoning missile launchers when they hear a drone or after conducting a single launch.[35]

US sources told a US journalist that Iranian Shahed drones are "so far the most dangerous threat."[36] The sources stated that Iranian Shahed drones are getting through some air defenses. Iran has spent years and tremendous resources developing Shahed drones and has provided Russia with Shahed drones for its invasion of Ukraine. CTP-ISW has not observed reports of drone impacts in Israel, but Iranian drones have struck several Gulf countries.[37] Iran has primarily used ballistic missiles to attack Israel, but has relied on drones to attack Gulf countries.[38] The combined force struck several Iranian drone launch sites and storage facilities, some of which appeared to contain Shahed-136 and Shahed-129 drones, in southeastern Iran on March 1.[39] Ukrainian officials have offered to share their experience with the United States and Israel on how to counter Iranian Shahed drones.[40]

Iran is increasingly targeting energy infrastructure in Gulf countries, likely to impose an economic cost and compel the United States and its partners to pursue a ceasefire before achieving their objective of toppling the regime. Iran reportedly struck the Jebel Ali power station complex in Dubai, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), on March 1.[41] The station is the UAE's largest power production and desalination plant with a capacity of 2,060 megawatts.[42] Iranian drones also attempted to strike the Ras Tanura oil refinery in Saudi Arabia on March 2, but Saudi forces intercepted the drones.[43] The Ras Tanura oil refinery is Saudi Arabia's largest oil refinery and houses the Saudi state-owned national oil company, Saudi Aramco.[44] Iran previously targeted Saudi energy facilities in September 2019.[45] The Ras Tanura complex is also a vital export terminal for Saudi crude oil. Iran also targeted an energy facility in the Ras Laffan Industrial City in Qatar, which is a major Qatari hub for liquefied natural gas.[46]

Iran has also targeted industrial facilities in the Gulf. Iran struck the Aluminum Bahrain Company in Riffa, Bahrain, on March 2, which is one of the world's largest aluminum smelters.[47] Aluminum smelters are key for national defense because they produce aluminum for military aircraft, armored vehicles, and

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ships.[48] An Iranian drone struck the Mesaieed industrial zone in Qatar, which houses Qatari petrochemical and manufacturing facilities.[49]

Iran's attacks on Gulf energy infrastructure may cause the Gulf states to retaliate and join the conflict. UnspecifiedSaudi officials told the *Wall Street Journal* on March 2 that Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman previously identified attacks on Saudi Arabia's oil facilities as a red line.[50] A geopolitical risk analysttold the *Wall Street Journal* that Iran's attacks on the Gulf states' "economic centers of gravity…could become increasingly existential" for the Gulf states.[51] The Emirati government previously warned that the UAE will not sit "cross-armed" in the face of Iran's attacks and will review its options.[52] Saudi Arabia similarly noted that it will take all necessary measures to defend its security, including by possibly responding to Iranian attacks.[53]

Iranian Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) Secretary Ali Larijani stated on March 2 that Iran will not negotiate with the United States.[54] Larijani's statement comes after US and Arab officials told the *Wall Street Journal* on March 1 that Larijani has made an effort to resume talks with the United States.[55]

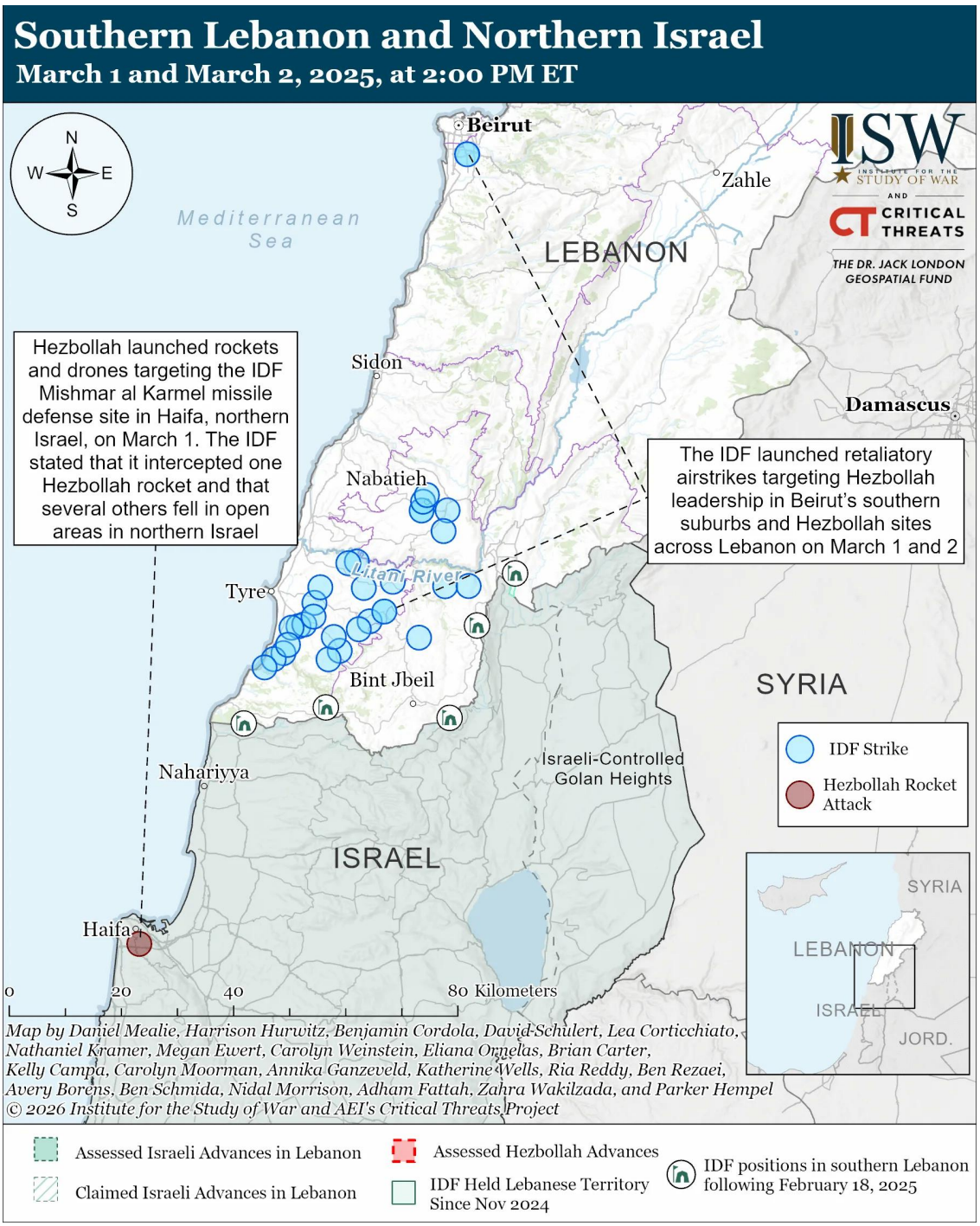
Axis of Resistance Response

Hezbollah launched rockets and drones targeting the IDF Mishmar al Karmel missile defense site in Haifa, northern Israel, on March 1.[56] The IDF stated that it intercepted one Hezbollah rocket and that several others fell in open areas in northern Israel.[57] Hezbollah confirmed the attack on March 1 and stated that the attack was in retaliation for the combined force's killing of Iranian Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei.[58]

The IDF launched retaliatory airstrikes targeting Hezbollah leadership in Beirut's southern suburbs and Hezbollah sites across Lebanon on March 1 and 2.[59] The IDF struck dozens of Hezbollah headquarters across Lebanon, including a headquarters belonging to Iranian forces**.**[60]The IDF also struck Hezbollah weapons depots and other Hezbollah military sites across Lebanon.[61] The IDF strikes on Beirut's southern suburbs killed:

- **Hussein Mekeld.** Mekeld served as the head of Hezbollah's intelligence headquarters in Beirut.[62]
- **Mohammad Raad.[63]** Raad was the head of Hezbollah's Loyalty to the Resistance Bloc and a member of Hezbollah's Shura Council.[64] Raad also served as the head of Hezbollah's Parliamentary Oversight Council.[65] Raad helped found Hezbollah's Lebanese Union of Islamic Students.[66] He was a leading figure in Hezbollah and a staunch party ideologue, formerly chairing Hezbollah's Political Council.[67] He had served as a Hezbollah parliamentarian since 1992.[68] The United States sanctioned Raad in 2019 for his role in Hezbollah's Shura Council and for using his political position to benefit Hezbollah.[69]

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Other Activity

US Central Command (CENTCOM) announced that Kuwaiti air defense systems mistakenly shot down three US F-15E fighter jets over Kuwait on March 1.[70] CENTCOM reported that all six aircrew ejected from the fighter jets and have been recovered safely.[71]

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Endnotes

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[64] https://israel-alma dot org/hezbollah-leadership-main-figures-november-2025/ ; https://home.treasury.gov/news/featured-stories/treasury-targets-iranian-backed-hizballah-officials-for-exploiting-lebanons-political-and-financial-system

[65] https://israel-alma dot org/hezbollah-the-shura-council/

[66] https://hezbollah.org/people/mohammad-raad

[67] https://hezbollah.org/people/mohammad-raad

[68] https://hezbollah.org/people/mohammad-raad ; https://thisisbeirut dot com.lb/articles/1322642/mohammad-raads-misfortunes-with-life-and-death

[69] https://home.treasury.gov/news/featured-stories/treasury-targets-iranian-backed-hizballah-officials-for-exploiting-lebanons-political-and-financial-system

[70] https://www.centcom.mil/MEDIA/PRESS-RELEASES/Press-Release-View/Article/4418568/three-us-f-15s-involved-in-friendly-fire-incident-in-kuwait-pilots-safe/

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[71] https://www.centcom.mil/MEDIA/PRESS-RELEASES/Press-Release-View/Article/4418568/three-us-f-15s-involved-in-friendly-fire-incident-in-kuwait-pilots-safe/

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Iran Update Evening Special Report, March 2, 2026

Katherine Wells, Ria Reddy, Ben Rezaei, Avery Borens, Carolyn Moorman, Zahra Wakilzada, Kelly Campa, Liam Karr, Annika Ganzeveld

Analyst Notes: Data Cutoff: 4:00 PM ET

The Institute for the Study of War (ISW) and the Critical Threats Project (CTP) at the American Enterprise Instituteare publishing two updates daily to provide analysis on the war with Iran. The morning update will focus on US and Israeli strikes on Iran and Iran and the Axis of Resistance's response to the strikes. The evening update will be more comprehensive, covering events over the past 24-hour period and refining items discussed in the morning update.

Key Takeaways

1. The combined US-Israeli force continued to degrade Iranian air defenses to maintain air superiority over western Iran and Tehran. US Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman General Dan Caine announced on March 2 that "local air superiority has been established [over Iran]." The combined force's strikes on Iranian air defense systems also enable Israel and the United States to operate lower-generation aircraft in Iran with less risk.
2. The combined force launched several airstrikes on March 2 targeting Iranian internal security sites responsible for maintaining security, suppressing protests, and spreading regime propaganda.
3. The combined force struck the Natanz Nuclear Facility in Esfahan Province on March 2, which marks the first attack on an Iranian nuclear site since the start of the US-Israeli campaign on February 28. An Israeli analyst, citing March 2 satellite imagery, reported that strikes targeted Natanz and severely damaged at least three buildings.
4. The IDF has continued to conduct airstrikes targeting Hezbollah military sites and institutions in Lebanon on March 2 to degrade Hezbollah's ability to conduct retaliatory attacks against Israel. The IDF reported that it struck over 70 Hezbollah weapons depots, launch sites, and launchers in southern Lebanon.
5. The United States and Israel conducted several attacks targeting Iranian-backed Iraqi militias in Iraq on March 1 and 2 to degrade the militias' ability to conduct retaliatory attacks against US forces and Israel. Iranian-backed Iraqi militias appear to be threatening to expand their attacks to regional countries that host US troops, such as Jordan.
6. The Houthis could target Emirati, Israeli, or US military positions in the Horn of Africa if it joins Iran's regional retaliatory campaign.
7. Iran is attempting to disrupt international shipping through the Strait of Hormuz as part of a broader effort to impose a cost on the Gulf states. Iran likely seeks to push the Gulf states to pressure the United States and Israel to end their combined strike campaign against Iran. Iranian

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attacks targeting energy infrastructure in the Gulf have also disrupted some regional oil and gas industries.

US and Israeli Air Campaign

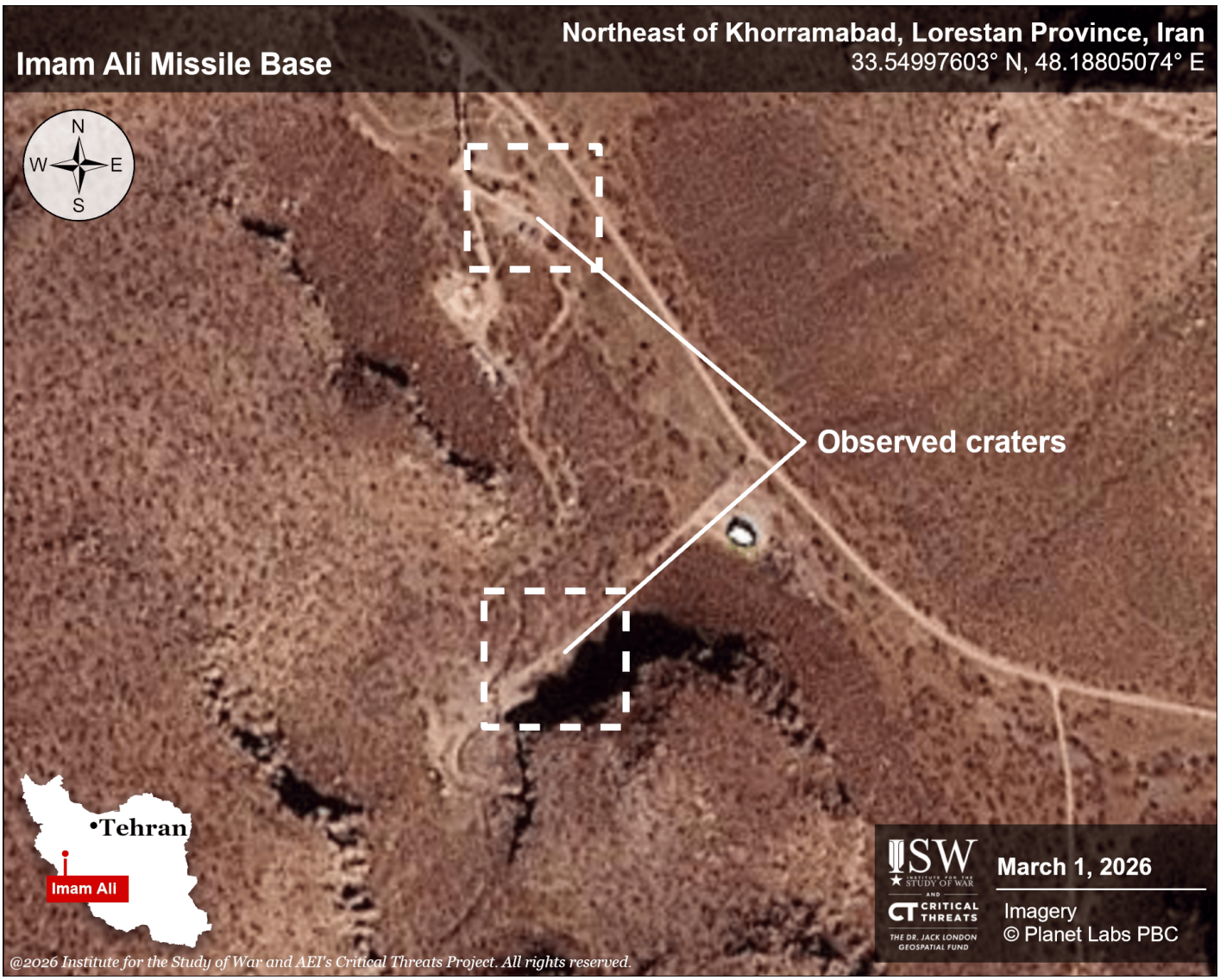
The combined US-Israeli force continued to degrade Iranian air defenses to maintain air superiority over western Iran and Tehran. US Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman General Dan Caine announced on March 2 that “local air superiority has been established [over Iran].”[1] The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) stated on March 2 that it has targeted over 200 Iranian air defense systems since the war started on February 28.[2] Israeli Defense Minister Israel Katz stated on March 1 that Israeli aircraft have been using “stand-in” munitions in Tehran after Israel established air superiority over the city.[3] Katz’s statement suggests that Iranian air defense systems no longer pose a significant threat to Israeli or US aircraft in Tehran given that Israeli aircraft are able to drop munitions directly on their targets instead of launching munitions from a distance. The combined force’s strikes on Iranian air defense systems also enable Israel and the United States to operate lower-generation aircraft in Iran with less risk. US Central Command (CENTCOM) reported that US B-1 bombers struck targets in Iran on March 1 to degrade Iranian ballistic missile capabilities.[4] The use of B-1 bombers demonstrates that the combined force is degrading Iranian air defenses to the point that the United States feels comfortable using lower-generation aircraft to conduct attacks in Iran.

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The combined force has also continued to degrade Iran's ballistic missile capabilities in order to disrupt Iran's ability to coordinate and execute large-scale missile barrages against Israel and US forces. Commercially available satellite imagery shows bunker buster bomb impacts at the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) Aerospace Force Imam Ali Missile Base in Khorramabad, Lorestan Province. The Imam Ali Missile Base is home to the al Hadid 7th Missile Brigade and al Tawhid 23rd Missile Brigade.[5] The base reportedly stores Shahab-3 ballistic missiles, which have a range of between 800 and 1,300 kilometers.[6] US and Israeli strikes also targeted the Bid Ganeh ballistic missile facility in Tehran Province on March 2.[7] The Bid Ganeh site likely stored medium-range ballistic missiles, according to a missile expert.[8] Israel struck the facility during the June 2025 Israel-Iran War.[9]

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The combined force may have targeted an Iranian drone manufacturing facility in Shahin Shahr, Esfahan Province, on March 2. Anti-regime media published a video of an explosion in Shahin Shahr and an individual in the video claimed that the explosion took place at the Iran Aircraft Manufacturing Industrial Company (HESA).[10] HESA operates under the Iranian Defense and Armed Forces Logistics Ministry and produces Ababil- and Shahed-series drones.[11] The combined force's reported targeting of HESA comes amid reports that Iranian Shahed drones are "so far the most dangerous threat."[12] The combined force struck several Iranian drone launch sites and storage facilities, some of which appeared to contain Shahed-136 and Shahed-129 drones, in southeastern Iran on March 1.[13]

The combined force appears to have targeted the Malek Ashtar University Aerospace Complex in Tehran on March 2. The combined force conducted a strike in Pasdaran, Tehran City, which is home to numerous defense industrial and nuclear-related sites.[14] ISW-CTP assesses that the combined force may have struck the Malek Ashtar University Aerospace Complex based on footage of the strike and satellite imagery.[15] The complex is responsible for designing aircraft for the IRGC and has previously cooperated with Russia to develop advanced aircraft designs.[16] An Iranian OSINT account also posted a video of an explosion in Pasdaran and suggested that the targeted site may have been the Defense Industries Organization (DIO).[17] The DIO is a subsidiary of the Iranian Ministry of Defense and Armed Forces Logistics (MODAFL) and is heavily involved in Iran's missile and nuclear programs.[18] There are numerous other nuclear and military sites located in Pasadaran that may have been targeted,

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including the Mojdeh site and MODAFL Intelligence Protection Organization. The Mojdeh site is located at Shahid Rajaei University and previously housed the Iranian Organization of Defensive Innovation and Research (SPND) headquarters. The SPND played a leading role in the Iranian nuclear weapons research program before 2003.[19] Shahid Rajaei University is affiliated with Iran's nuclear program, and some US officials believe that the university has been involved in nuclear warhead design research.[20]



The combined force launched several airstrikes on March 2 targeting Iranian internal security sites responsible for maintaining security and suppressing protests. The IDF announced that it struck regime command centers and bases belonging to security forces responsible for suppressing anti-regime protests. The IDF also announced that it struck 10 Intelligence Ministry command centers and an IRGC Quds Force facility in Tehran City.[21] The combined force also continued to target Law Enforcement Command (LEC) sites and Basij bases across Iran.[22] OSINT accounts have reported airstrikes targeting four Basij bases and three LEC sites in Tehran City since ISW-CTP's last data cutoff at

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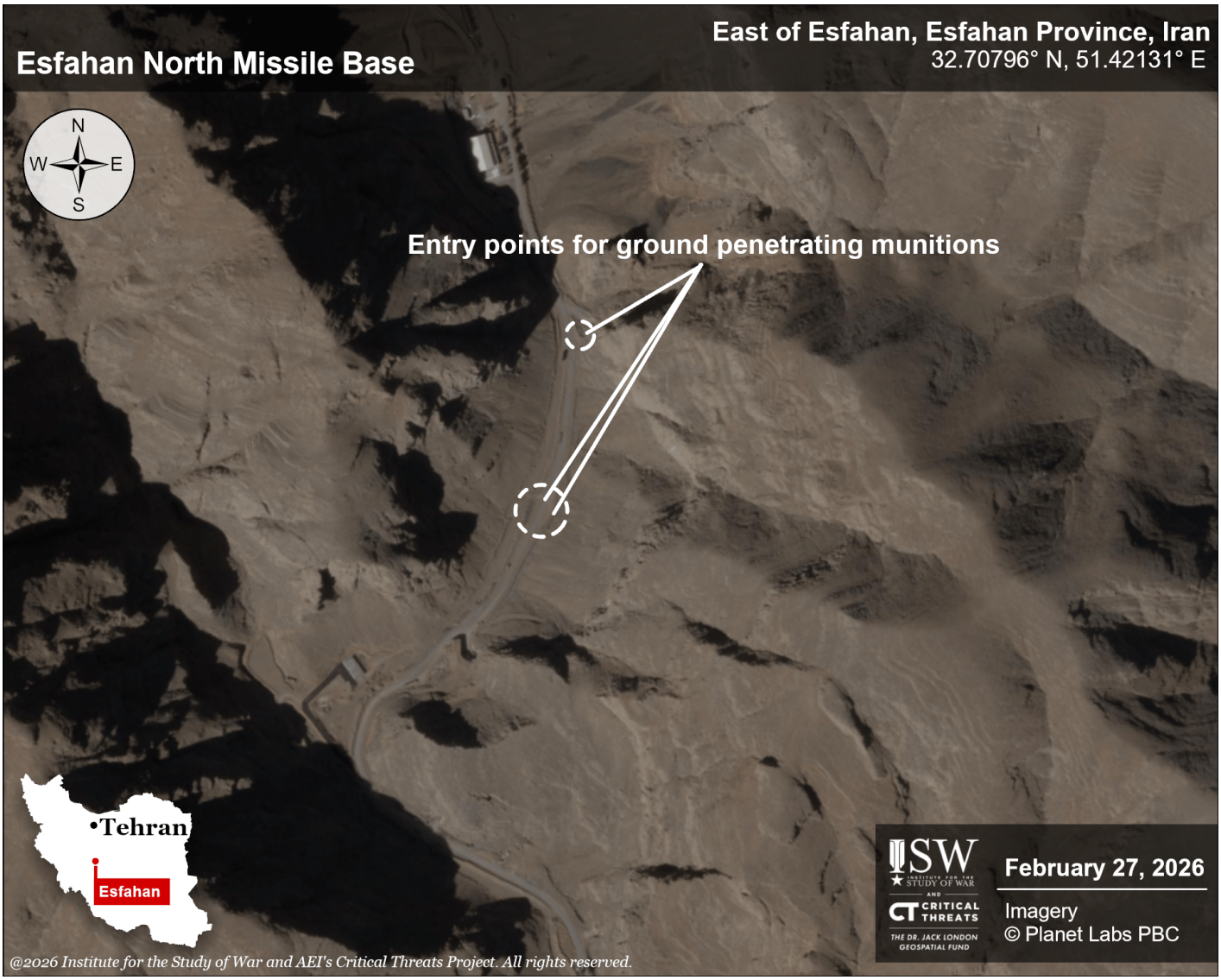
8:00 AM ET on March 2.[23] One of the targeted Basij bases in Tehran was the Fifteenth Tehran Municipality Region Basij Resistance Base, which is one of the 23 Basij regional bases in Tehran.[24] The combined force also targeted the Fifth Tehran Municipality Region Basij Resistance Base on March 2, as ISW-CTP reported in its March 2 morning update. OSINT accounts also reported a strike on an LEC site in Sarableh, Ilam Province, and the Kurdistan Province LEC Headquarters in Sanandaj, Kurdistan Province, on March 2.[25] Iranian media separately reported that the combined force targeted a local official's home in Sarableh on March 2, killing five people.[26] The IDF also confirmed that the combined force targeted the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB) headquarters in Tehran City on March 2.[27] IRIB is responsible for spreading regime propaganda.



The combined force struck the Natanz Nuclear Facility in Esfahan Province on March 2, which marks the first attack on an Iranian nuclear site since the start of the US-Israeli campaign on February 28. An Israeli analyst, citing March 2 satellite imagery, reported that strikes targeted Natanz

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and severely damaged at least three buildings.[28] The function of the three damaged buildings is unclear, but the Natanz complex was Iran's primary uranium enrichment site before the June 2025 Israel-Iran War. Iran's representative to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Reza Najafi, told the IAEA Board of Governors on March 2 that the combined force recently attacked Natanz.[29] Israel previously struck Natanz during the Israel-Iran War, destroying the Pilot Fuel Enrichment Plant (PFEP) and damaging electrical substations and support buildings that supplied power to the site.[30] The PFEP housed more than 1,700 centrifuges. The United States also targeted Natanz during the June war and likely destroyed the site or rendered it inoperable.[31] US officials told the *Wall Street Journal* on February 26 that US negotiators demanded that Iran dismantle key nuclear facilities, including Natanz, as part of a potential nuclear agreement.[32] Iran rejected this demand. The Associated Press, citing an unreleased IAEA report, reported on February 27 that the IAEA had observed activity at Natanz and the Fordow Fuel Enrichment Plant but could not verify the purpose or nature of the activity.[33] The IAEA report also stated that the agency could not confirm whether Iran had suspended all enrichment-related activities. The IDF Farsi-language spokesperson announced on March 1 that the IDF is "systematically dismantling" Iranian nuclear infrastructure.[34]

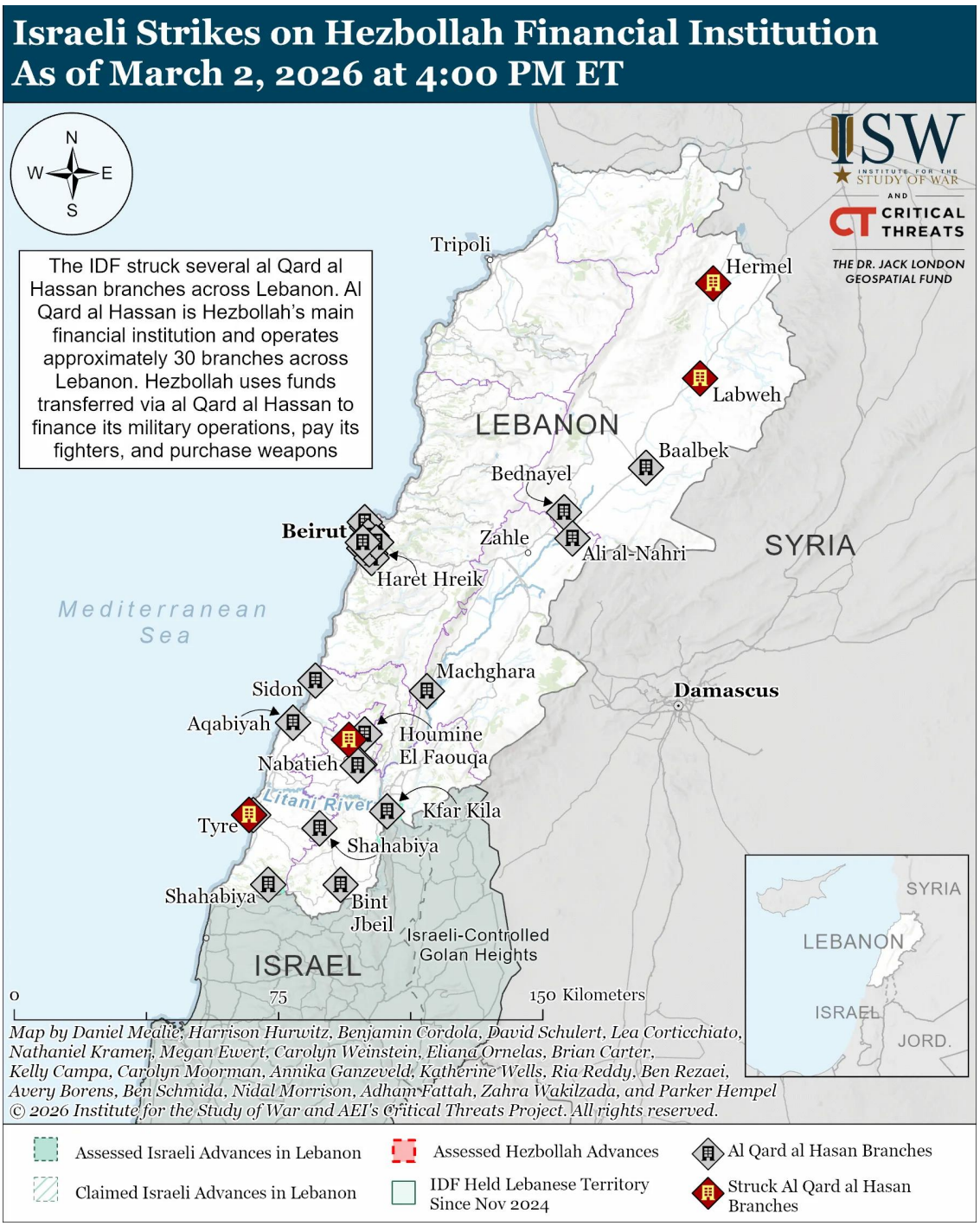


US CENTCOM denied Iranian claims that it sank a US aircraft carrier and announced that it has sunk 11 Iranian vessels in the Gulf of Oman, including the IRGC Navy's Shahid Bagheri drone carrier.[35] The combined force has attackedtheIRGC Navy *Jamaran* Moudge-class frigate, Artesh Navy *Bayandor* corvette, Artesh Navy *Naghdi* corvette, and Artesh Navy *Kurdistan* Makran-class forward

base ship in Iran’s southern fleet since the start of the war.[36]

The IDF has continued to conduct airstrikes targeting Hezbollah military sites and institutions in Lebanon on March 2 to degrade Hezbollah’s ability to conduct retaliatory attacks against Israel. The IDF reported that it struck over 70 Hezbollah weapons depots, launch sites, and launchers in southern Lebanon.[37] The IDF also struck several al Qard al Hassan branches across Lebanon.[38] Al Qard al Hassan is Hezbollah’s main financial institution and operates approximately 30 branches across Lebanon.[39] Hezbollah uses funds transferred via al Qard al Hassan to finance its military operations, pay its fighters, and purchase weapons.[40] The IDF has regularly targeted al Qard al Hassan during and after the Fall 2024 Israel-Hezbollah conflict.[41] It is notable that Israel’s airstrikes have largely been concentrated in southern Lebanon thus far given that the IDF previously assessed that Hezbollah had moved the bulk of its weapons and combat forces north of the Litani River.[42] These airstrikes indicate that Hezbollah maintains small units in southern Lebanon that are capable of conducting limited attacks against Israel.

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There are varying reports about whether Israeli airstrikes killed certain senior Hezbollah leaders. OSINT accounts reported on March 1 that Israeli strikes killed Hezbollah's Loyalty to the Resistance Bloc head and Hezbollah's Shura Council member Mohammad Raad.[43] Israeli media has denied this claim, however.[44] A Hezbollah-affiliated media outlet posted a statement from Raad on March 2, which suggests that he is alive.[45] The IDF confirmed that Israeli airstrikes killed Hussein Mekeld, who served as the head of Hezbollah's intelligence headquarters in Beirut.[46] The IDF stated that Mekeld held several roles in Hezbollah's intelligence headquarters and was responsible for forming intelligence assessments about the IDF.[47]

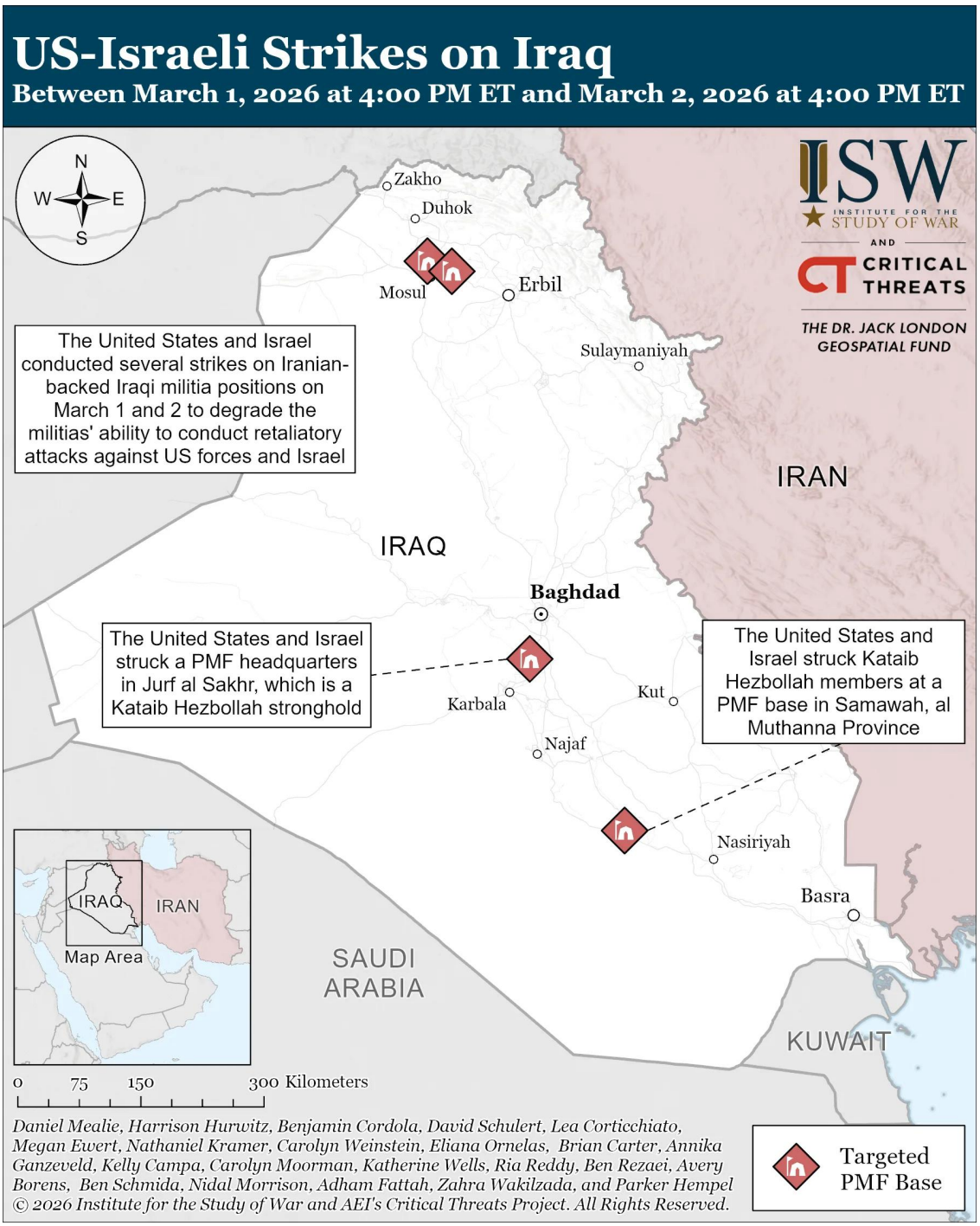
The IDF has taken steps to enhance security and reduce threats along the Israel-Lebanon border in response to Hezbollah's attacks. IDF Chief of Staff Major General Eyal Zamir approved on March 1 a plan for continued defensive and offensive preparedness against Hezbollah.[48] The IDF stated on March 1 that it has significantly increased the number of forces along the Israel-Lebanon border and is

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prepared to deploy additional forces.[49] Israeli media reported on March 2 that the IDF sent reinforcements to the IDF 91st Territorial Division and the 210th Territorial Division, which both operate along the Israel-Lebanon border.[50] The IDF issued evacuation warnings for over 53 southern Lebanese villages, urging Lebanese civilians to evacuate the area immediately.[51] The IDF also issued evacuation warnings for Lebanese residents who live near al Qard al Hassan branches.[52] The IDF issued urgent evacuation warnings for southern Lebanese residents in September and October 2024 ahead of its air and ground campaign against Hezbollah.[53] Israeli officials stated that the IDF will intensify its strikes on Lebanon and may target Hezbollah Secretary General Naim Qassem.[54] IDF Spokesperson Brigadier General Effie Defrin told Israeli media that the IDF could conduct ground operations in Lebanon and noted that “all options are on the table.”[55]

The United States and Israel conducted several attacks targeting Iranian-backed Iraqi militias in Iraq on March 1 and 2 to degrade the militias’ ability to conduct retaliatory attacks against US forces and Israel. The United States and Israel struck an Iranian-backed Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) base in Samawah, al Muthanna Province, on March 1.[56] Several Iranian-backed Iraqi militias operate under the PMF and answer to Iran instead of the Iraqi prime minister.[57] A security source told Iraqi media that the strikes killed one Kataib Hezbollah member and injured another.[58] The United States and Israel separately struck a PMF headquarters in Jurf al Sakhr, north of Baghdad, which is a Kataib Hezbollah stronghold.[59] The strikes reportedly killed one PMF member and injured another. The United States and Israel have struck PMF headquarters in Jurf al Sakhr multiple times in recent days.[60] The combined force reportedly struck a PMF 50th Brigade checkpoint north of Mosul on March 1.[61] The PMF 50th Brigade is affiliated with Asaib Ahl al Haq.[62] The combined force reportedly also struck a PMF 30th Brigade headquarters in the Ninewa Plains on March 1, wounding two fighters.[63] The PMF 30th Brigade is affiliated with Kataib Hezbollah and Harakat Hezbollah al Nujaba.[64] The United States has previously conducted pre-emptive airstrikes targeting Iranian-backed Iraqi militias in Iraq to prevent the militias from launching attacks.[65]

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US President Donald Trump told CNN on March 2 that the United States' "big wave" of strikes on Iran is "coming soon."[66] US Secretary of State Marco Rubio similarly stated on March 2 that "the hardest hits are yet to come."[67] An unspecified senior US official told CNN on March 2 that the United States is preparing for a "major uptick" in strikes on Iran over the next 24 hours.[68] The official stated that the United States assesses that its strikes thus far have succeeded in weakening Iran's air defenses and that the next phase of US strikes will largely focus on Iran's missile production, drone, and naval capabilities.[69]

Supreme Leader Succession

Unspecified sources told anti-regime media on February 28 that the IRGC wanted a new

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supreme leader to be selected within hours of former Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei's death on February 28.[70] Iran has not announced a new supreme leader at the time of this writing.The IRGC also reportedly wants to circumvent the supreme leader selection process outlined in the constitution because the Assembly of Experts cannot convene to select a new leader due to ongoing US and Israeli strikes.[71] The Iranian constitution stipulates that the president, the judiciary chief, and a member of the Guardian Council will assume the responsibilities of the Supreme Leader until the Assembly of Experts convenes to select a new leader. The Iranian Expediency Discernment Council appointed Guardian Council member Ali Reza Arafi as the third member of the Leadership Council on March 1.[72] The IRGC is not a monolith, and it is unclear which faction of the IRGC this report was referring to. The combined force killed IRGC Commander Major General Mohammad Pakpour in airstrikes on February 28.[73] There are unconfirmed reports that IRGC Deputy Commander Brigadier General Ahmad Vahidi has replaced Pakpour.[74]

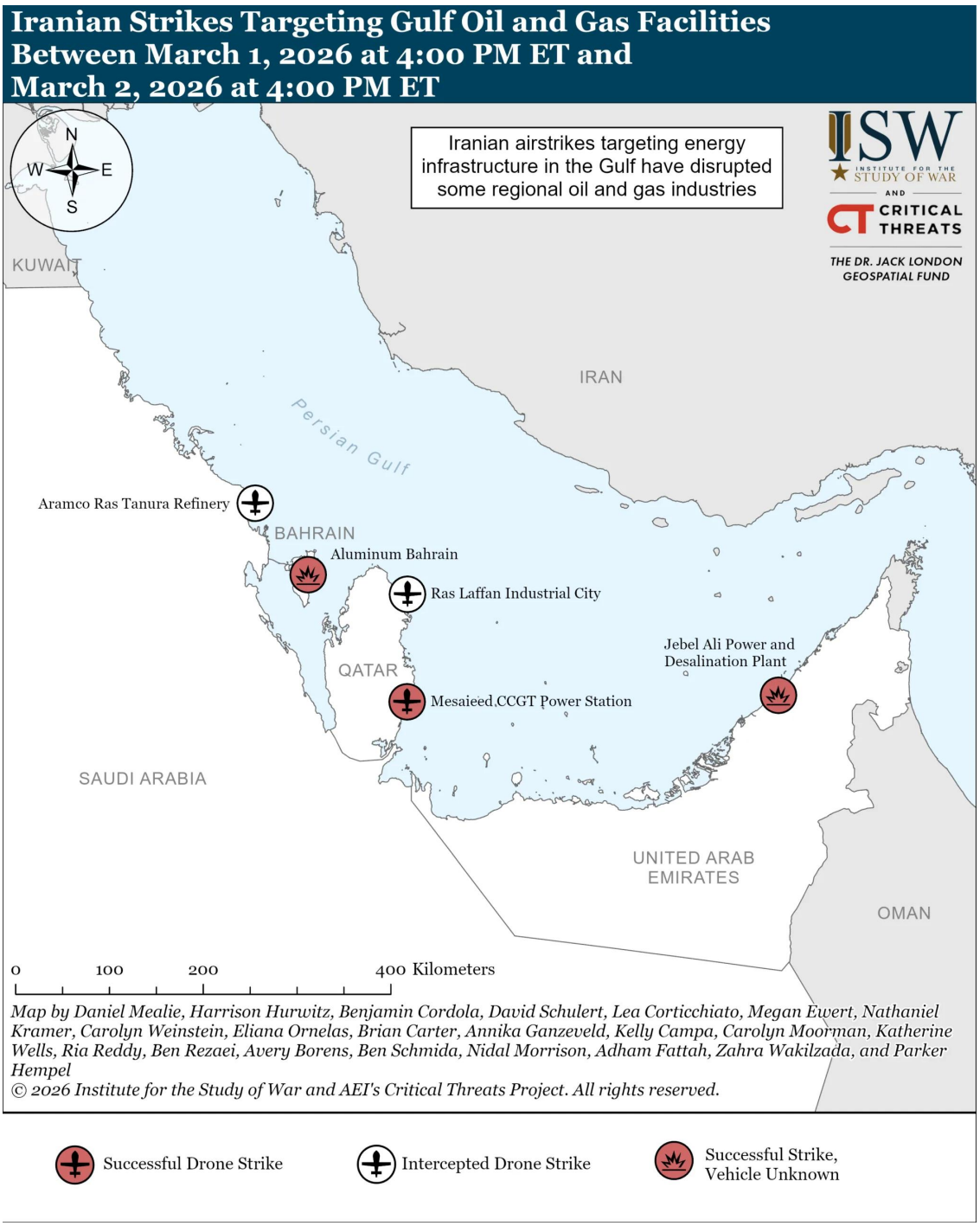
Iranian Retaliation

Iran continued to launch ballistic missile barrages at Israel at a relatively low rate on March 2. Iran conducted at least four missile barrages targeting Israel on March 1 and at least six missile barrages targeting Israel on March 2, compared to at least 20 missile barrages on February 28.[75] The IDF reported on March 2 that Iran is attempting to conduct larger and more coordinated missile attacks on Israel but is struggling to do so because of IDF strikes on Iranian missile launchers.[76] The combined forcehad destroyed around half of Iran's missile launchers as of March 1.[77] US and Israeli strikes on Iranian command-and-control networks may also be limiting Iran's ability to respond.

Iran continued to conduct drone and ballistic missile attacks targeting Gulf states. The United Arab Emirates (UAE) Ministry of Defense reported that Iran has launched 174 ballistic missiles and 689 drones at the UAE since the start of the conflict on February 28.[78] The ministry added that the UAE has intercepted 161 missiles and 645 drones, but that 13 missiles and 44 drones have impacted UAE territory. Iran targeted the Prince Sultan Airbase in Saudi Arabia.[79] The Prince Sultan Airbase is an active US Air Force air expeditionary base that currently hosts several US military support aircraft.[80] Iran also targeted the Ali al Salem Airbase in Kuwait, which hosts US forces.[81] The Iranian Khatam ol Anbia Central Headquarters spokesperson claimed that Iran launched 12 drones targeting Camp Arifjan in Kuwait, six drones and five ballistic missiles targeting a US "command and control center" in the UAE, and six drones targeting US naval facilities in Bahrain.[82]

Iranian attacks targeting energy infrastructure in the Gulf have disrupted some regional oil and gas industries. Qatar announced that it has ceased production of all liquefied natural gas (LNG) and associated products.[83] Qatar is responsible for approximately 20 percent of the global LNG supply.[84] State-owned QatarEnergy similarly halted its production of LNG due to Iranian drone attacks on its facilities in Ras Laffan Industrial City and Mesaieed Industrial City.[85] Saudi state-owned Saudi Aramco shut down its Ras Tanura refinery as a precautionary measure after Iranian drones attempted to strike the refinery on March 2.[86] The Ras Tanura oil refinery is Saudi Arabia's largest oil refinery, and the Ras Tanura complex is a vital export terminal for Saudi crude oil.[87] Several oil companies in Iraqi Kurdistan have similarly stopped productionat their oil fields as a precaution.[88] Natural gas and oil prices have increased 46 percent and 13 percent, respectively, as of March 2.[89] Oil prices are above $82 USD per barrel, which marks the highest price since January 2025.[90]

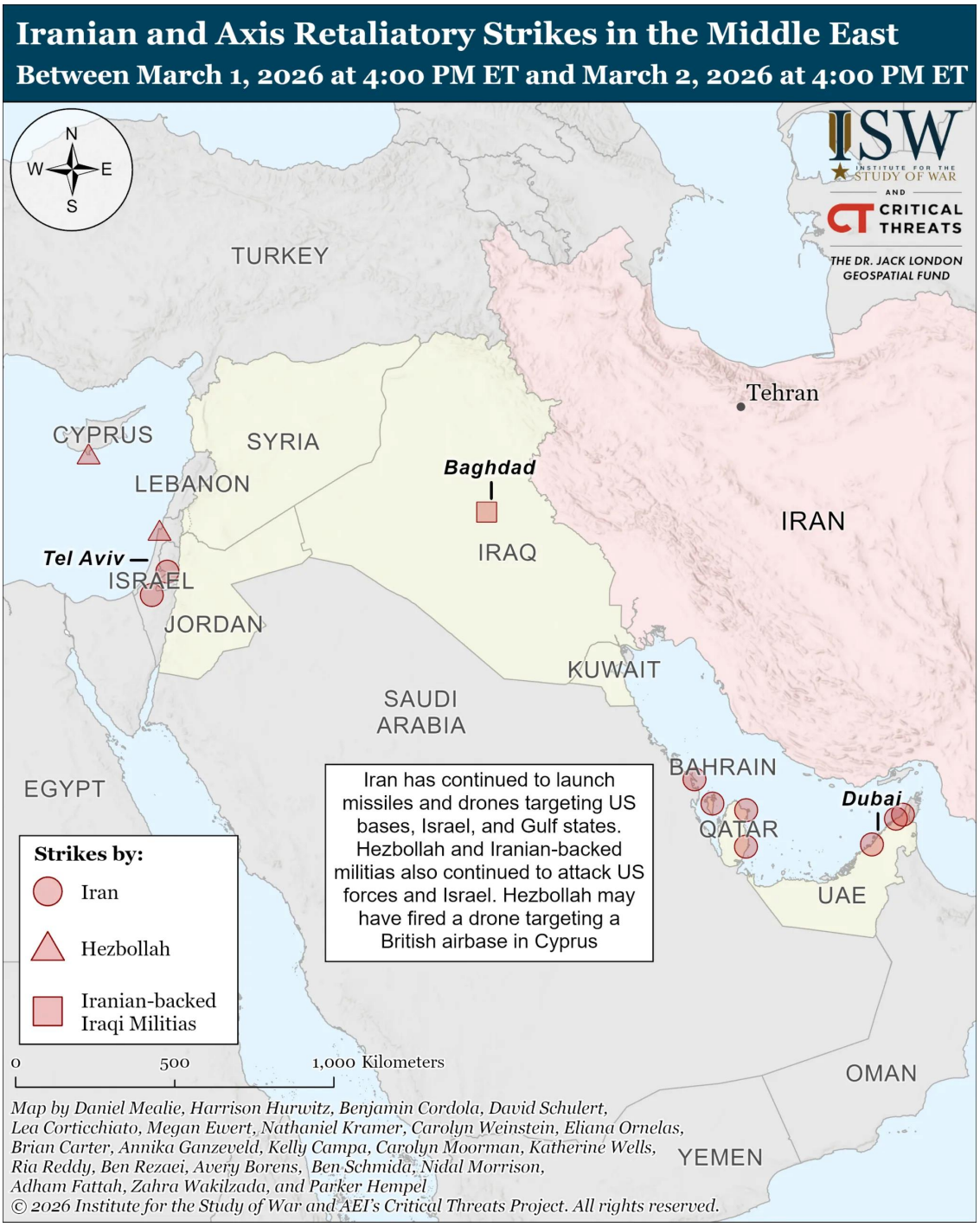
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Iran is attempting to disrupt international shipping through the Strait of Hormuz as part of a broader effort to impose a cost on the Gulf states. Iran likely seeks to push the Gulf states to pressure the United States and Israel to end their combined strike campaign against Iran. IRGC adviser to former Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei Brigadier General Ebrahim Jabbari threatened on March 2 to attack any ship that transits through the Strait of Hormuz and stated that not a "single drop of oil will leave the region."[91] The Iranian Khatam ol Anbia Central Headquarters spokesperson claimed on March 2 that Iranian forces launched two drones targeting the "US-allied," Honduras-flagged *Athe Nova* commercial oil tanker in the Strait of Hormuz, resulting in a fire on the tanker.[92] United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO) reported on March 1 that an unspecified actor launched two unmanned surface vessels (USV) and an unspecified projectile at an unspecified vessel 50 nautical miles north of Muscat, Oman, which forced the vessel's crew to evacuate the vessel.[93] Iran may have used USVs to attack the commercial vessel because USVs can inflict greater damage to vessels than

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unmanned aerial vehicles. Iran also reportedly launched two unspecified projectiles at the *Stena Imperative* oil tanker, which was docked in Bahrain, according to maritime security sources speaking to Reuters.[94] The attack caused a fire, which the crew quickly extinguished. The US Navy uses the *Stena Imperative* as a refueling tanker for US naval vessels in the region.[95] Iran previously attempted to seize the *Stena Imperative* with two fast-attack craft on February 3.[96] The Iranian Artesh separately claimed on March 2 that its naval and ground forces launched 15 cruise missiles at unspecified vessels in the northern Indian Ocean.[97] ISW-CTP cannot verify the Artesh claim.



Axis of Resistance Response

Hezbollah may have conducted a drone attack targeting a British airbase in Cyprus on March 2.[98] Hezbollah has not commented on or confirmed the attack at the time of this writing.

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Cypriot and British officials said that an Iranian Shahed drone struck the Royal Air Force Akrotiri Airbase in Cyprus, causing limited damage and no casualties.[99] Senior Cypriot officials told Reuters on March 2 that Hezbollah most likely fired the Shahed drone targeting the UK base.[100] Hezbollah has historically used Shahed drones to attack Israel.[101] Hezbollah's attack may have been a response to the United Kingdom's recent decision to allow the United States to use UK bases in the Middle East to intercept and destroy Iranian missiles.[102] The United Kingdom has several military bases in Gulf countries, including in Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Oman, and Bahrain.[103]

Some members of Iran's Axis of Resistance, specifically Lebanese Hezbollah and the Houthis, did not conduct any successful retaliatory attacks against Israel on March 2. Hezbollah launched one drone against Israel on March 2, which the IDF intercepted.[104] The Houthis have not conducted any retaliatory attacks against Israel at the time of this writing.The Houthis' continued inaction is notable given that the Houthis were the only Axis of Resistance member that participated in the June 2025 Israel-Iran War.[105] The Houthis could decide at any time to attack US interests or Israel in response to the killing of Iranian Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, however.

Iranian-backed Iraqi militias continue to conduct attacks and threaten to conduct attacks against US forces and Israel. The Islamic Resistance in Iraq, which is a coalition of Iranian-backed Iraqi militias, claimed on March 2 that its fighters conducted 28 attacks targeting "enemy bases" in Iraq and the region with dozens of drones and missiles.[106] The Islamic Resistance of Iraq also posted a video of its fighters launching missiles and drones at US bases in Iraq and the region.[107] Iran has provided its partner militias in Iraq with missiles and drones for years.[108] ISW-CTP has not observed any indications of successful militia missile attacks or interceptions of militia missile attacks at the time of this writing. Saraya Awliya al Dam, which is commonly believed to be a front group for larger Iraqi militias, claimed responsibility for targeting the US military's former Victory Base at Baghdad International Airport on March 1 with a "swarm of drones" in response to the combined force's killing of Iranian Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei.[109] The United States transferred control of the Victory Base to the Iraqi government in 2011, but many Iranian-backed actors continue to assert that the area is still a US base.[110] A security source confirmed to Iraqi media on March 2 that drones targeted the former US Victory Base near Baghdad International Airport and the Iraqi Special Operations Headquarters in Baghdad.[111] Iraqi air defense systems reportedly intercepted one drone near the airport, but another drone crashed into the Special Operations Headquarters.[112]

Iranian-backed Iraqi militias appear to be threatening to expand their attacks to regional countries that host US troops. Kataib Hezbollah claimed on March 2 that the fighter jets and drones that have attacked Iraq are based at US bases in Jordan.[113] Kataib Hezbollah also condemned the UAE and Saudi Arabia for allowing their "territory and capabilities" to "serve the Zionist-American project."[114] Harakat Hezbollah al Nujaba and Kataib Hezbollah claimed on March 2 that they launched ballistic missiles targeting US bases in Iraqi Kurdistan and Kuwait.[115] An Iraqi OSINT account claimed that Iranian-backed Iraqi militias attacked Saudi Arabia's Aramco but did not provide any evidence for this claim.[116] Iranian-backed Iraqi militias have previously attacked regional countries that host US forces, such as a January 2024 attack on a US outpost in Jordan that killed three US service members.[117]

NOTE: A version of the following text will also appear in CTP's March 3 Africa File Special Edition:

The Houthis could target Emirati, Israeli, or US military positions the Horn of Africa if it joins Iran's regional retaliatory campaign. Iran has attacked Israel, US bases in the Middle East, and all six Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries in response to the US-Israel strikes.[118] The UAE, followed by Kuwait and Qatar, have predominantly borne the brunt of the hundreds of Iranian ballistic missiles and

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drones launched at the Arabian Peninsula. The campaign aims to exploit relatively softer GCC defenses compared to Israel or US bases in the Arabian Peninsula to force the GCC to capitulate and pressure the United States to cease attacks on Iran and enter talks, despite the GCC countries refusing Israel and the United States permission to use their airspace to attack Iran.[119]

The Houthis would likely directly target Israel and the Gulf countries if they joined the campaign. The Houthis regularly used drones and missiles to target energy infrastructure in Saudi Arabia and the UAE from 2015 to 2022, until a UN-mediated truce entered effect in April 2022.[120] The Houthis then shifted their focus to attacking Israel and Red Sea shipping in response to the Israel-Hamas war in October 2023. The Houthis conducted several major drone and missile attacks on Israel and in the Red Sea throughout mid-2025, including surrounding the June 2025 Israel-Iran War, before voluntarily slowing and eventually halting attacks in relation to the US-brokered ceasefire in Gaza.[121]

The Houthis could target Emirati or Israeli military positions in the de facto independent Somaliland region as part of a Red Sea attack campaign. The UAE has upgraded military facilities in the Somaliland port city of Berbera, which lies less than 200 miles from the southern entrance to the Red Sea at the Bab el Mandeb Strait in recent years. Emirati facilities include a modern military port, a deepwater dock, and an airstrip with hangars and other facilities to support Emirati military operations in Yemen and the Horn of Africa.[122] The UAE helped facilitate Israeli recognition of Somaliland in December 2025, which CTP assessed partially aimed to boost Israeli strategic depth to counter the Houthis.[123] Israeli and Somaliland officials had discussed base options as part of recognition talks, and Somaliland officials confirmed in January that basing talks were still ongoing.[124] Agence France Press reported on March 2 that “it is possible that Israeli forces are already present in the Berbera military base” and quoted a Western official who said that “there is a widespread assumption that there is an Israeli military or security presence that is already in the country.”[125] Houthi leader Abdul Malik al Houthi warned after the recognition that any Israeli assets in Somaliland would be legitimate military targets.[126]

The Houthis could also target the US base in Djibouti—Camp Lemonnier—as part of a Red Sea attack campaign. Camp Lemonnier lies less than 100 miles from the Yemeni coast and hosts more than 4,000 US personnel who support counterterrorism and maritime security initiatives in the Red Sea and Horn of Africa. The multitude of foreign military bases in the area around Camp Lemonnier, which includes China, increases the risk of accidental collateral damage.[127] Analysts have previously noted that this risk, Djiboutian support for Palestine, and Djibouti’s non-confrontational approach to the Houthis have likely decreased Houthi incentives to target the base.[128]

The Houthis could also use their ties with al Qaeda’s Somali affiliate al Shabaab to increase disruptions to shipping in the greater Red Sea area. The Houthis have established ties with al Shabaab since 2024, cooperating on weapons smuggling, technical training, operational tactics, and logistic support.[129] Houthi support has included training on improvised explosive device and drone technology, and Somali security forces claimed that some Somali armed groups had acquired global positioning system (GPS) satellite devices to better track commercial vessels.[130] The Houthis lack command and control over al Shabaab, but al Shabaab has previously offered to increase lucrative piracy operations in the Gulf of Aden in exchange for Houthi support.[131] These attacks would be highly lucrative for al Shabaab and bolster its propaganda if it decides to claim them. A piracy campaign in the Gulf of Aden would strain the bandwidth of maritime security forces focusing on countering Houthi attacks in the Red Sea.

Iran could also conduct terror attacks against Emirati, Israeli, and US targets across Africa. The Iranian regime is facing an existential threat and its attacks on the GCC countries demonstrate a willingness to expand the conflict and attack relatively softer US-allied targets than Israel or US bases in the region. Iran has attempted to use its covert apparatus to attack US and allied personnel and across

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Africa as a form of horizontal escalation for US sanctions multiple times since 2013. Kenyan and Nigerian officials claimed to disrupt plots backed by the IRGC Quds Force and Lebanese Hezbollah in 2013 that aimed to attack British, Israeli, Saudi, and US targets in both African countries as the US tightened sanctions on the Iranian regime.[132]

Iran surged attack plots between 2019 and 2022 in response to heightened US sanctions. Anonymous Western intelligence officials told the *Telegraph* in June 2019 that former IRGC Quds Force Major General Qassem Soleimani had organized attack cells in the Central African Republic, Chad, Gambia, Ghana, Niger, and Sudan to attack Western targets in response to new US sanctions.[133] US intelligence exposed a potential Iranian plot to assassinate the US ambassador to South Africa in 2020 in retaliation for the US assassination of Soleimani.[134] Security forces also thwarted IRGC-QF-backed plots against Israeli tourists and Jewish centers in Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Senegal, and Tanzania in 2021 and US targets in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in 2022.[135]

Other Activity

US CENTCOM announced on March 2 that six US servicemembers have been killed in the war with Iran thus far.[136] The servicemembers were killed in an Iranian attack on Camp Arifjan in Kuwait on March 1.[137] Eighteen US service members have been seriously wounded in the war thus far, according to CENTCOM Spokesperson Captain Tim Hawkins.[138]

The Iranian regime sustained its internet blackout on March 2.[139] An Iranian OSINT account, citing an eyewitness, reported on March 2 that Basij forces in Sattarkhan neighborhood in Tehran City fired at several buildings after they heard Iranians chanting anti-regime slogans from their homes.[140] ISW-CTP has not observed any anti-regime protests during the war. The regime's internet shutdown during the December 2025-January 2026 protest movement reduced the spread of information from Iran, including reports and videos of protests.

Some Iranians are attempting to migrate to Turkey. A witness told Reuters on March 2 that "hundreds" of Iranians have crossed Iran's northwestern border to Turkey.[141] Reuters reported that Turkey and Iran mutually suspended operations at three border gates.[142] Travelers also told Reuters that border guards stopped Iranians from crossing into Turkey on March 1.[143] Bloomberg previously reported on February 24 that Turkish authorities made contingency plans to prepare for an influx of Iranian refugees, citing people familiar with the matter.[144] Turkey's plans reportedly included establishing refugee camps at the border and deploying forces into Iran to prevent mass migration in the event of a power vacuum in Iran.[145]



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Iran Update Morning Special Report, March 3, 2026

Avery Borens, Ben Rezaei, Kelly Campa, Annika Ganzeveld

Analyst Notes: Data Cutoff: 8:00 AM ET

The Institute for the Study of War (ISW) and the Critical Threats Project (CTP) at the American Enterprise Institute are publishing two updates daily to provide analysis on the war with Iran. The morning update will focus on US and Israeli strikes on Iran and Iran and the Axis of Resistance's response to the strikes. The evening update will be more comprehensive, covering events over the past 24-hour period and refining items discussed in the morning update.

Key Takeaways

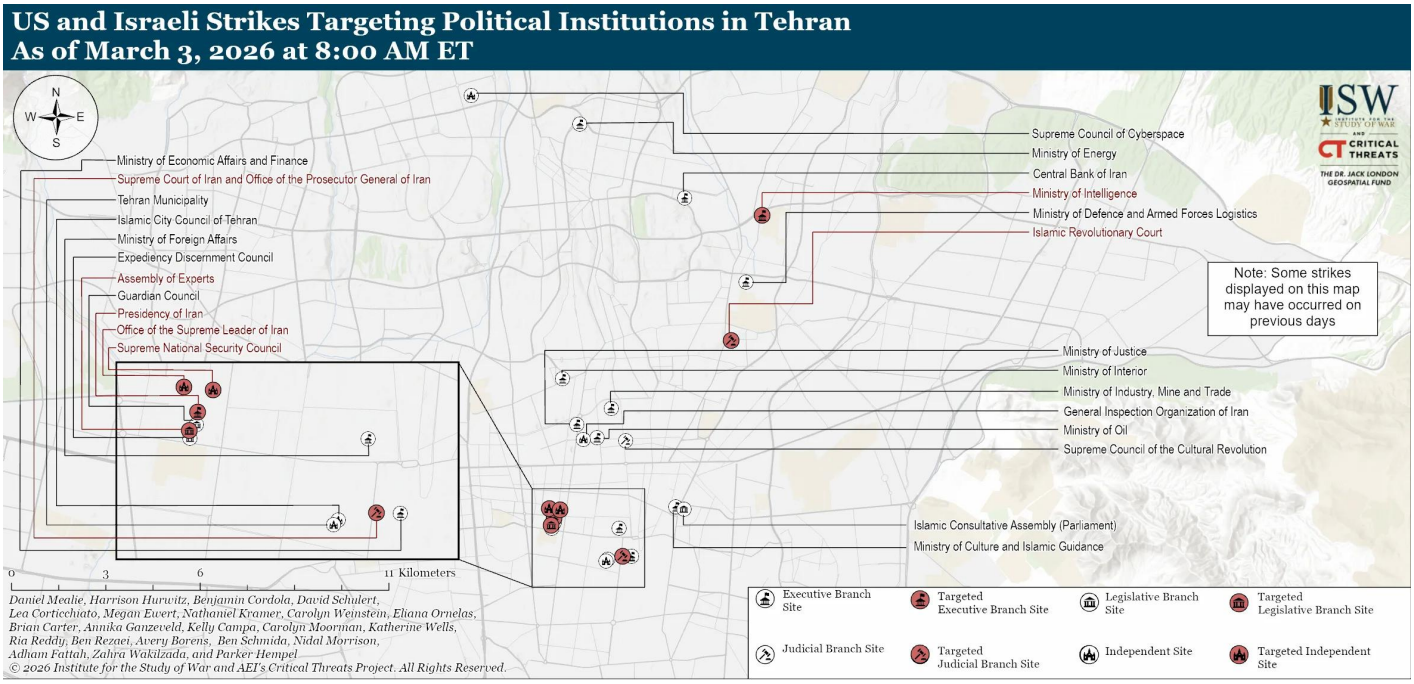
1. The United States and Israel continued to attack Iranian internal security institutions. The combined force reportedly destroyed the Marivan Law Enforcement Command (LEC) Headquarters in Marivan, Kurdistan Province, on March 3. This reported attack comes after the combined force struck the Kurdistan Province LEC Headquarters in Sanandaj, Kurdistan Province, on March 2. The attacks on internal security institutions in Kurdistan Province are notable given that significant protest activity took place in this province during the 2022-2023 Mahsa Amini protest movement.
2. The IDF confirmed that Iran launched a ballistic missile with a cluster munition warhead at Israel on March 1. A cluster munition warhead contains submunitions that disperse over a wide area and are intended to maximize damage. Iran previously launched a Khorramshahr-4 ballistic missile containing a cluster munition warhead at Israel during the June 2025 Israel-Iran War.
3. Iran continued to conduct drone and ballistic missile attacks targeting energy and maritime infrastructure in Gulf countries. An Iranian drone struck the Port of Salalah in Raysut, Oman, on March 3. Several Iranian drones struck a fuel tanker at the Duqm Port in Duqm, Oman, on March 3. Iranian attacks targeting energy infrastructure in the Gulf have continued to disrupt some regional oil and gas industries.
4. Two Iranian drones struck the US Embassy in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, on March 2. The Iranian drone attack caused a limited fire and minor material damage to the US Embassy. The Saudi Foreign Ministry condemned the Iranian drone attack on the embassy and stated that Saudi Arabia reserves the right to respond to the attack. A senior Israeli official told Israeli media on March 3 that Israel assesses that Saudi Arabia will soon strike Iran. US President Donald Trump responded to the attack on the US Embassy, stating "you [will] find [out] soon what the retaliation will be for the attack."
5. The Qatari Foreign Ministry denied reports that Qatar conducted strikes against Iran. Iran has launched around 101 ballistic missiles, 39 drones, and 3 cruise missiles at Qatar since the start of the war.

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6. Hezbollah has launched several attacks targeting IDF positions and forces in northern Israel since ISW-CTP's last data cutoff. The IDF launched "forward defense maneuver[s]" in southern Lebanon on March 3. The IDF has continued to conduct airstrikes targeting Hezbollah military sites and institutions in Lebanon since ISW-CTP's last data cutoff to degrade Hezbollah's ability to conduct retaliatory attacks against Israel.

US and Israeli Air Campaign

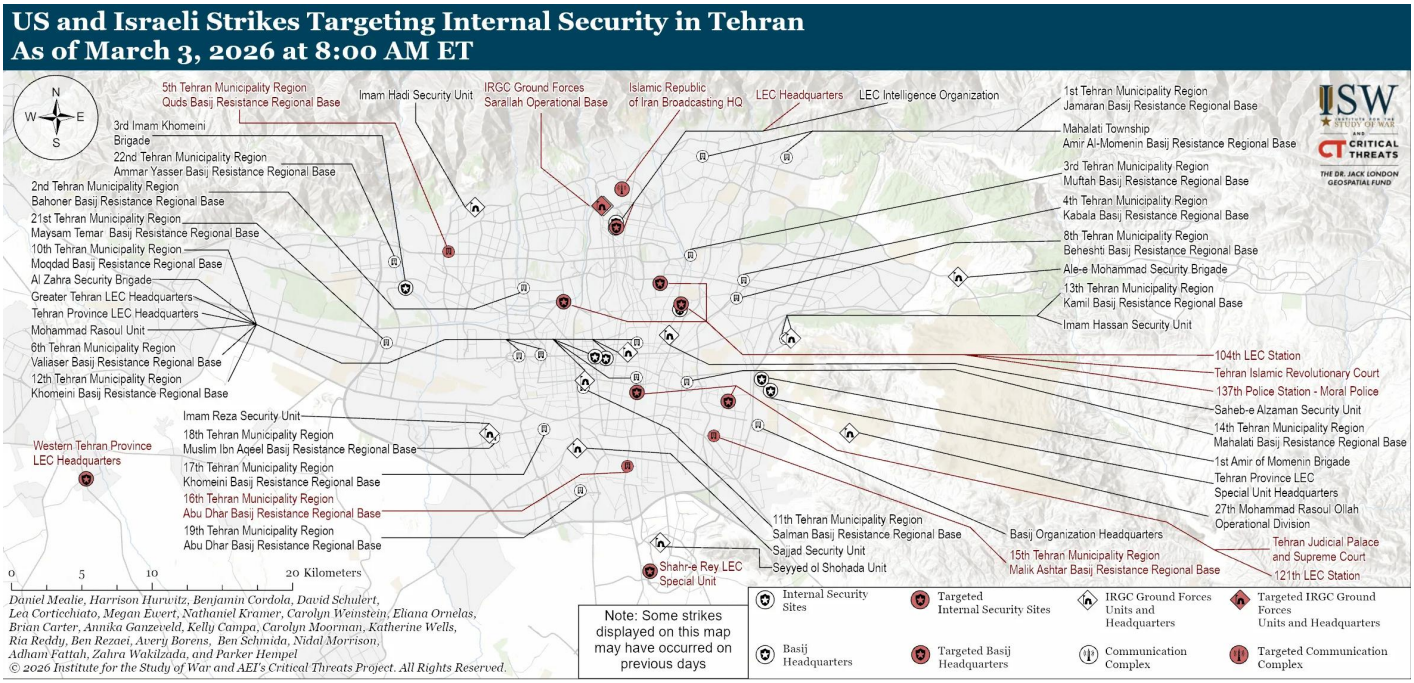
The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) conducted strikes on key Iranian political institutions in Tehran on March 3.[1] The IDF struck the Supreme National Security Council (SNSC), the Presidential Office, and the Assembly of Experts building in Tehran.[2] The SNSC is Iran's highest national security and foreign policy decision-making body.[3] The IDF also reportedly targeted an Assembly of Experts meeting in Qom, where the Assembly of Experts was convening to select the next Supreme Leader.[4] The Assembly of Experts is an 88-member elected clerical body tasked with appointing, supervising, and — at least in theory — removing the Supreme Leader.[5]



The United States and Israel continued to attack Iranian internal security institutions. The combined force reportedly destroyed the Marivan Law Enforcement Command (LEC) Headquarters in Marivan, Kurdistan Province, on March 3.[6]This reported attack comes after the combined force struck the Kurdistan Province LEC Headquarters in Sanandaj, Kurdistan Province, on March 2.[7] The LEC is the regime's premier internal security service and first line of defense against protests.[8] The attacks on internal security institutions in Kurdistan Province are notable given that significant protest activity took place in this province during the 2022-2023 Mahsa Amini protest movement.[9]

Geolocated imagery published on March 3 shows that the combined force destroyed the LEC Intelligence Organization headquarters in Tehran on March 1.[10] Open-source intelligence (OSINT) accounts also published videos of an explosion at an unspecified provincial intelligence headquarters in Ilam City, Ilam Province.[11]

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The combined force continued to target Iranian defense industrial sites. Geolocated imagery published on March 3 shows that the combined force struck the Esfahan Optics Industry in Esfahan.[12] The Esfahan Optics Industry is a subsidiary of Iran Electronic Industries, which operates under the Defense and Armed Forces Logistics Ministry.[13] The United States sanctioned the Esfahan Optics Industry in October 2023 for contributing to the development of Shahed-129 drones for Iran's Shahed Aviation Industries Research Center.[14] The IDF separately issued an evacuation order for the Hakimiyeh Industrial Zone in northwestern Tehran.[15] It is unclear what the IDF intends to target in this area, although many Iranian defense industrial sites are located in industrial zones.

The combined force continued to attack Iranian naval facilities to limit Iran's ability to conduct retaliatory attacks against international shipping and US Navy vessels. An Israeli analyst published imagery of fires at the Jask Port, which is home to the Artesh Navy 2nd Naval District.[16] The Artesh Navy 2nd Naval District moved its headquarters from Bushehr, which is located in the Persian Gulf, to Jask, which is located south of the Strait of Hormuz, in October 2008.[17] Iran also opened an oil pipeline between Goreh, Bushehr Province, and Jask in May 2021 that is meant to enable Iran to export oil without having to transit vessels through the Strait of Hormuz.[18]

The US-Israeli combined force continued to degrade Iran's ballistic missile and drone infrastructure in Iran. US-Israeli strikes targeted an Iranian drone facility in Kermanshah Province on March 3.[19] Satellite imagery confirms strikes on the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) drone base in Mahidasht, west of Kermanshah.[20] Israel previously targeted the base during the June 2025 Israel-Iran War.[21] US-Israeli strikes separately targeted Iranian missile bases in Esfahan and Fars provinces to disrupt Iran's ability launch missile barrages against Israel and US forces.[22] US Central Command (CENTCOM) previously reported that US B-1 bombers struck targets in Iran on March 1 to degrade Iran's ballistic missile capabilities.[23]

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Saudi Arabia-based Al Arabiya reported on March 3 that Israel conducted a ground operation inside Iran involving Mossad operatives and special forces.[24] The report stated that the operation took place during the night but did not provide details about its objective, scope, or outcome.[25] ISW-CTP cannot verify this claim.

Iranian Retaliation

Iran has continued to launch ballistic missile barrages at Israel since ISW-CTP's last data cutoff on March 2. Iran conducted at least four missile barrages targeting Israel between March 2 at 4:00 PM ET and March 3 at 8:00 AM ET.[26] ISW-CTP did not observe any reports of impacts.

The IDF confirmed that Iran launched a ballistic missile with a cluster munition warhead at

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Israel on March 1.[27] A cluster munition warhead contains submunitions that disperse over a wide area and are intended to maximize damage.[28] Iran previously launched a Khorramshahr-4 ballistic missile containing a cluster munition warhead at Israel during the June 2025 Israel-Iran War.[29] The combined force struck a missile base in Yazd Province on March 1 that Iran used to launch a ballistic missile containing a cluster munition warhead at Israel during the June war.[30]

Iran continued to conduct drone and ballistic missile attacks targeting energy and maritime infrastructure in Gulf countries. An Iranian drone struck the Port of Salalah in Raysut, Oman, on March 3.[31] The Port of Salalah is an important transshipment hub that handles a variety of cargo, including locally mined industrial minerals, liquefied natural gas, and fuel.[32] Several Iranian drones struck a fuel tanker at the Duqm Port in Duqm, Oman, on March 3.[33] Iranian drones previously struck Duqm Port on March 1.[34] Duqm Port is a major commercial port that serves as a key logistics and maritime hub in the Arabian Sea for regional trade and energy transport.[35] The port is a valuable asset for US logistics and shipping because the port can host military roll-on/roll-off ships, which are crucial for moving large supplies and equipment to and from the theater.[36] The US Navy has had regular access to the port since 2019.[37] Iranian drone fragments caused a massive fire at the al Fujairah Oil Terminal in Fujairah, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), on March 3.[38] The terminal is a critical global energy hub, serving as the world's third-largest oil bunkering hub and a major oil storage center.[39]

Iranian attacks targeting energy infrastructure in the Gulf have continued to disrupt some regional oil and gas industries. State-owned QatarEnergy announced on March 3 that it has halted its downstream production of several products, including urea, polymers, methanol, and aluminum.[40] Iraq also announced the halt of oil production at the Rumaila oil field, which is operated by the British Petroleum (BP) PLC.[41] A person "familiar with the operation" told Bloomberg on March 3 that the field is closing because it is running out of storage space, as its oil tankers have struggled to exit the Persian Gulf due to the war.[42]

Iran continued to conduct drone and ballistic missile attacks targeting US forces and sites in Gulf countries. Two Iranian drones struck the US Embassy in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, on March 2.[43] The Iranian drone attack caused a limited fire and minor material damage to the US Embassy.[44] The Saudi Foreign Ministry condemned the Iranian drone attack on the embassy and stated that Saudi Arabia reserves the right to respond to the attack.[45] A senior Israeli official told Israeli media on March 3 that Israel assesses that Saudi Arabia will soon strike Iran.[46] US President Donald Trump responded to the attack on the US Embassy, stating "you [will] find [out] soon what the retaliation will be for the attack."[47]

The IRGC claimed on March 2 that it conducted at least 10 drone attacks targeting US Camp Arifjan in Kuwait.[48] It is unclear whether the IRGC was claiming responsibility for previous attacks on the base or whether it was announcing new attacks. Iran previously struck Camp Arifjan on March 1, killing six US servicemembers.[49] The IRGC claimed that it launched 20 drones and three missiles targeting the Isa Airbase in Bahrain.[50] The IRGC claimed that the attack destroyed the airbase's main command building and set fuel tanks on fire.[51] Iran claimed that it conducted drone attacks targeting al Udeid Airbase in Qatar on March 3.[52]

Axis of Resistance Response

Iranian-backed Iraqi militia Saraya Awliya al Dam claimed on March 2 that its fighters launched a "squadron" of drones targeting a hotel in Erbil, Iraqi Kurdistan, that housed US forces.[53] Saraya Awliya al Dam is widely considered to be a facade group and has historically claimed

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attacks on US convoys and Iraqi Kurdistan.[54] Saraya Awliya al Dam previously claimed that its fighters attacked a US base in Erbil with drones in support of Iran on March 1.[55]

Gulf Response

The Qatari Foreign Ministry denied reports that Qatar conducted strikes against Iran.[56] Iran has launched around 101 ballistic missiles, 39 drones, and 3 cruise missiles at Qatar since the start of the war.[57] Qatar intercepted Iranian missiles and drones targeting Hamad International Airport in Doha on March 3.[58] Qatar shot down two Iranian Su-24 aircraft on March 2.[59] The Qatari Foreign Ministry stated on March 3 that there is currently no contact between Qatar and Iran.[60] The Qatari Foreign Ministry also denied that Iranian attacks on the Gulf countries will "lead to a return to the negotiating table."[61]

Lebanon

Hezbollah has launched several attacks targeting IDF positions and forces in northern Israel since ISW-CTP's last data cutoff. Hezbollah launched a "squadron" of drones targeting radar sites and control centers at the Israeli Air Force (IAF) Ramat David Airbase in Ramat David, northern Israel, on March 2.[62] Hezbollah launched a "squadron" of drones targeting the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) Meron Air Operations and Control Base in Mount Meron, northern Israel, on March 3.[63] Hezbollah claimed that its attack damaged a radar and a command building at the base.[64] Hezbollah claimed that it launched a large rocket salvo targeting the Nafah Base in the Israeli-controlled Golan Heights on March 3.[65] Hezbollah claimed that the Nafah Base is the headquarters for the IDF 210th Territorial Infantry Division, which operates along Israel's border with Lebanon and Syria.[66] Hezbollah launched a rocket barrage targeting an IDF site in Maayan Baruch, northern Israel, on March 3.[67] The IDF has not confirmed or commented on any of these attacks at the time of this writing. The IDF intercepted two drones launched from Lebanon on March 2.[68]

Hezbollah issued a statement on March 2 in which it explained its decision to enter the war.[69] Hezbollah claimed that all political and diplomatic efforts to halt Israeli operations in Lebanon and compel Israel to comply with the November 2024 Israel-Hezbollah ceasefire agreement had failed. Hezbollah declared that it must "put an end to the aggression by all available means, with decisive action and effective measures."[70] Hezbollah claimed that its attacks against Israel are "defensive act[s] and a legitimate right."[71] Hezbollah's statement underscores the group's long-standing (and incorrect) narrative about its role in defending Lebanon. Hezbollah has consistently initiated wars against Israel while using the excuse that Lebanon needs Hezbollah to "defend" it against Israel to prevent its disarmament.[72] Hezbollah's raison d'être is the destruction of the Israeli state, which requires offensive wars against the Israeli state at places and times of Hezbollah's choosing.[73]

The IDF launched "forward defense maneuver[s]" in southern Lebanon on March 3.[74] Israeli Defense Minister Israel Katz and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu authorized the IDF on March 3 to advance into southern Lebanon to seize "controlling areas" to prevent Hezbollah attacks on northern Israel.[75] The IDF said that its 91st Territorial Division is operating in southern Lebanon and is holding several points in the area to strengthen Israel's forward defense.[76] The IDF noted that it is working to create "an additional layer of security" for northern Israeli residents.[77] The IDF previously issued several evacuation warnings for residents located along the Israel-Lebanon border.[78]

The IDF has continued to conduct airstrikes targeting Hezbollah military sites and institutions

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in Lebanon since ISW-CTP's last data cutoff to degrade Hezbollah's ability to conduct retaliatory attacks against Israel. The IDF stated on March 3 that it struck over 160 Hezbollah targets, including Radwan fighters and military command centers, in southern Lebanon over the past day.[79] The IDF conducted a wave of strikes targeting Hezbollah command centers, weapons depots, and satellite communication components in Beirut on March 3.[80] The IDF struck the Hezbollah-owned al Manar television station and the Hezbollah-owned al Nour radio station in Beirut on March 3.[81] The IDF said that Hezbollah used these sites to conduct operations, gather intelligence, and disseminate propaganda.[82] The IDF confirmed that it killed the following individuals:

- Adham Adnan al Othman.[83] Othman was a Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) commander in PIJ's Lebanon sector. The IDF said that Othman served in this role for several years, during which he was responsible for promoting and executing attacks against the IDF and Israel. Othman trained and recruited fighters and acquired weapons for Hezbollah. Othman also managed Hezbollah's smuggling via the Syria-Lebanon border and the group's activities against the IDF in southern Lebanon.
- Reza Khazai.[84] Khazai was the Chief of Staff of the IRGC Quds Force's Lebanon Corps and served as Hezbollah's "military buildup chief." The IDF said that Khazai was a central figure in Hezbollah's reconstitution efforts and was responsible for coordinating between Hezbollah and Iran. Khazai oversaw Hezbollah's acquisition of Iranian weapons and equipment, Hezbollah's weapons production plans, and the implementation of Hezbollah's reconstitution plan. Khazai also helped restore Iran's smuggling routes from Iran to Hezbollah.

Israeli media reported that the IDF also killed the IRGC Quds Force's Lebanon Corps Commander Dawood Ali Zada.[85] The IDF has not confirmed Zada's death at the time of this writing.

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Iran Update Evening Special Report, March 3, 2026

Avery Borens, Ben Rezaei, Benjamin Schmida, Adham Fattah, Carolyn Moorman, Katherine Wells, Zahra Wakilzada, Nidal Morrison, Brian Carter, Kelly Campa, Annika Ganzeveld

Analyst Notes: Data Cutoff: 8:00 PM ET.

The Institute for the Study of War (ISW) and the Critical Threats Project (CTP) at the American Enterprise Instituteare publishing two updates daily to provide analysis on the war with Iran. The morning update will focus on US and Israeli strikes on Iran and Iran and the Axis of Resistance's response to the strikes. The evening update will be more comprehensive, covering events over the past 24-hour period and refining items discussed in the morning update.

Key Takeaways

1. The combined US-Israeli force has designed its campaign to destroy Iran's ballistic missile capabilities before the force depletes its interceptor stockpiles. The destruction of missile launchers mitigates the risk that either the United States or Israel will run out of interceptors by limiting Iran's ability to launch missiles in the first place. The decrease in Iranian missile attacks against Israel and the UAE strongly suggests that the effort to destroy ballistic missile launchers has had considerable success.
2. The IDF struck key decision-making institutions on March 3, including the Assembly of Experts building in Tehran, as part of an effort to disrupt senior decision-making. The Assembly of Experts is an 88-member clerical body that is responsible for appointing and supervising the Supreme Leader, according to the Iranian constitution. Strikes that disrupt or prevent the Assembly of Experts from fulfilling its constitutional duty to select the next Supreme Leader would undermine the legitimacy of the regime. The regime is based on the principle of Velayat-e Faqih, in which a jurist, the Supreme Leader, controls Iran.
3. Iranian leaders have devolved powers to lower-level officials in response to the combined force's strikes targeting senior officials and central decision-making institutions, likely to ensure continued state functions despite disruptions to central Iranian leadership.
4. The IDF continued to strike sites associated with Iran's nuclear program, including facilities linked to weaponization research conducted by Iranian nuclear scientists.
5. Iran continued to conduct drone and ballistic missile attacks targeting US forces and sites in Gulf countries, which has prompted two US embassies to close.
6. The United States and Israel continued to strike Iranian-backed Iraqi militias on March 2 and 3 to degrade their ability to conduct retaliatory attacks against US forces and Israel.

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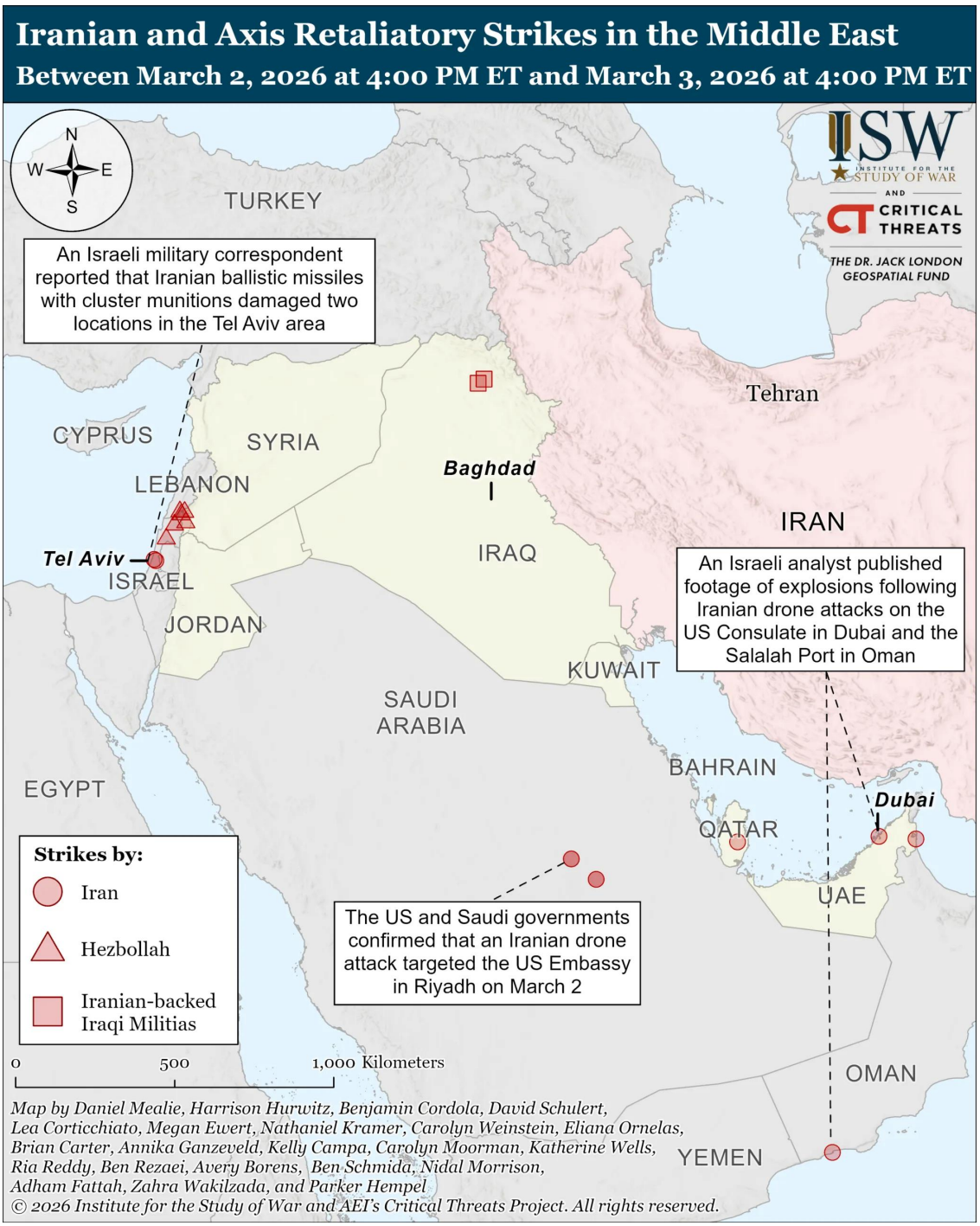
Toplines

The combined force has designed its campaign to destroy Iran's ballistic missile capabilities before the force depletes its interceptor stockpiles. Both Trump and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu have emphasized that they seek to degrade Iran's ballistic missile program.[1]Both leaders hope to protect their respective interests by preventing Iran from rebuilding its ballistic missile program, to be sure, but the strikes against ballistic missile launchers also have the immediate effect of preventing further Iranian missile launches that require interceptors to stop. The destruction of these launchers mitigates the risk that either the United States or Israel will run out of interceptors by limiting Iran's ability to launch missiles in the first place.

The decrease in Iranian missile attacks against Israel strongly suggests that the effort to destroy ballistic missile launchers has had considerable success. The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) assessed on March 3 that the combined force has destroyed around 300 launchers since the war began.[2] Israel's public broadcaster and other open sources reported that missile attacks on Israel have decreased sharply, which—combined with the IDF assessment that it has destroyed 300 Iranian launchers—strongly suggests that the effort to destroy launchers has been successful.[3] The number of missiles targeting the United Arab Emirates (UAE) has similarly fallen sharply, which suggests that Iran is also experiencing challenges with launching its short-range ballistic missiles.[4] The UAE, like Israel, has faced hundreds of missile attacks.

Iran continued to conduct drone and ballistic missile attacks targeting US forces and sites in Gulf countries, which has prompted two US embassies to close. At least one Iranian drone struck the US Consulate in Dubai, the UAE, on March 3.[5] The drone attack started a fire at the consulate, which Emirati emergency services extinguished, but did not cause casualties.[6] The drone attack on the US Consulate in Dubai follows two Iranian drone strikes on the US Embassy in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, on March 2.[7] Two unspecified sources told the *Washington Post* that one of the Iranian drones reportedly struck the CIA's station at the embassy during the Riyadh attack. The State Department closed the US Embassy in Riyadh on March 3 following the attacks.[8] Two US officials separately told the *New York Times* that an Iranian drone struck the US Embassy in Kuwait on March 2.[9] The US Embassy in Kuwait did not confirm the strike but said that it would close until further notice, citing "regional tensions."[10] Two diplomatic sources told AFP that several Iranian drone strikes damaged the US Embassy in Kuwait, while a second Kuwait-based diplomat said that the building had been struck directly.[11] Iran previously struck Camp Arifjan in Kuwait on March 1, killing six US servicemembers.[12] Iran has repeatedly targeted and struck US forces and sites in Gulf countries since the conflict began on February 28.[13]

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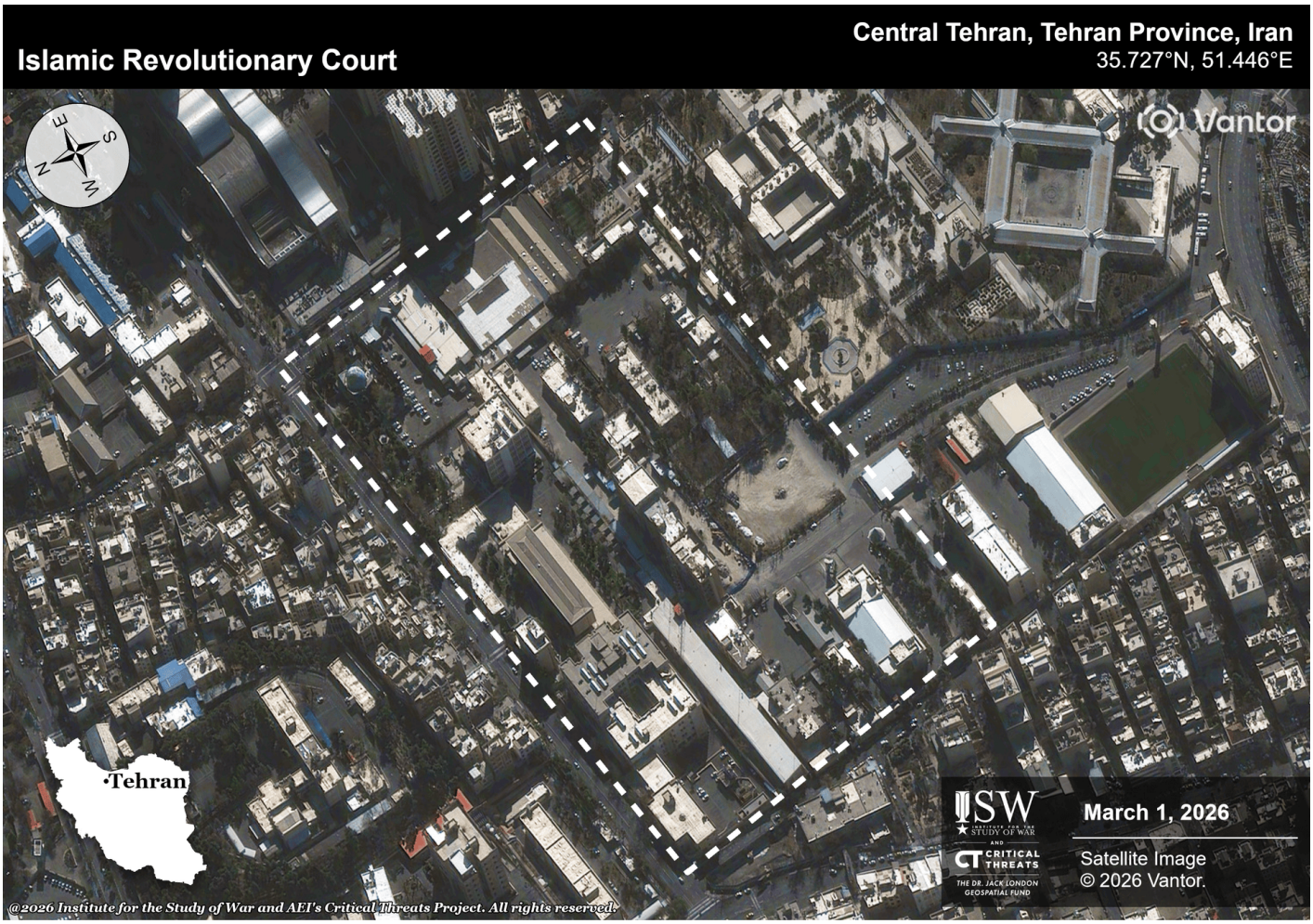
Iran continued to launch ballistic missile barrages at Israel at a relatively low rate on March 3. Iran launched at least six missile barrages at Israel on March 3.[14] Iran launched the same number of barrages on March 2, compared to at least 20 missile barrages on February 28.[15] An Iranian ballistic missile cluster munition warhead landed near Tel Aviv, Israel, injuring at least 12 people.[16] Iran previously fired ballistic missiles with cluster munition warheads during the 12-day war.[17] NBC News reported that Iranian ballistic missiles have killed at least 11 people and injured over 1,000 others to varying degrees in Israel since February 28.[18]

The consistently low level of Iranian ballistic missile barrages and impacts in Israel likely reflects the continued degradation of Iran's ballistic missile capabilities by the combined force. The IDF said that it has destroyed 300 Iranian missile launchers since the conflict began, which is consistent with an Israeli media report of a 70 percent drop in Iranian missile fire toward Israel.[19] A nuclear analyst separately observed on March 3 that Iran's expansion of the war to the Gulf has increased the number of air defense

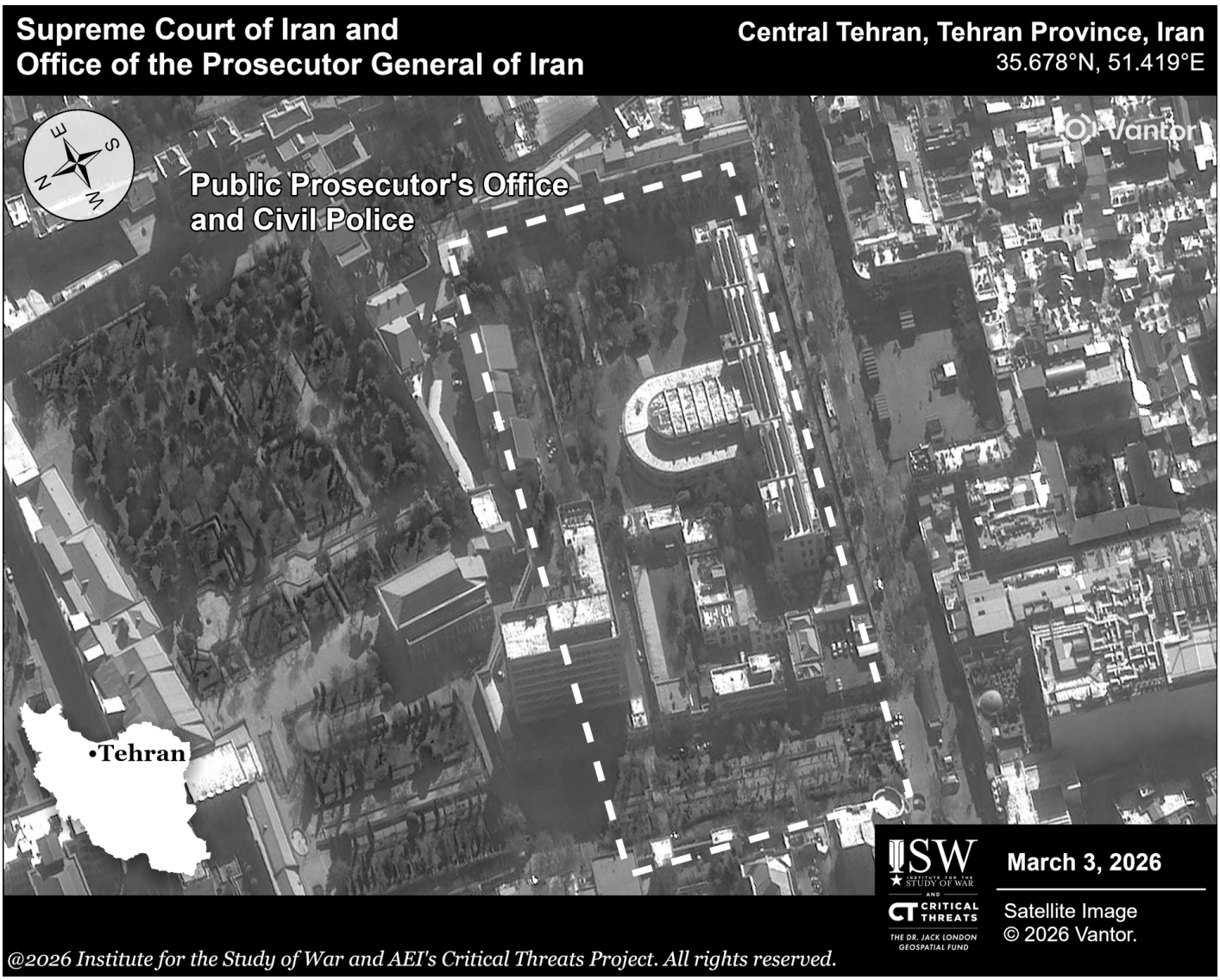
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systems Iran must attrit while simultaneously continuing to lose missile launchers due to combined force strikes.[20] The IAF separately announced that it has successfully intercepted over 100 Iranian drones launched at Israel since the conflict began.[21]

The IDF struck key decision-making institutions on March 3 as part of an effort to disrupt senior decision-making. The IDF struck the Supreme National Security Council (SNSC), the Presidential Office, and the Assembly of Experts building in Tehran on March 3.[22] Israeli media reported that around 100 fighter jets dropped over 250 bombs on Iran's "leadership complex," which contains the above sites.[23] The SNSC is Iran's highest national security and foreign policy decision-making body.[24] The attack on the SNSC follows earlier US-Israeli strikes that killed senior officials who were members of the council, including former Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) Commander Major General Mohammad Pakpour and former Armed Forces General Staff (AFGS) Chief Major General Abdol Rahim Mousavi.[25] The Assembly of Experts is an 88-member clerical body that is responsible for appointing and supervising the Supreme Leader, according to the Iranian constitution.[26] Strikes that disrupt or prevent the Assembly of Experts from fulfilling its constitutional duty to select the next Supreme Leader would undermine the legitimacy of the regime because the regime is based on the principle of Velayat-e Faqih, in which a jurist, the Supreme Leader, controls Iran.

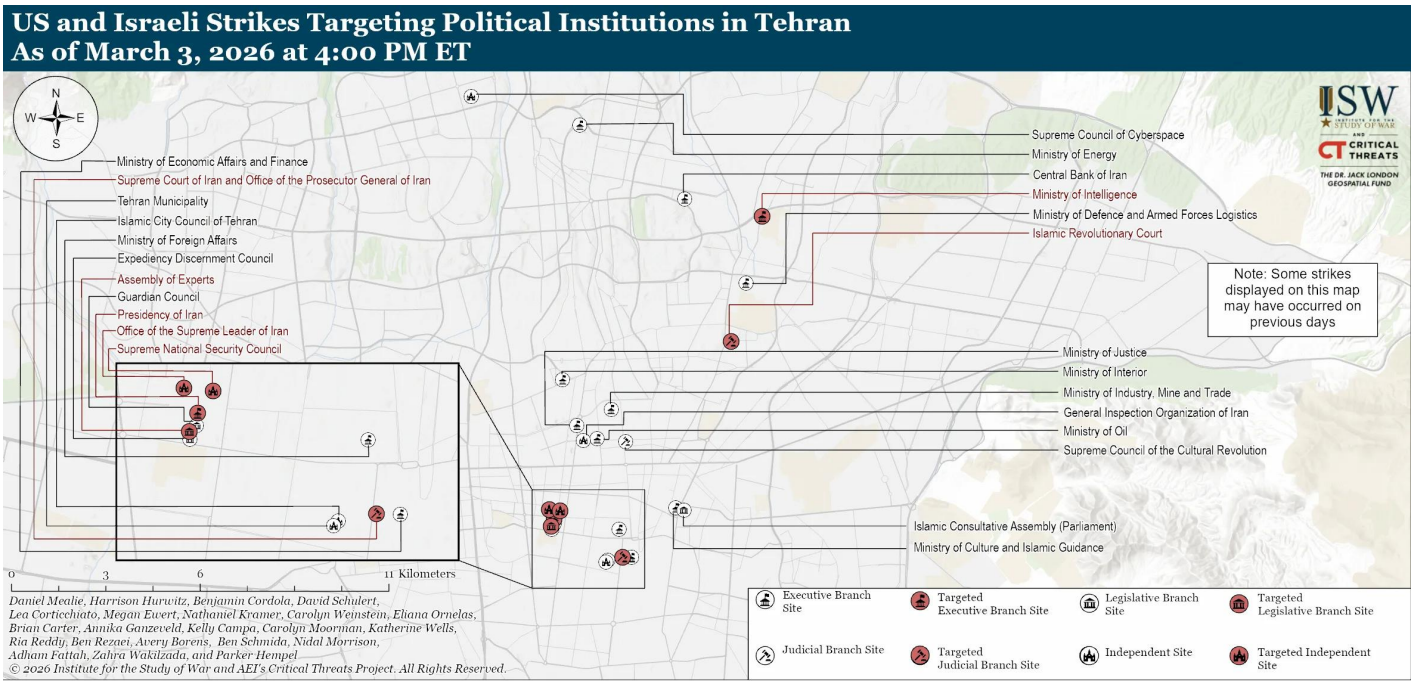


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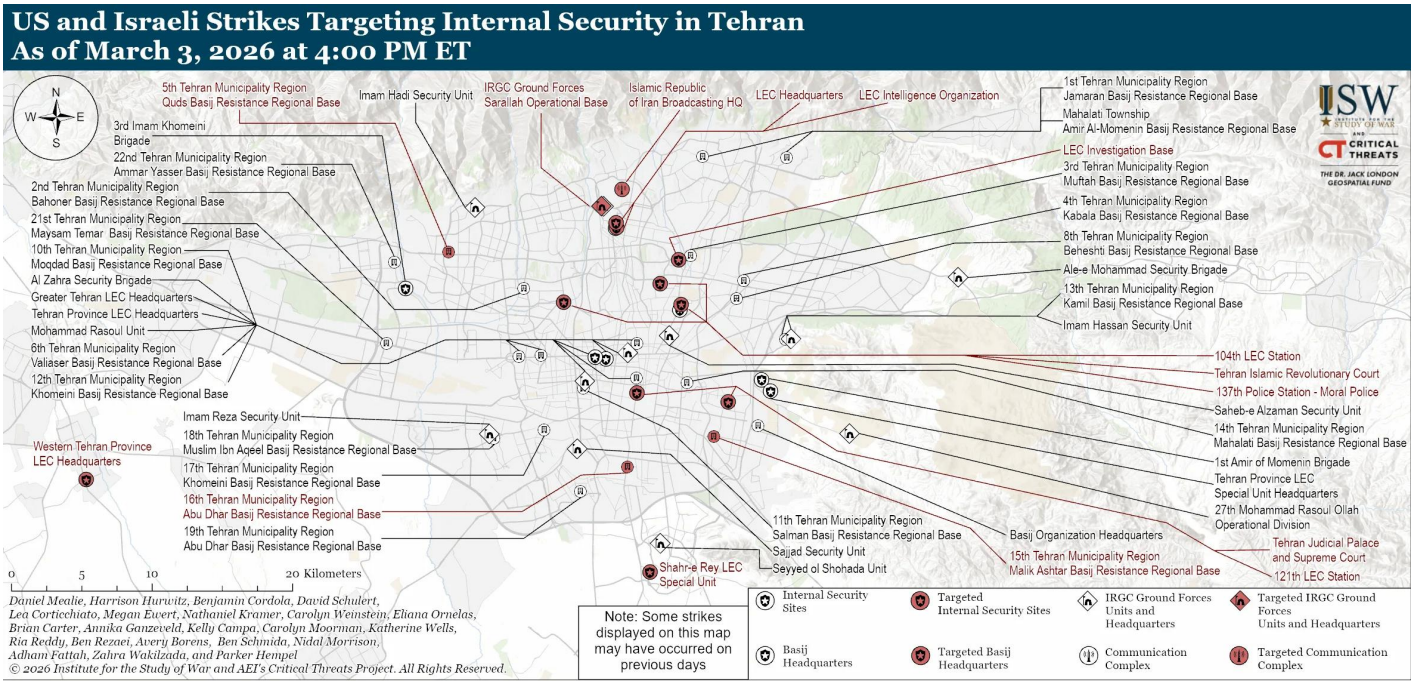




Iranian leaders have devolved powers to lower-level officials in response to the combined force’s strikes

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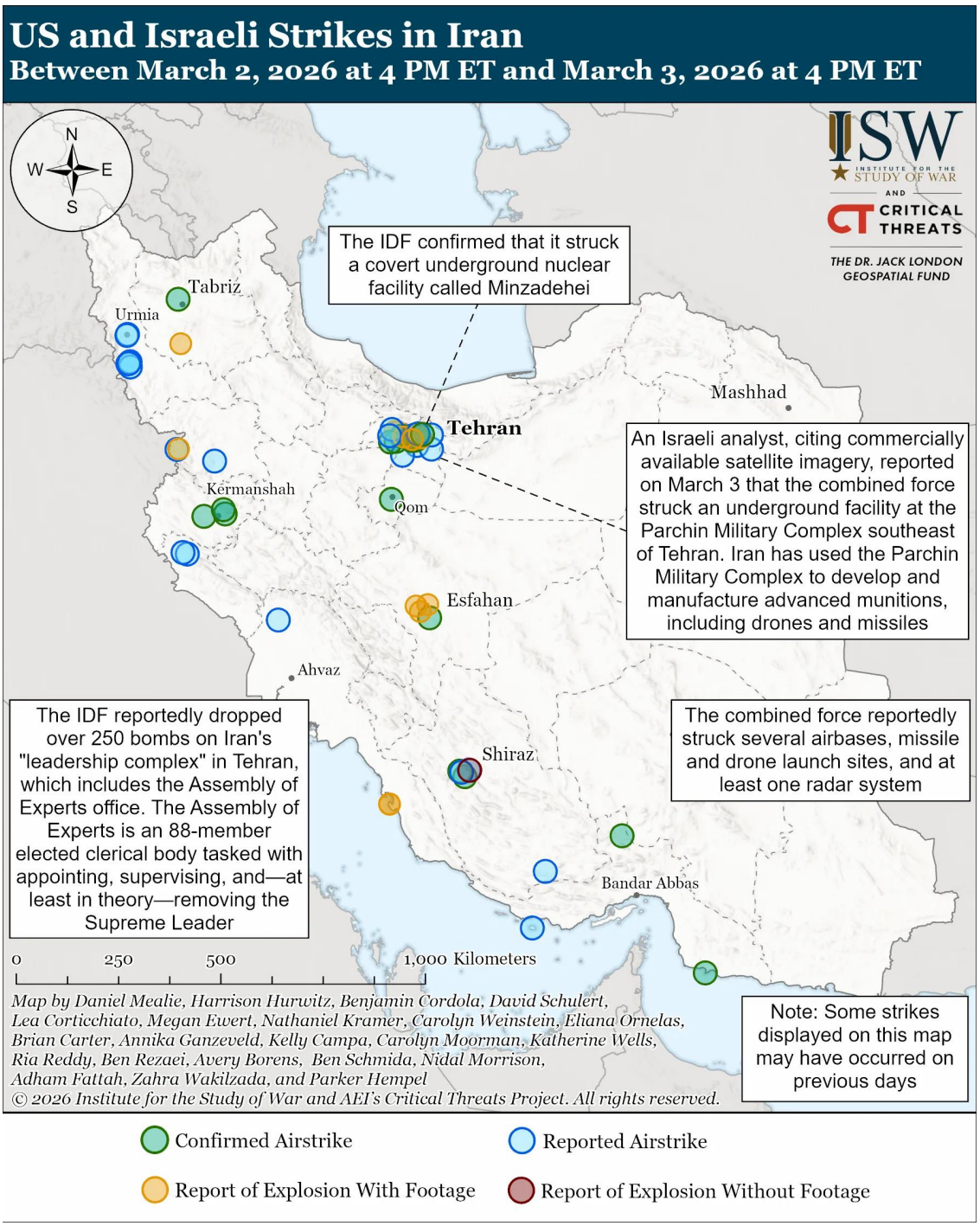
targeting senior officials and central decision-making institutions. President Masoud Pezeshkian stated on March 3 that the central government has delegated authorities to provincial governors so that they can make faster decisions based on local conditions.[27] These authorities likely include administrative and economic decision-making powers and broader executive authority to ensure continued state functions despite disruptions to central Iranian leadership.[28]



US and Israeli Air Campaign

The United States has struck over 1,700 Iranian targets since February 28.[29] US Central Command (CENTCOM) confirmed on March 3 that US B-52 strategic bombers are operating in Iran.[30]

The Israeli Air Force (IAF) announced that it has conducted 1,600 sorties into Iranian territory since the start of the war on February 28.[31] An IDF spokesperson said that the IDF has dropped over 4,000 munitions on Iranian targets since February 28.[32] The spokesperson noted that the IDF dropped the same number of munitions on Iran during the entirety of the 12-day war.[33]



The IDF continued to strike sites associated with Iran's nuclear program, including facilities linked to weaponization research conducted by Iranian nuclear scientists. The IDF reported on March 3 that it struck the covert "Minzadehei" compound in Tehran Province, where Iranian nuclear scientists sought to develop "a key component for nuclear weapons."[34] The strike comes after the combined force struck the Natanz Nuclear Facility in Esfahan Province on March 2.[35] The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) confirmed on March 3 that recent satellite imagery shows damage to entrance buildings at Natanz's underground Fuel Enrichment Plant.[36] The IAEA stated that the strikes caused no radiological consequences.[37] Israel previously struck Natanz during the Israel-Iran War, destroying the Pilot Fuel Enrichment Plant (PFEP) and damaging electrical substations and support buildings that supplied power to the site.[38] The PFEP housed more than 1,700 centrifuges. The United States also targeted Natanz during the June war.[39]

The combined force has continued to degrade Iranian air defense capabilities in order to

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maintain air superiority over parts of Iran. The combined US-Israeli force established air superiority over Tehran on March 2.[40] The combined force struck Iranian radars on March 3 that were likely components of Iran's integrated air defense system. Satellite imagery of Imam Khomeini International Airport, south of Tehran, showed a destroyed radar dome near the airport's airfield.[41] Anti-regime media also reported a strike on a radar on Kish Island in the Persian Gulf on March 3.[42] Local footage from the aftermath of the strike showed damage to a steel radar tower.[43] The combined force previously reportedly struck a radar on Kish Island on February 28.[44]

The combined force also conducted attacks on Artesh airbases and IRGC facilities that house aircraft that could potentially threaten US or Israeli aircraft in western Iran and near Tehran. Commercially available satellite imagery captured on March 3 shows eleven craters on the runway of the 2nd Artesh Air Force Tactical Airbase in Tabriz, East Azerbaijan Province. This damage has likely rendered the airbase inoperable. The IDF Air Force destroyed one Iranian F-4 and two F-5 fighter jets attempting to take off from the base on March 1.[45] IAF strikes previously damaged the base's runway at the beginning of the 12-day war.[46] The combined force also struck a logistics facility near the 6th Artesh Ground Forces Aviation Base in Tabriz, according to satellite imagery from March 3.[47] Commercially available satellite imagery from March 2 shows two craters and a damaged building in the southern part of the 7th Artesh Air Force Tactical Airbase in Shiraz, Fars Province. The 7th Artesh Air Force Tactical Airbase is co-located with the Shiraz International Airport and hosts a fighter squadron that includes 12 Russian SU-22 fighter jets and a helicopter squadron.[48] Iranian anti-regime media also reported that the combined force struck an IRGC-affiliated helicopter manufacturing facility in Karaj, Alborz Province, on March 3.[49] The IDF issued an evacuation warning on March 3 for Payam Airport and its immediate surroundings in Karaj.[50] The IDF reportedly struck Payam Airport during the June 2025 war.[51]

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An Israeli analyst, citing commercially available satellite imagery, reported on March 3 that the combined force struck an underground facility at the Parchin Military Complex southeast of Tehran.[52] Iran has used the Parchin Military Complex to develop and manufacture advanced munitions, including drones and missiles.[53] The Parchin complex also played a key role in Iran's pre-2003 nuclear weapons program.[54] The regime historically used the site for high explosive testing for nuclear weapons development.[55] The IDF struck the Parchin Military Complex in June 2025.[56] The Parchin Military Complex is also home to the Taleghan 2 facility, which Iran used to test explosives that are needed to detonate a nuclear device before it suspended its nuclear weapons program in 2003.[57] The IDF struck the Taleghan 2 facility in October 2024.[58] Iran recently encased a newly built facility at Taleghan 2 with a "sarcophagus" to harden it against airstrikes, according to the Institute for Science and International Security.[59] CTP-ISW has not observed any reports of strikes on Taleghan 2 at the time of this writing.

The US-Israeli combined force continues to degrade Iran's ballistic missile program. The combined force struck an underground missile facility in Haji Abad, Hormozgan Province, on February 28.[60] The James Martin Center for Non-Proliferation Studies shared satellite imagery from March 2 that shows two craters and destroyed vehicles at the site.[61] Iran constructed the Haji Abad Base between 2016 and 2020.[62] The site contains at least seven visible "hardened" missile launch positions.[63] Iran recently positioned missile launchers along its southern coast in preparation for a conflict with the United States and Israel.[64] The combined force also struck a missile base north of Kermanshah.[65] An Israeli

analyst noted that all of the base's aboveground structures were "destroyed."[66] The IDF also said that it struck the Imam Sajjad Missile Base southwest of Tehran.[67]

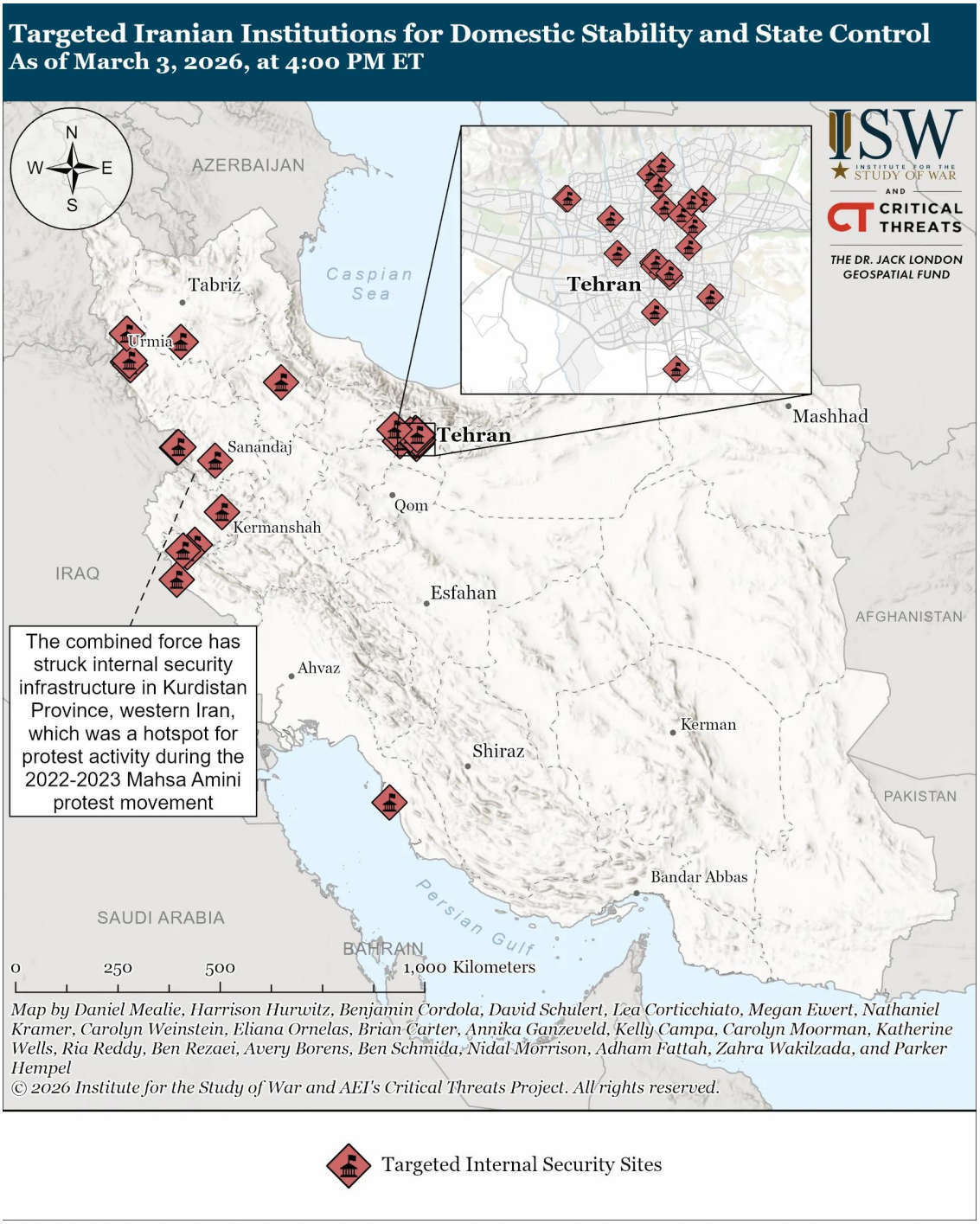
The IDF also struck several facilities in Tehran on March 3 that manufacture or develop components for ballistic missiles. The IDF struck an IRGC-affiliated manufacturing site that develops components for surface-to-surface and surface-to-air missiles in western Tehran.[68] The IDF struck a chemical plant that produces missile components west of Tehran in Garmdareh, Alborz Province.[69] The IDF said that the site produced raw materials for solid-fuel surface-to-surface missiles.[70] The IDF also struck an IRGC-affiliated facility in Shahr-e Jadid-e Parand, southwest of Tehran, that the IDF stated processes ammonium perchlorate raw materials for solid-fuel missiles.[71] The facility is located about four kilometers south of a missile launch site in Malard.

The IDF issued an evacuation order for the Esteghlal Industrial Zone in western Tehran on March 3.[72] The evacuation zone includes the University of Applied Science and a Farda Motors facility.[73] It is unclear what the IDF intends to target in this area, although the IDF previously struck a Farda Motors factory in Borujerd, Lorestan Province, during the June 2025 Israel-Iran War.[74]

Internal Security

The combined force targeted internal security and military institutions in northwestern Iran. Anti-regime media claimed on March 3 that the combined force struck the "Shohada base" in Urmia, West Azerbaijan Province.[75] It is unclear whether the anti-regime outlet was referring to the IRGC Ground Forces Hamzeh Seyyed ol Shohada Operational Base or the IRGC Ground Forces Shohada Unit, which are both based in Urmia.[76] An Israeli journalist reported that the combined force also targeted an unspecified border guard site in Urmia on March 3.[77] IRGC-affiliated media previously claimed on March 1 that the combined force had targeted the West Azerbaijan Provincial Border Guard.[78] An OSINT account claimed on March 3 that the combined force struck an unspecified IRGC base in Marivan, Kurdistan Province.[79] This report comes after the combined force reportedly destroyed the Marivan Law Enforcement Command Headquarters.[80] A Norway-based human rights organization reported on March 3 that the combined force struck several IRGC sites in Oshnavieh, West Azerbaijan Province, including an IRGC headquarters, outpost, and intelligence building.[81]

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The Iranian regime is continuing to securitize the country and prevent information about the war from leaving Iran. An OSINT account posted a video of Iranian security forces setting up a checkpoint on a major highway in Tehran.[82] The regime has also continued its nationwide internet blackout.[83] Iranian opposition media, citing a journalist rights group, reported on March 3 that the regime has sent intimidating messages to Iranian journalists to prevent them from spreading information about the war.[84]

Iranian Retaliation

Iran has launched a greater number of drones at Arab Gulf states than at Israel, likely due to the proximity of the Gulf states to Iran. Iranian drones take hours to reach Israel, which makes them

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easier for Israel to detect and defend against. Reuters published a roll-up of several Gulf defense ministries' statistics on drones and missiles that Iran has fired at them since February 28.[85]

The Emirati Defense Ministry said that it has:

- Detected 186 Iranian ballistic missiles, intercepted 172 ballistic missiles, while 13 fell in the sea, and one landed in the UAE.[86] The Defense Ministry also said that it has detected and intercepted 8 Iranian cruise missiles.[87]
- Detected 812 Iranian drones, intercepted 755 drones, while 57 drones have struck UAE territory.[88]

The Qatari Defense Ministry said that it has:

- Detected 101 ballistic missiles and intercepted 98 ballistic missiles, which suggests that 3 missiles landed in Qatar.[89] The Defense Ministry also said that it has detected and intercepted 3 Iranian cruise missiles.[90]
- Detected 39 drones and intercepted 24 drones, which suggests that 15 drones struck Qatar.[91]

The Bahraini Defense Ministry said that it has:

- Intercepted 73 Iranian missiles and 91 drones, but did not provide the number of impacts in Bahrain.[92] CTP-ISW has observed multiple Iranian drones striking US military positions and civilian infrastructure in Bahrain since the conflict began.[93]

The Kuwaiti Defense Ministry said that it has:

- Detected and intercepted 178 Iranian ballistic missiles.[94]
- Detected and intercepted 384 Iranian drones.[95] The Kuwaiti Defense Ministry did not provide the number of Iranian missile or drone impacts in its territory, but CTP-ISW has observed multiple Iranian strikes in Kuwait since the conflict began.[96]

These figures reflect that Iran has launched a greater number of drones at Arab Gulf states than at Israel, likely due to their proximity to Iran. The combined force has struck several drone launch sites in Iran within the Iranian Shahed-136's 2,000-kilometer range, which is far enough to reach Arab Gulf states but insufficient to reach Israel.[97]

Axis of Resistance Response

The United States and Israel continued to strike Iranian-backed Iraqi militias on March 2 and 3 to degrade their ability to conduct retaliatory attacks against US forces and Israel. The United States and Israel struck Kataib Hezbollah's Jurf al Sakhr stronghold north of Baghdad on March 3, reportedly targeting Kataib Hezbollah weapons depots.[98] The combined force has repeatedly struck Jurf al Sakhr since the start of its strike campaign on February 28.[99] The combined force also conducted two waves of strikes targeting the headquarters of the Iranian-backed Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) 30th Brigade in the Ninewa Plains.[100] The PMF 30th Brigade is primarily composed of Shabak fighters and is aligned with the Badr Organization.[101] The United States and Israel recently struck the PMF 30th Brigade headquarters on March 1.[102]

Multiple unspecified Iranian-backed Iraqi militias reportedly told Iraqi federal government officials and Shia Coordination Framework members that the militias will continue to conduct

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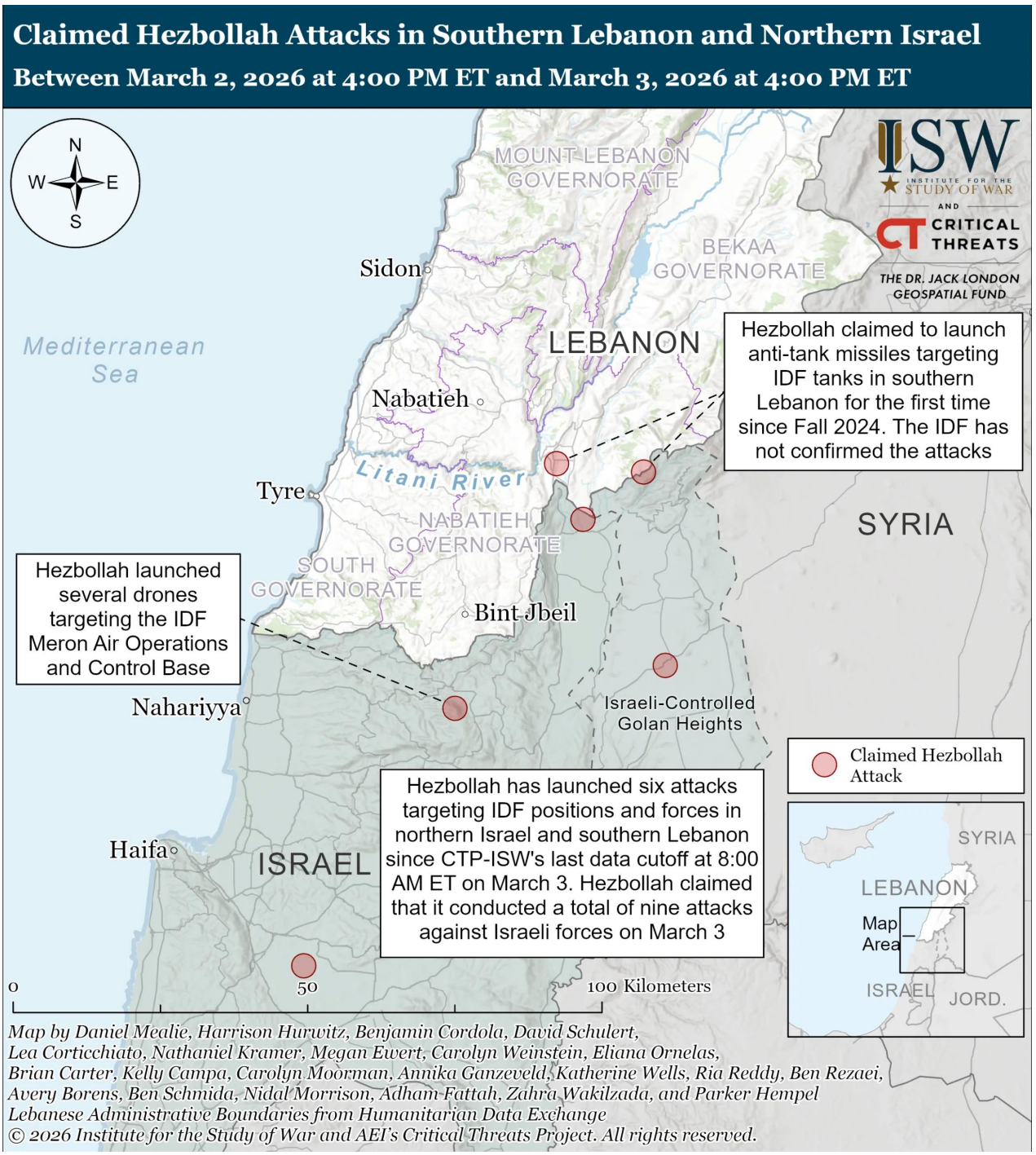
attacks targeting US forces despite the Shia Coordination Framework and the Iraqi federal government's efforts to prevent escalation.[103] The Islamic Resistance of Iraq, which is a coalition of Iranian-backed Iraqi militias, has claimed over 16 "operations" against "enemy" forces, in reference to the United States, per day since February 28.[104] The group claimed on March 3 that it conducted 27 "operations" involving "dozens" of drones and missiles targeting "enemy" bases in Iraq and the region.[105] Iranian-backed Iraqi militias have conducted multiple drone attacks targeting US bases in federal Iraq and Iraqi Kurdistan in recent days.[106] CTP-ISW has not observed any successful militia missile attacks or interceptions of militia missile attacks at the time of this writing.

The Houthis condemned Israel's operations in Lebanon on March 3 but have not yet conducted any retaliatory attacks against the United States or Israel.[107] The Houthis' continued inaction is notable given that the Houthis were the only Axis of Resistance member that participated in the June 2025 Israel-Iran War.[108] The Houthis could decide at any time to attack US interests or Israel in response to the combined strike campaign, however.

Lebanon

Hezbollah has conducted six attacks targeting IDF positions and forces in northern Israel and southern Lebanon since CTP-ISW's last data cutoff at 8:00 AM ET on March 3.[109] Hezbollah conducted a total of nine attacks against Israeli forces on March 3.[110] Hezbollah conducted three attacks targeting four Israeli Merkava tanks in Kfar Kila, Marjaayoun District, and Kfarchouba, Hasbaya District, on March 3.[111] Hezbollah claimed that it launched an anti-tank guided missile at an Israeli Merkava tank in Metula, northern Israel.[112] Hezbollah has attacked military and civilian targets in Metula from nearby hills with more rockets and anti-tank guided missiles than any other town in northern Israel during the October 7 War.[113] Hezbollah claimed that it launched two rocket salvos targeting the IDF Rawiya base and the IDF southern Kelaa barracks in the Israeli-controlled Golan Heights.[114] Hezbollah launched a "squadron" of drones targeting the IDF Meron Air Operations and Control Base in Mount Meron, northern Israel, on March 3.[115] Mount Meron is a prominent IDF air defense and communications site that was a frequent Hezbollah target during the October 7 War.[116] The IDF said on March 3 that it detected several launches from Lebanon, most of which the IDF intercepted.[117] One projectile fell in an open area of Israel.[118] Hezbollah Political Council Deputy Head Mahmoud Qamati told the Associated Press on March 3 that Israel "wanted an open war…so let it be an open war."[119]

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Israel's goal to prevent direct fire attacks on northern Israeli towns mirrors one of Israel's objectives for its ground operation in southern Lebanon in Fall 2024. Israeli Defense Minister Israel Katz and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said that the IDF will seize territory in southern Lebanon to prevent Hezbollah's direct fire attacks on northern Israeli towns.[120] The IDF announced that the 91st Division aims to create an "additional layer of security" for northern Israeli residents. Israeli media reported that IDF troops are deployed "across the entire Israel-Lebanon border," presumably referring to positions in northern Israel.[121] The IDF has positioned forces atfive permanent positions in southern Lebanon since February 2025.[122] It is unclear precisely where 91st Division fighters are operating in Lebanon at this time.

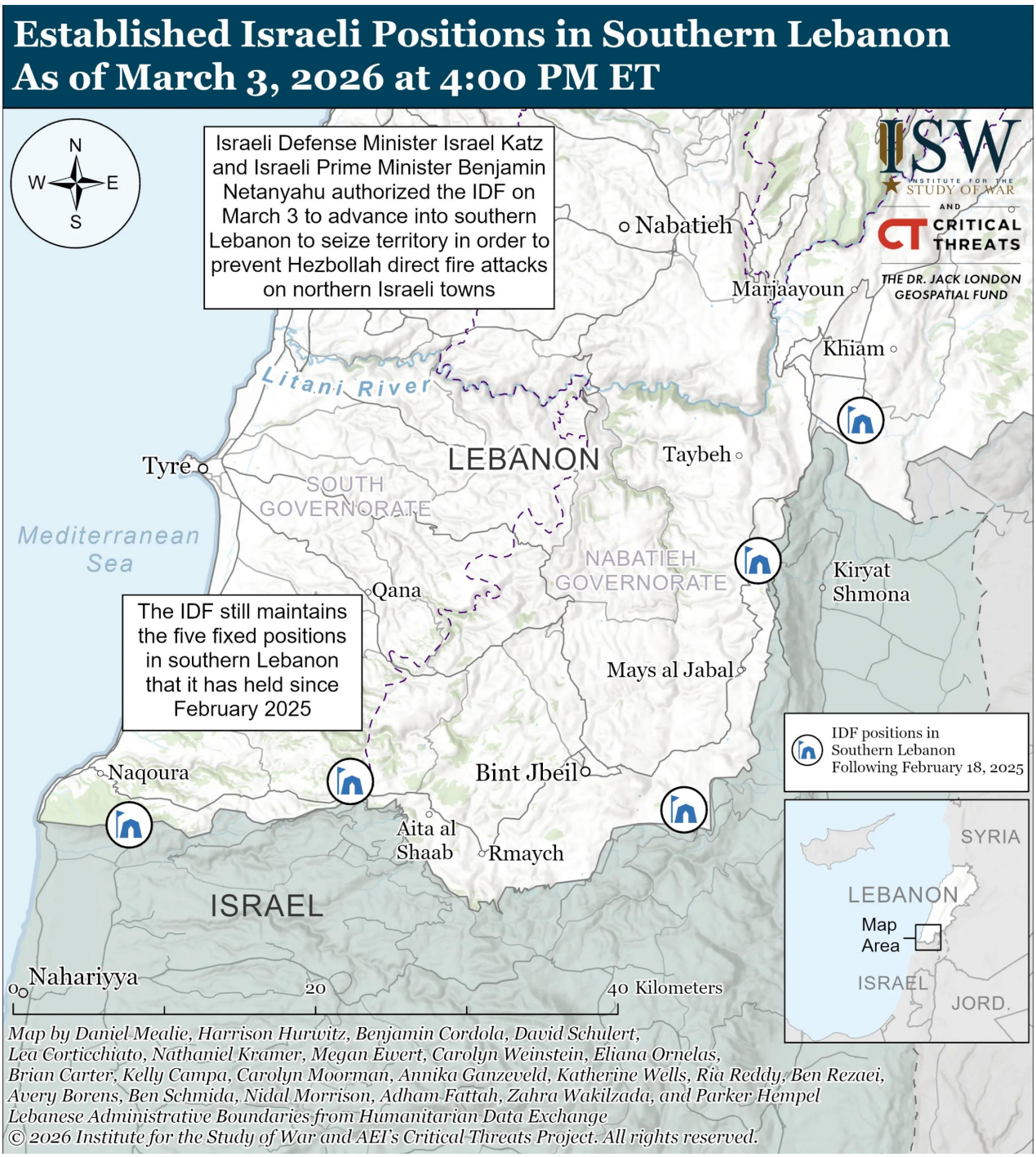
The IDF's advances into southern Lebanon in Fall 2024 dramatically diminished the threat of Hezbollah direct fire attacks into northern Israeli towns and IDF positions. Direct fire is when a combatant fires a ranged weapon directly at a target within the combatant's unobstructed line-of-sight. The forested

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Lebanese border hills that overlook the northern Israeli border allowed Hezbollah fighters to target towns and IDF bases in northern Israel with anti-tank guns and guided missiles.[123] Hezbollah's anti-tank guided missiles can fire up to eight kilometers, but most of these attacks required Hezbollah fighters to maintain a direct view of Israeli targets. The IDF's capture of key hills that overlook northern Israel deny Hezbollah a direct view of Israeli targets. Hezbollah launched its first direct fire attacks since Fall 2024 on March 3 (noted above).

Unspecified Israeli officials suggested that the IDF could conduct a larger ground campaign in Lebanon. Two unspecified Israeli officials told the *New York Times* on March 3 that the IDF has been planning an operation against Hezbollah for months that "could be much more ambitious and involve a deep ground incursion into Lebanon."[124] The officials noted that the "small buildup of forces in Lebanon could evolve into a bigger and more ambitious invasion."[125] Israeli media similarly noted that the IDF's current "forward defense maneuver[s]" aim to deter Hezbollah from conducting an invasion into northern Israel. Israeli media added that the IDF is "not yet invading on a large-scale," which implies that the IDF could launch a larger ground campaign in the future.[126] Israeli media reported that additional divisions are expected to deploy into southern Lebanon in the coming days.[127]

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The Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) has withdrawn from some of its positions in southern Lebanon amid the IDF's "forward defense maneuver[s]." The Lebanese army reportedly withdrew from more than 50 border positions, including newly established positions near the border.[128] A Lebanese military source told Lebanese media that the LAF redeployed soldiers deployed at border positions back to their bases because of "the danger to their safety."[129] The LAF had established approximately 200 positions in southern Lebanon as of December 2025.[130]

The IDF has continued to conduct airstrikes targeting Hezbollah military sites and institutions in Lebanon to degrade Hezbollah's ability to conduct retaliatory attacks against Israel. The IDF struck approximately 60 Hezbollah targets across southern Lebanon on March 3.[131] The targets included weapons depots, launchers, command centers, and other military sites.[132] The IDF also struck the rocket launcher that Hezbollah fighters used to launch rocket salvos at the Israeli-controlled Golan Heights (noted above).[133] The IDF also confirmed that it killed the IRGC Quds Force's Lebanon Corps

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Commander Daoud Ali Zada**.**[134] Zada was the most senior Iranian commander in charge of Iranian activity in Lebanon, according to the IDF. Zada was involved in Hezbollah's reconstitution and helped manage its operations against Israel. Zada previously served as the Quds Force's Strategic Weapons Corps commander and helped strengthen Hezbollah's weapons capabilities. The IDF reported that Zada was a "factor that incited and pushed" Hezbollah to join the war.

The Lebanese government has taken unprecedented action against Hezbollah for its involvement in the war, which will likely have long-term implications for Hezbollah. The Lebanese Cabinet declared on March 2 that all Hezbollah military and security activity is illegal, demanded that Hezbollah hand over all of its weapons to the state, and called for Hezbollah to be relegated to only a political organization.[135] Many Lebanese governments have been unable or unwilling to challenge the principle of Hezbollah's armament, in part because Hezbollah, supported by Iran and Bashar al Assad's Syria, previously dominated Lebanese decision-making.[136] Hezbollah has long viewed its status as a military organization as the group's core and has previously referred to its weapons as its "soul."[137]Hezbollah has historically used its military capabilities and threats of military action to sway Lebanese government decision-making.[138] The loss of these capabilities would reduce Hezbollah's influence in Lebanon, given that Hezbollah is already in a politically vulnerable position that has limited the group's ability to advance its objectives in Lebanon. Lebanese Prime Minister Nawaf Salam reduced the proportion of cabinet seats that Hezbollah holds and removed the group's ability to veto cabinet decisions when he formed his cabinet in February 2025.[139] Hezbollah's de facto veto power had often prevented the cabinet from passing legislation to constrain Hezbollah between 2008 and 2019.[140] Hezbollah has struggled to keep some of its long-standing political allies due to its confrontational approach and its defeat at the hands of the IDF.[141] The Free Patriotic Movement (FPM), a Lebanese political party, ended its two-decade alliance with Hezbollah in October 2024 after Israel began its campaign against Hezbollah.[142] Hezbollah's political weakness prior to the current war suggests that Hezbollah would likely struggle to achieve any of its objectives after the war if the group was solely a political organization.

Other Activity

US President Donald Trump ordered the US International Development Finance Corporation to provide political risk insurance and financial guarantees to "all shipping lines" on March 3.[143] Trump added that the United States may consider escorting tankers through the Strait of Hormuz. Iran has conducted four attacks on commercial vessels around the Strait of Hormuz between the start of the war on February 28 and 4:00 PM ET on March 2.[144] Traffic through the Strait of Hormuz has dropped by around 80 percent as of March 1.[145]



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Iran Update Morning Special Report, March 4, 2026

Ria Reddy, Carolyn Moorman, Kelly Campa, Brian Carter

Analyst Notes: Data Cutoff: 08:00 AM ET.

The Institute for the Study of War (ISW) and the Critical Threats Project (CTP) at the American Enterprise Institute are publishing two updates daily to provide analysis on the war with Iran. The morning update will focus on US and Israeli strikes on Iran and Iran and the Axis of Resistance's response to the strikes. The evening update will be more comprehensive, covering events over the past 24-hour period and refining items discussed in the morning update.

Key Takeaways

1. The United States and Israel have continued to attack Iranian internal security institutions.The combined force also continued to target police stations, including an Iranian Cyber Police (FATA) station in Kermanshah, Kermanshah Province.
2. The US-Israeli combined force continued to degrade Iran's ballistic missile and drone infrastructure in Iran. US Central Command (CENTCOM) Commander Admiral Brad Cooper stated on March 3 that the combined force has "severely degraded" Iran's air defenses and destroyed hundreds of Iran's ballistic missiles, drones, and launchers.
3. The combined force continued to target Iranian defense industrial sites. The combined force struck at least two buildings at the Khojir Missile Production Complex in Hajarabad, Tehran Province.
4. The combined force continued to attack Iranian naval capabilities. CENTCOM announced on March 4 that the United States has struck or sunk more than 20 Iranian ships.
5. US Central Command (CENTCOM) reported on March 4 that the number of ballistic missiles Iran has fired regionally has decreased 86 percent since the start of the combined force's campaign on February 28, with a 23 percent decrease in the past 24 hours. The combined force has designed its campaign to destroy Iran's ballistic missile capabilities before the force depletes its interceptor stockpiles.
6. Hezbollah has conducted several attacks targeting IDF positions and forces in northern Israel and southern Lebanon since ISW-CTP's last data cutoff. Hezbollah launched two rocket attacks targeting Israeli forces in northern Israel, as well as a rocket attack targeting the Haifa Naval Base on March 3.

US and Israeli Air Campaign

The United States and Israel have continued to attack Iranian internal security institutions.

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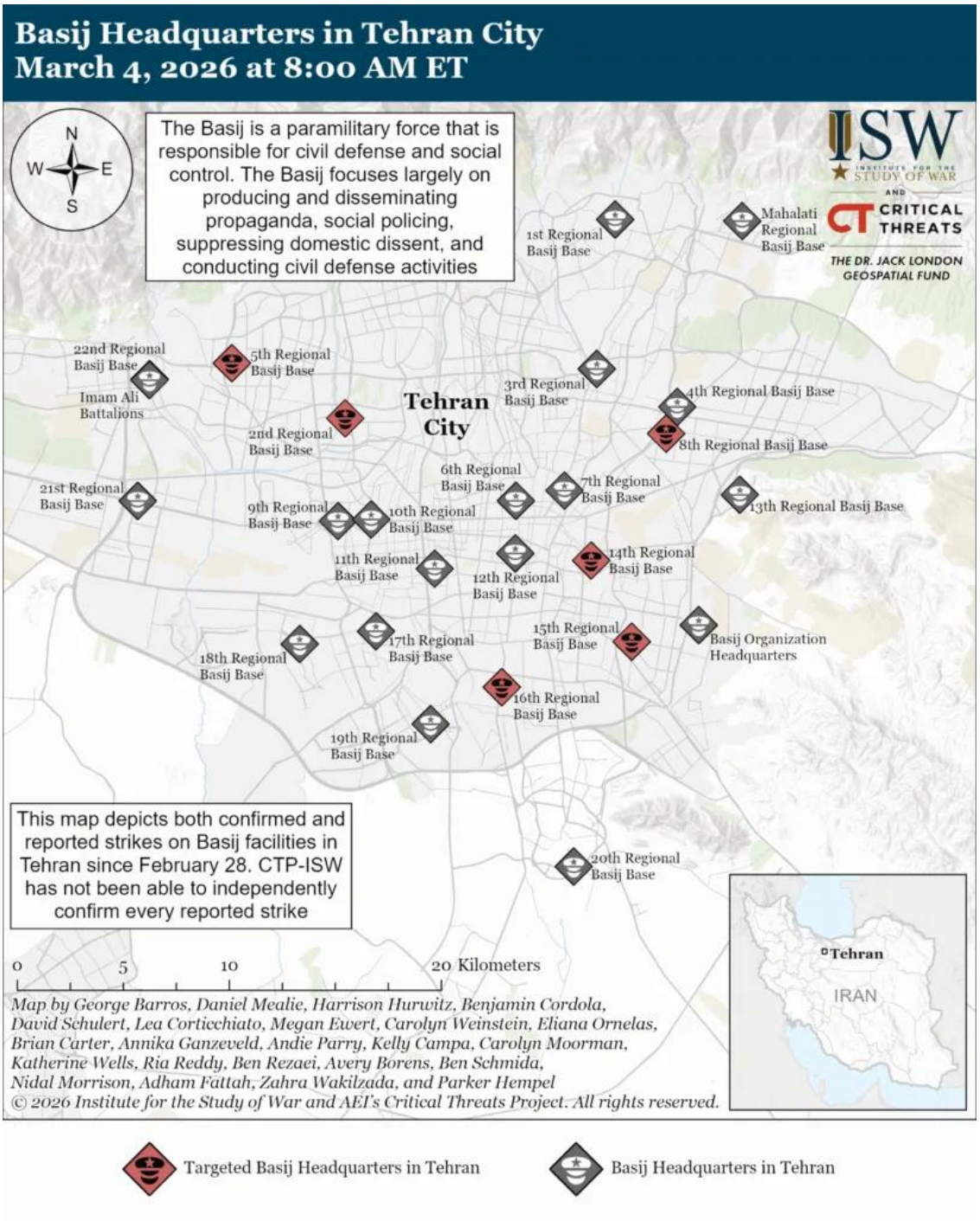
The IDF targeted the “internal security riot control headquarters” in western Tehran.[1] The IDF also targeted the 8th Tehran Municipality Beheshti Basij Resistance Regional Base and the 14th Tehran Municipality Mahalati Basij Resistance Regional Base in airstrikes on March 3.[2] Satellite imagery from March 4 confirms that the combined force also struck the 2nd Tehran Municipality Bahoner Basij Resistance Regional Base. These bases operate under the IRGC Ground Forces Sarallah Headquarters.[3] The Sarallah Headquarters is responsible for overseeing security in the capital region and plays a key role in protest suppression. The IDF also struck a separate internal security headquarters in Tehran, which likely refers to the LEC Border Guard Headquarters.[4] Satellite imagery from March 4 shows that the combined force destroyed several buildings at the Ilam Province LEC Headquarters in Ilam, Ilam Province. An Israeli OSINT account circulated an image of smoke reportedly coming from the East Azerbaijan LEC headquarters in Tabriz, East Azerbaijan.[5] ISW-CTP cannot verify if the building was hit.



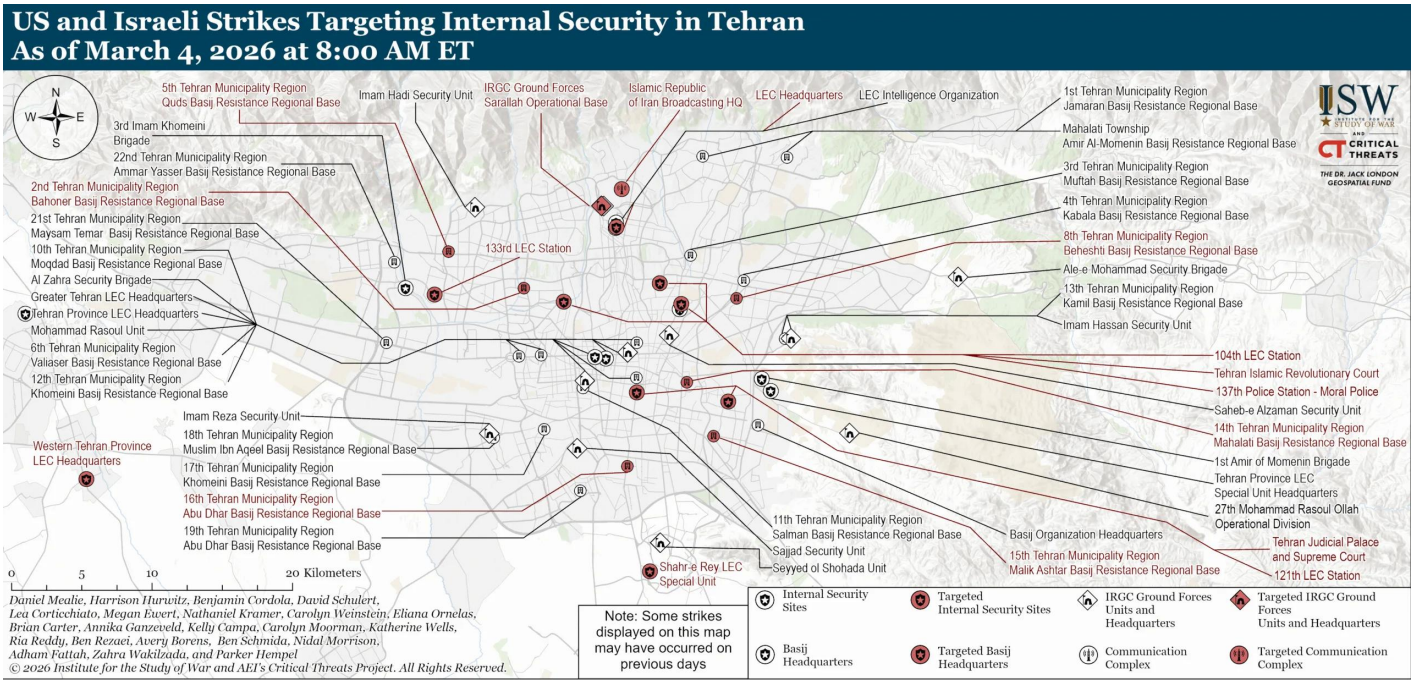
The combined force also continued to target police stations, including an Iranian Cyber Police (FATA)

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station in Kermanshah, Kermanshah Province.[6] Te FATA operates under the LEC and is responsible for domestic surveillance and cyber operations. The Iranian regime has previously used FATA to thwart dissent on online platforms, including during the crackdowns that followed the Masha Amini protests in 2022.[7] Israel struck the FATA headquarters in Tehran during the June 2025 Israel-Iran War.[8] The Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmail Baghaei confirmed on March 4 that the combined force also attacked the Diplomatic Police headquarters in Tehran.[9] The Diplomatic Police operate under the LEC and protect foreign embassies and diplomats in Iran from threats, including civil unrest and protests.[10]



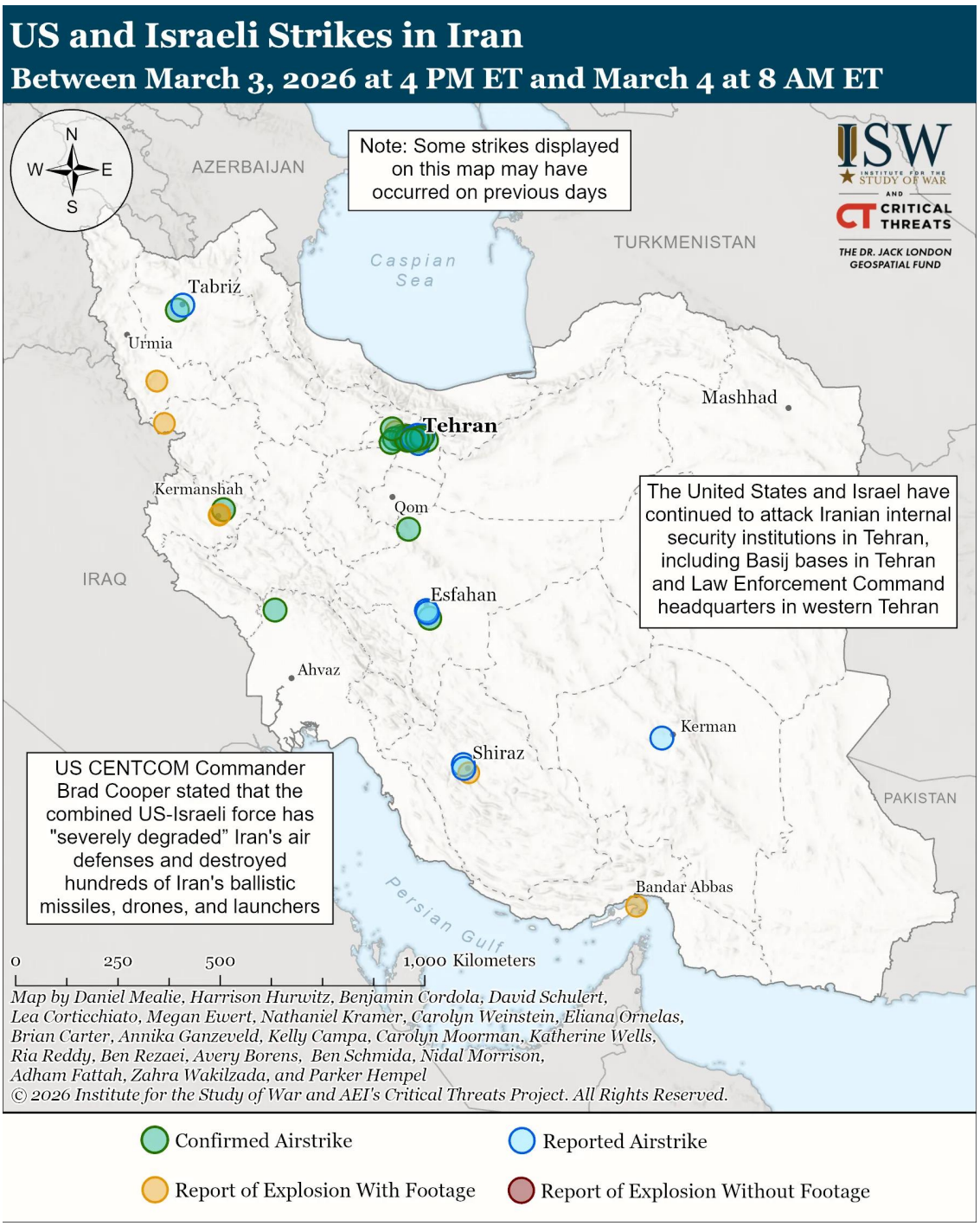
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The US-Israeli combined force continued to degrade Iran's ballistic missile and drone infrastructure in Iran. US Central Command (CENTCOM) Commander Admiral Brad Cooper stated on March 3 that the combined force has "severely degraded" Iran's air defenses and destroyed hundreds of Iran's ballistic missiles, drones, and launchers.[11] The IAF announced on March 4 that it attacked several ballistic missile and defense storage sites overnight on March 3 and 4.[12] Satellite imagery confirms strikes at the following missile bases: Esfahan South Missile Base in Esfahan Province, Kashan Missile Base in Esfahan Province, Dezful Missile Base in Khuzestan Province, and Southwest Tabriz Missile Base in East Azerbaijan Province.[13] Kashan Missile Base is located near the 840th Missile Group in Aran va Bidgo, Esfahan Province.[14] The Israeli Air Force (IAF) struck a missile storage facility at Esfahan North Missile Base that houses Ghadr missiles in order to prevent further launches.[15] Iran has reportedly used Ghadr missiles to attack Israel in the current conflict.[16]

The combined force continued to target Iranian defense industrial sites. The combined force struck at least two buildings at the Khojir Missile Production Complex in Hajarabad, Tehran Province.[17] The Khojir complex is a research, development, and manufacturing facility for solid- and liquid-fuel missiles. Some OSINT accounts said that Iran used the two buildings, which included facilities to produce oxidizer for Iranian liquid-fuel missiles and solid propellant motors.[18] Israel previously struck the Khojir complex during the June 2025 Israel-Iran War and during Israeli airstrikes in Iran in October 2024.[19] An Israeli analyst reported that the combined force has also targeted Shiraz Electronic Industries in Shiraz, Fars Province, several times.[20] Shiraz Electronic Industries is affiliated with Iran's Ministry of Defense and Armed Forces Logistics (MODAFL). The United States sanctioned Shiraz Electronics Industries in September 2008 for producing electronic equipment for the Iranian armed forces.[21] Iranian media reported on February 28 that the combined force targeted an unspecified defense industrial site in Shiraz.[22] Israel previously struck Shiraz Electronics Industries during the 12-Day War.[23] Satellite imagery from March 4 confirms that the combined force also struck Novin Sazan Industrial Group, Ghazanfar Roknabadi Industries, Baharestan Industrial Town, and Hakimiyah Industrial Zone. The IDF issued an evacuation order for the Hakimiyeh Industrial Zone in northwestern Tehran on March 3.[24] Ghazanfar Roknabadi Industries is reportedly involved in drone production for the IRGC.[25]

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The combined force continued to attack Iranian naval capabilities. CENTCOM announced on March 4 that the United States has struck or sunk more than 20 Iranian ships.[26] CENTCOM Commander Admiral Brad Cooper added that there is “not a single Iranian ship underway in the Arabian Gulf, Strait of Hormuz, or Gulf of Oman.”[27] The United States Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth confirmed that a US Navy submarine sank an Iranian warship, IRIS *Dena*, off the southern coast of Sri Lanka.[28] The IRIS *Dena* is a Moudge-class frigate in the Artesh Navy’s Southern Fleet.[29] The United States also attacked the IRGC Navy’s IRIS *Shahid Sayyad Shirazi*, a Soleimani-class warship, off the coast of Bandar Abbas, Hormozgan Province.[30] The IRGC fired a naval version of its “Seyed-3” surface-to-air missile off the IRIS *Shahid Sayyad Shirazi* during its recent naval exercise in the Strait of Hormuz in February to prepare for a potential conflict with the United States.[31]

An Israeli analyst reported that Israel killed the IRGC Special Operations Division head, Rahman Mokadam.[32] The Israeli analyst said that Mokadam played a key role in US President Donald Trump’s

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planned assassination in 2024.[33] Another analyst noted that it is not clear if Mokadam worked for the IRGC Quds Force's Unit 840 or the Special Division's Unit 400 of the IRGC's Intelligence Organization.[34] The IRGC Quds Force Units 840 and 400 conduct covert action and assassinations abroad.[35] Mokadam previously served as the Deputy Coordinator for Information Protection at the Iranian Defense Ministry.[36]

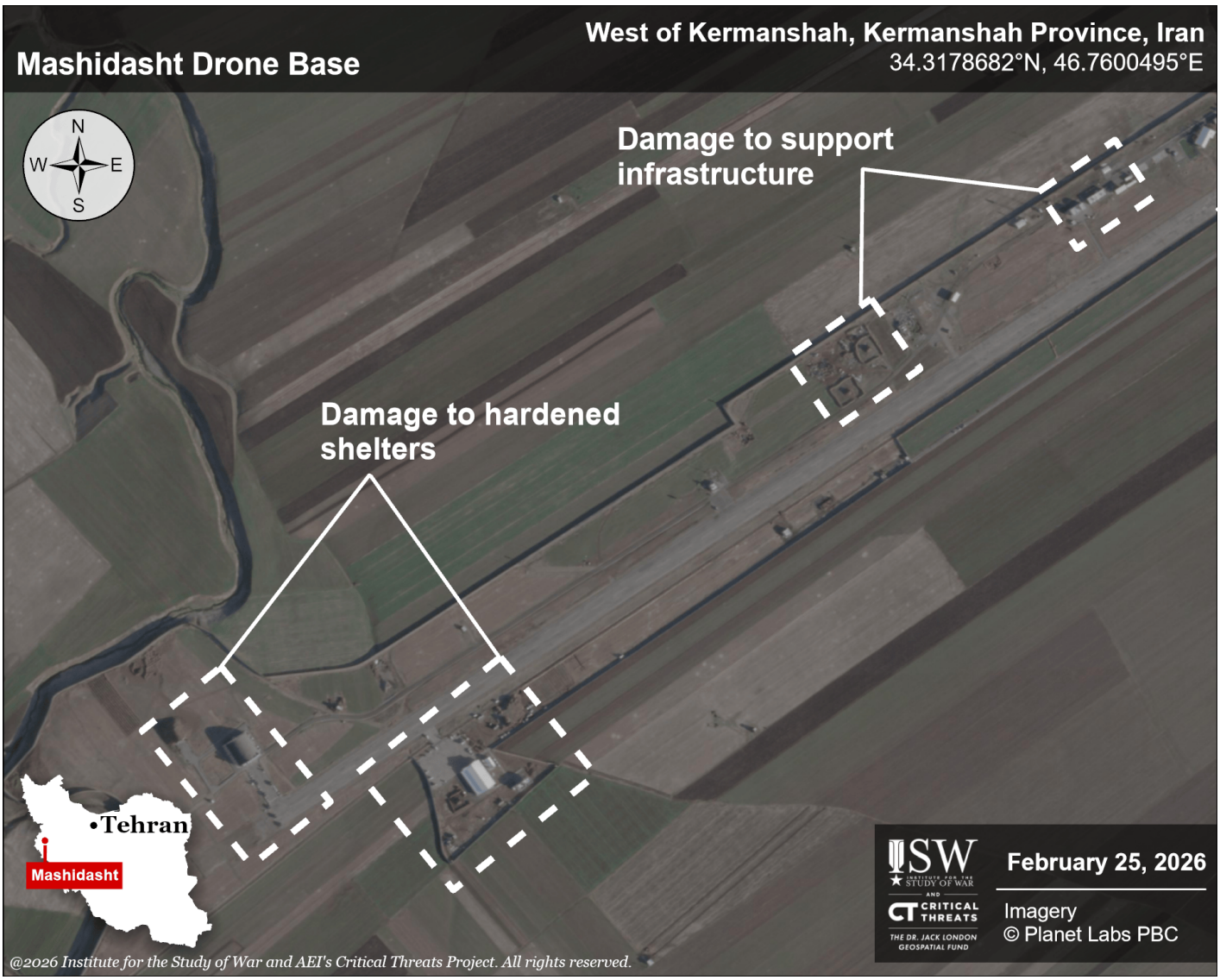
Iranian Retaliation

Iran has continued to launch ballistic missile barrages at Israel since ISW-CTP's last data cutoff on March 3. Iran conducted at least seven ballistic missile barrages targeting Israel between March 3 at 4:00 PM ET and March 4 at 8:00 AM ET.[37] ISW-CTP has not observed any missile impacts at the time of this writing.

US Central Command (CENTCOM) reported on March 4 that the number of ballistic missiles Iran has fired regionally has decreased 86 percent since the start of the combined force's campaign on February 28, with a 23 percent decrease in the past 24 hours.[38] The combined force has designed its campaign to destroy Iran's ballistic missile capabilities before the force depletes its interceptor stockpiles. CENTCOM's statement further demonstrates the force's successful efforts against Iran's ballistic missile capabilities.

CENTCOM Commander Admiral Brad Cooper stated on March 3 that Iran has launched at least 2,000 drones since the start of the war.[39] Cooper also stated that the United States has destroyed hundreds of drones and will continue to "[shoot] all things that can shoot us."[40] ISW-CTP previously reported strikes on the IRGC drone base in Mahidasht, west of Kermanshah, on March 3.[41] Satellite imagery confirmed that strikes destroyed at least three hardened shelters at the base.[42]

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The IRGC claimed on March 3 that the IRGC Ground Forces launched three simultaneous attacks against Israel, which included 230 drones.[43] The IRGC also claimed that it fired dozens of drones at an unspecified US base in Erbil, Iraqi Kurdistan, and intermittently launched drones at the US Ali al Salem and Arifjan bases in Kuwait.

Iran continues to conduct drone and ballistic missile attacks targeting Gulf countries hosting US forces. Iran launched two ballistic missiles targeting Al Udeid Airbase in Qatar on March 3. Qatari air defenses intercepted one missile, while the other hit the base, causing no casualties.[44] Geolocated satellite imagery posted on March 3 also shows damage from an unidentified Iranian drone attack on a phased array radar in Umm Dahal, Qatar.[45] Geolocated footage posted on March 3 separately shows an Iranian drone striking the Hayat Palace hotel in Manama, Bahrain.[46] The Saudi Defense Minister said on March 3 that Saudi Arabia intercepted two Iranian cruise missiles in al Kharj, Saudi Arabia, which is located near Prince Sultan Airbase.[47] Saudi Arabia also intercepted 9 Iranian drones on March 3 that entered Saudi airspace.[48]

Iran has continued to attack energy infrastructure in the Gulf, likely to impose an economic cost and compel the United States and its partners to pursue a ceasefire before achieving their objective of toppling the regime. Geolocated footage posted on March 4 shows a fire at an oil depot in Fujairah, United Arab Emirates (UAE), following an attack.[49]

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Axis of Resistance Response

Saraya Awliya al Dam, which is a front group for other Iranian-backed Iraqi militias, claimed multiple attacks targeting US forces since ISW-CTP's last data cutoff.[50] Saraya Awliya al Dam claimed on March 4 that it launched separate "squadrons" of drones targeting a hotel in Erbil used by US forces and Erbil International Airport, which houses a US military base.[51] Sources in Erbil reported hearing the sound of explosions at Harir military base, which houses US forces, and near the Erbil International Airport.[52] Saraya Awliya al Dam also claimed that it launched a "squadron" of drones targeting an unspecified target in Jordan.[53] ISW-CTP noted on March 2 that Iranian-backed Iraqi militias appear to be threatening to expand their attacks to regional countries that host US troops.[54] Iranian-backed Iraqi militias have previously attacked regional countries that host US forces, such as a January 2024 attack on a US outpost in Jordan that killed three US service members.[55]

Hezbollah has conducted several attacks targeting IDF positions and forces in northern Israel and southern Lebanon since ISW-CTP's last data cutoff. Hezbollah launched two rocket attacks targeting Israeli forces in northern Israel, as well as a rocket attack targeting the Haifa Naval Base on March 3.[56] Hezbollah claimed that it launched separate missile attacks targeting the Givaa Drone Base east of Safed, northern Israel, and the IDF Northern Command headquarters in Safed on March 4.[57] Hezbollah also said that it launched a "squadron" of drones targeting the Israeli Aerospace Industries located in central Israel on March 4.[58] Hezbollah claimed separate missile attacks targeting an Israeli armored personnel carrier and Merkava tank in Houla, southern Lebanon.[59] An Israeli outlet reported on March 3 that Hezbollah launched a rocket salvo for one of its recent attacks from Berghoz, south of the Litani River, which demonstrates that Hezbollah still has a physical presence in southern Lebanon.[60]

A senior Israeli official told an Israeli media correspondent that Iran and Hezbollah have attempted to coordinate their attack timing, following an attack on March 4 in which Hezbollah fired rockets and missiles targeting unspecified sites in central Israel as Iran fired a ballistic missile at Israel.[61] The IDF said on March 4 that it intercepted several projectiles from Lebanon.[62] This attack, which injured two people, marks Hezbollah's first long-range attack since it first entered the conflict on March 1.[63] ISW-CTP has not observed any indications that Hezbollah and Iran are planning simultaneous attacks on Israel, however.

The IDF has conducted at least 17 airstrikes targeting Hezbollah military sites and institutions in Lebanon since ISW-CTP's last data cutoff to degrade Hezbollah's ability to conduct retaliatory strikes against Israel.[64] The IDF has struck more than 250 targets in Lebanon since March 2.[65] The IDF announced on March 4 that it struck multiple sites in southern Lebanon, as well as buildings that included underground Hezbollah weapons depots and headquarters in Beirut.[66] The IDF announced on March 3 that it struck and killed a Hezbollah member who had launched an anti-tank missile towards an IDF position in southern Lebanon.[67] The IDF issued evacuation orders on March 4 for residents in southern Lebanon to move north of the Litani River.[68] The IDF's evacuation order follows the IDF's launch of "forward defense maneuver[s]" in southern Lebanon on March 3 to prevent Hezbollah attacks on northern Israel.[69] The IDF redeployed the 146th Division (Res.) to the western area of the Israel-Lebanon border "for defensive purposes."[70] The 146th Division had been stationed on the western border from October 2023 to May 2025.[71]

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Iran Update Evening Special Report, March 4, 2026

Ria Reddy, Kelly Campa, Benjamin Schmida, Avery Borens, Katherine Wells, Adham Fattah, Nidal Morrison, Carolyn Moorman, Brian Carter

Analyst Notes: Data Cutoff: 4:00 PM ET

The Institute for the Study of War (ISW) and the Critical Threats Project (CTP) at the American Enterprise Instituteare publishing two updates daily to provide analysis on the war with Iran. The morning update will focus on US and Israeli strikes on Iran and Iran and the Axis of Resistance's response to the strikes. The evening update will be more comprehensive, covering events over the past 24-hour period and refining items discussed in the morning update.

Key Takeaways

1. The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) conducted multiple strikes at several military compounds in southeastern Tehran on March 4 that house the headquarters of several services and branches of the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) as well as other internal security forces. The IDF strikes could be part of an effort to disrupt Iranian command and control, but these strikes could also seek to achieve other effects, such as suppressing and degrading Iranian retaliatory capabilities.
2. There are reports that Kurdish groups moving from Iraqi Kurdistan have begun a cross-border ground operation in Iran. ISW-CTP has observed no corroborating evidence of such an operation, and a senior Iraqi Kurdistan official denied on March 4 that any groups from Iraqi Kurdistan had begun a ground offensive in Iran.
3. The combined force destroyed more provincial sites of internal and external forces key to the armed forces' domestic control over the population in Tehran and Kurdish-populated cities in northwestern Iran.
4. Iran has continued to launch a greater number of drones in its attacks as the number of ballistic missile launches continues to fall, which likely reflects the combined forces' success in degrading Iran's ability to launch ballistic missiles.
5. Iran will continue to attempt to disrupt international shipping through the Strait of Hormuz as part of a broader effort to impose a cost on the Gulf states using missiles and drones until the combined force degrades the ability of Iran to do so. The combined force has severely degraded the Iranian navy.

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The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) conducted multiple strikes at several military compounds in southeastern Tehran on March 4 that house the headquarters of several services and branches of the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) as well as other internal security forces.[1] IDF strikes targeting several IRGC-affiliated headquarters in Tehran could be part of an effort to disrupt Iranian command-and-control, but these strikes could also seek to achieve other effects, such as suppressing and degrading Iranian retaliatory capabilities. The compounds in southeastern Tehran contain the headquarters of three of the IRGC services, including the IRGC Ground Forces, IRGC Navy, and IRGC Quds Force. It also contains other key IRGC branches, including the Basij Organization and the Intelligence Organization. The IDF explicitly identified the following sites in the compound:

- **IRGC Headquarters.** The IDFsaid it struck the IRGC's headquarters.[2] The IRGC is a deeply ideological force that was created after the 1979 Revolution to protect the Iranian regime from internal and external threats. The IRGC is one of the most dominant political, security, economic, and ideological actors in Iran.[3] The IRGC is the primary body responsible for controlling the Iranian missile and drone arsenals and managing and supporting the so-called "Axis of Resistance." The IDF may have also hit the IRGC Central Defense Command Center, which is located less than 1.5 kilometers from the IRGC Headquarters.
- **IRGC Ground Forces Headquarters.** The IDF did not confirm whether it struck the IRGC Ground Forces headquarters but identified the building in a graphic.[4] The IRGC Ground Forces has dual missions to counter external and internal threats.[5] The Ground Forces are structured to wage a guerrilla campaign against any invading force while also having units positioned to violently suppress social unrest. The Ground Forces decentralized its command structure in the 2000s and 2010s, establishing 32 provincial units that could operate independently in the event of a decapitation strike against the IRGC central leadership. The provincial units oversee IRGC ground elements that are largely dispersed across population centers, such as how the Sarallah Headquarters oversees security in the capital region.[6] The IDF struck Sarallah Headquarters on March 1.[7]
- **IRGC Intelligence Organization Headquarters.** The IDF said it struck the "Intelligence Directorate headquarters," which may refer to the IRGC's Intelligence Organization.[8] The IRGC established the Intelligence Organization in response to the Green Movement protests that shook Iran in 2009.[9] The Intelligence Organization has thus focused primarily on domestic surveillance, social control, and counterinsurgency operations, while also conducting limited operations abroad. The IDF also said it hit the IRGC Intelligence Organization Unit 4000.[10] Unit 4000 is the special operations division within the IRGC Intelligence Organization.[11] Israeli media reported in October 2022 that Unit 4000, alongside an IRGC Quds Force unit, attempted to smuggle weapons to the West Bank for attacks on Israeli targets.[12] The report added that these units had made similar attempts in the past.
- **Basij Organization Headquarters.[13]** The Basij is a paramilitary organization that the Iranian armed forces use to recruit, indoctrinate, organize, and control regime loyalists.[14] The Basij focuses largely on producing and disseminating propaganda, social policing, suppressing domestic dissent, and conducting civil defense activities. The Basij cooperates extensively with the IRGC Intelligence Organization to monitor the Iranian population. The Basij maintains elite units that receive advanced military and "ideological-political" training and function as a manpower reserve for the IRGC Ground Forces. The Basij has historically played a key role in the regime's crackdown on protests, including in the December-January 2026 and 2022 Mahsa Amini protest movements.[15]
- **The IRGC Quds Force Headquarters.** The Quds Force is the extraterritorial arm of the IRGC and

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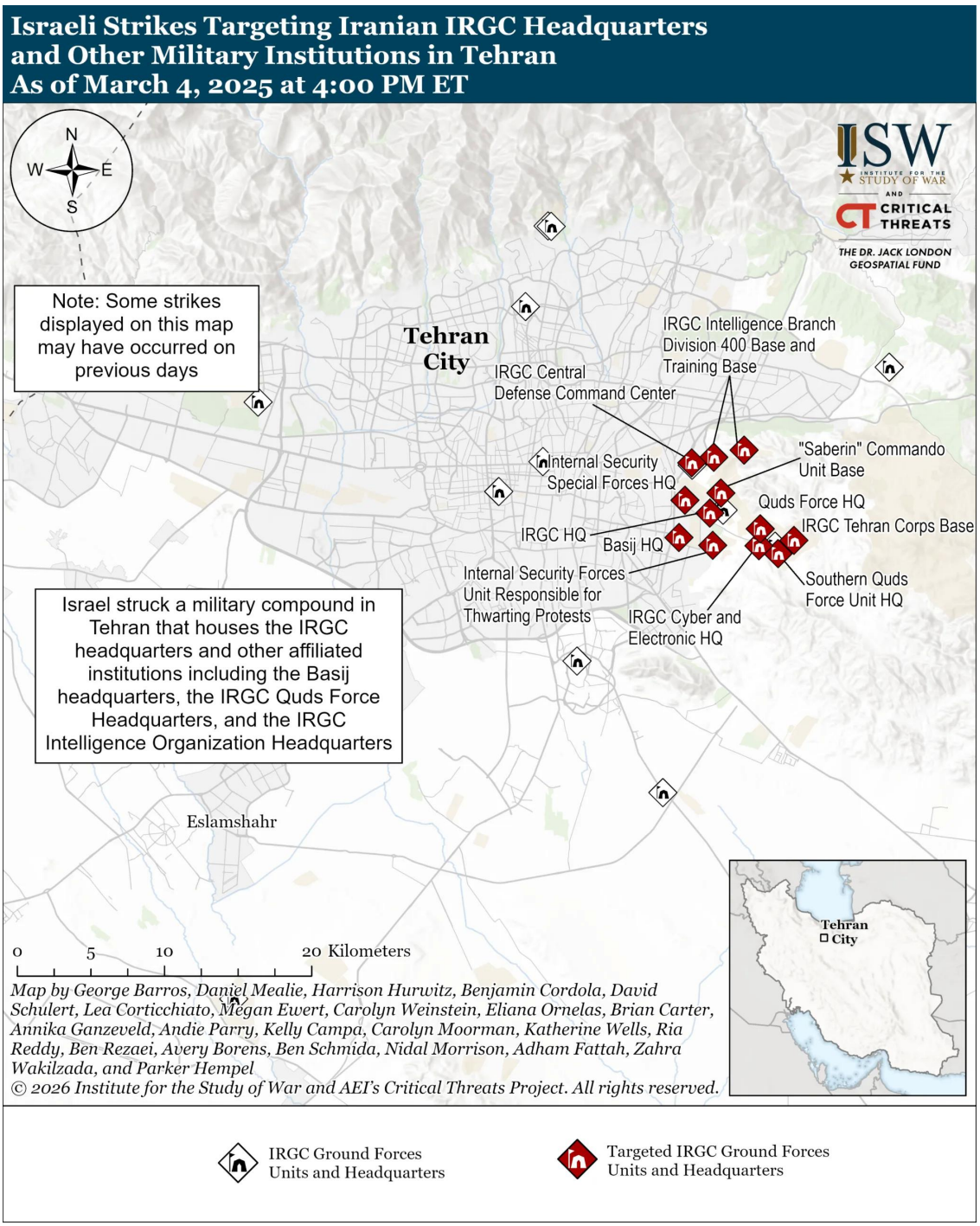
Iran's primary means of controlling and supporting the Axis of Resistance.[16] The Quds Force provides leadership, materiel, intelligence, training, and funds to Iranian proxy and partner militias across the Middle East, including Hezbollah in Lebanon, Hamas in the Gaza Strip, the Houthis in Yemen, and militias in Iraq.[17]

- **IRGC Electronic Warfare and Cyber Defense Headquarters.** The Electronic Warfare and Cyber Defense Headquarters is responsible for training IRGC forces in cyber defense.[18] The United States sanctioned the headquarters in January 2018 for censoring Iranians' access to Western media.[19]
- **27th Mohammad Rasoul Ollah Provincial Unit.** The IDF referred to it as the "IRGC Tehran Corps."[20] The 27th Mohammad Rasoul Ollah Provincial Unit is the IRGC Ground Forces' provincial unit for Tehran City and the IRGC's main unit in the city.[21] Mohammad Rasoul Ollah Provincial Unit operates under the IRGC Ground Forces Sarallah Headquarters and oversees the 22 Basij regional bases throughout Tehran City.[22] The combined force has targeted at least six of the 23 Basij regional bases in Tehran as of March 4.[23] The Mohammad Rasoul Ollah Provincial Unit also deployed to Syria to fight for the Assad regime during the Syrian civil war.[24]
- **The IRGC Ground Forces Saberin Special Forces Brigade Headquarters.** The Saberin Special Forces Brigade has previously played a role in protest suppression and expeditionary operations in Syria.[25] IRGC Major General Mohammad Pakpour appointed Brigadier General Mohammad Hosseini as commander of the Saberin Special Forces Brigade on February 24.[26] ISW-CTP observed on February 24, Hosseini may have been selected, at least partly, due to his experience with internal security and counter-insurgency operations.[27]
- **Unidentified Internal Security Unit.** The IDF said that it struck an internal security unit "responsible for suppressing protests."[28] There are numerous internal security sites within this area that may have been struck. The IDF may be referring to the Tehran Province Law Enforcement Command (LEC) Special Units Headquarters. The LEC Special Units are a highly trained anti-riot force deployed when regular police are unable to manage civil unrest.[29] The IDF may also be referring to the 1st Amir ol Momenin Brigade within the LEC Special Units. Iran's Counter-Terror Special Forces (NOPO) reportedly operate under the 1st Amir ol Momenin Brigade.[30] NOPO has previously participated in violent protest suppression.[31]

ISW-CTP has also identified several other Iranian armed forces-affiliated sites within or adjacent to the targeted compound area on March 4, including:

- **The IRGC Ground Forces Research and Self-Sufficiency Jihad Organization.** The IRGC Ground Forces Research and Self-Sufficiency Jihad Organization is responsible for the research and development of ballistic missiles.[32] The United States sanctioned the organization in 2017 for involvement in Iranian ballistic missile research, development, and flight test launches.[33]
- **Artesh Ground Forces 65th Airborne Special Forces Brigade.** The 65th Airborne Special Forces Brigade is one of the most elite units in the Artesh Ground Forces and specializes in "guerrilla warfare, close combat, hostage release [operations], psychological operations, sabotage behind enemy lines, parachuting, countering aircraft hijacking, and protecting individuals," according to Iranian state media.[34]

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The combined force also destroyed more provincial sites of internal and external forces key to the armed forces' domestic control over the population in Tehran and Kurdish-populated cities in northwestern Iran. Commercially available satellite imagery confirmed that a combined force airstrike damaged the northern complex on 22nd Tehran Municipality Region: Ammar Yasser Basij Resistance Regional Base in northwestern Tehran. This base is one of the 23 Basij regional bases in Tehran under the IRGC Ground Forces Mohammad Rasoul Ollah Provincial Unit, which operates under the IRGC Ground Forces Sarallah Headquarters.[35] The area also houses the Imam Ali Battalions, which are Basij security units trained and equipped to suppress urban protests and conduct anti-riot operations and intimidate and arrest protesters under IRGC direction.[36] Open source intelligence (OSINT) analysts published footage on March 4 confirming that combined force airstrikes targeted and heavily damaged two local LEC police stations in southeastern Tehran City on March 2 and southwestern Tehran City on an unspecified date, respectively.[37] LEC personnel from both these sites were reportedly involved in the

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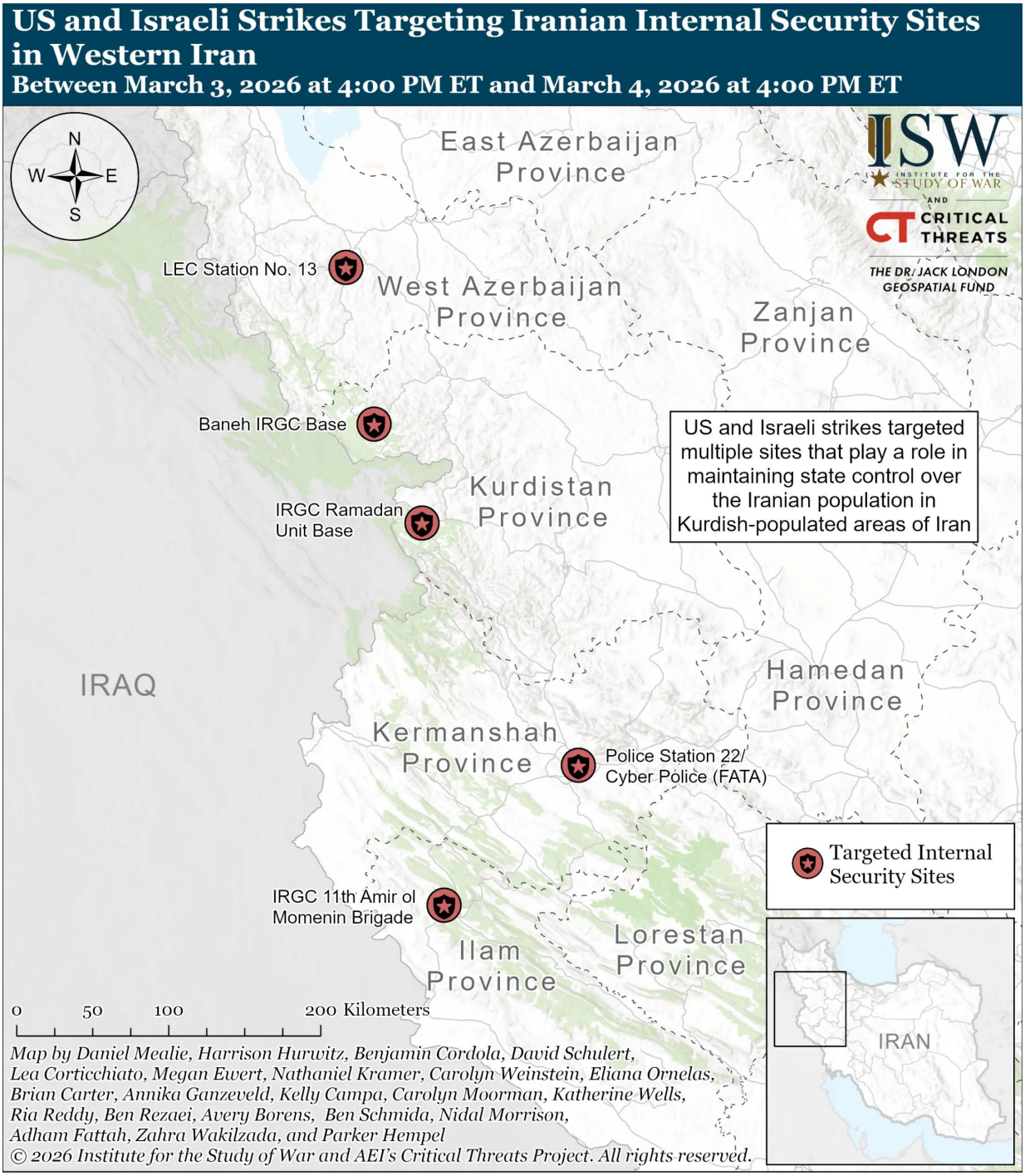
violent suppression of protests in Tehran during the December 2025-January 2026 protests.[38]



The combined force also launched airstrikes targeting key internal security sites in Kurdish-populated areas of northwestern Iran. Commercially available satellite imagery from March 4 confirmed that airstrikes damaged unspecified buildings at both the LEC headquarters in Ilam and Kurdistan provinces (see below). Commercially available satellite imagery from March 4 also confirmed damage to two buildings at the IRGC 11th Amir ol Momenin Brigade base in Soltanabad, Ilam Province. This brigade operates under the IRGC Ground Forces Najaf-e Ashraf Operational Base, which is responsible for supporting LEC and Basij's internal security operations in Ilam, Kermanshah, and Hamedan western border provinces, by providing rapidly deployable support to suppress internal unrest and protect the regime.[39] Local sources reported that combined forces airstrikes targeted the IRGC Ramadan Unit Base in Marivan City, Kurdistan Province, on March 4.[40] The IRGC Ramadan unit has supported the local LEC forces in suppressing the protests in Marivan City, which has been a hotspot for anti-regime unrest in the past decade.[41] Combined force airstrikes also targeted local LEC sites in Marivan City on March 3.[42] OSINT analysts published footage of airstrikes targeting an unspecified IRGC base and Artesh barracks in Baneh, Kurdistan, which was also a battleground between security forces and protesters during the 2022 Mahsa Amini Protest Movement.[43] Combined forces airstrikes separately destroyed a local LEC Station in Mahabad, West Azerbaijan Province, on March 3.[44] Security forces cracked down on protesters in the 2022 Mahsa Amini Protest Movement and in January 2026.[45] An OSINT analyst also reported on March 3 that an airstrike targeted the IRGC Ground Forces Farj Division headquarters' heliport in Shiraz City,

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Fars Province.[46] The Farj Division is a special forces unit under the IRGC Ground Forces Madineh Headquarters that covers Fars, Hormozgan, and Bushehr provinces.[47] ISW-CTP recorded several protests in Shiraz between December 30, 2025, and February 24, 2026.[48] Iranian diaspora media noted in 2020 how the Farj Division's headquarters is the closest IRGC Ground Force headquarters to the Strait of Hormuz and has carried out many exercises simulating defending the strait.[49]



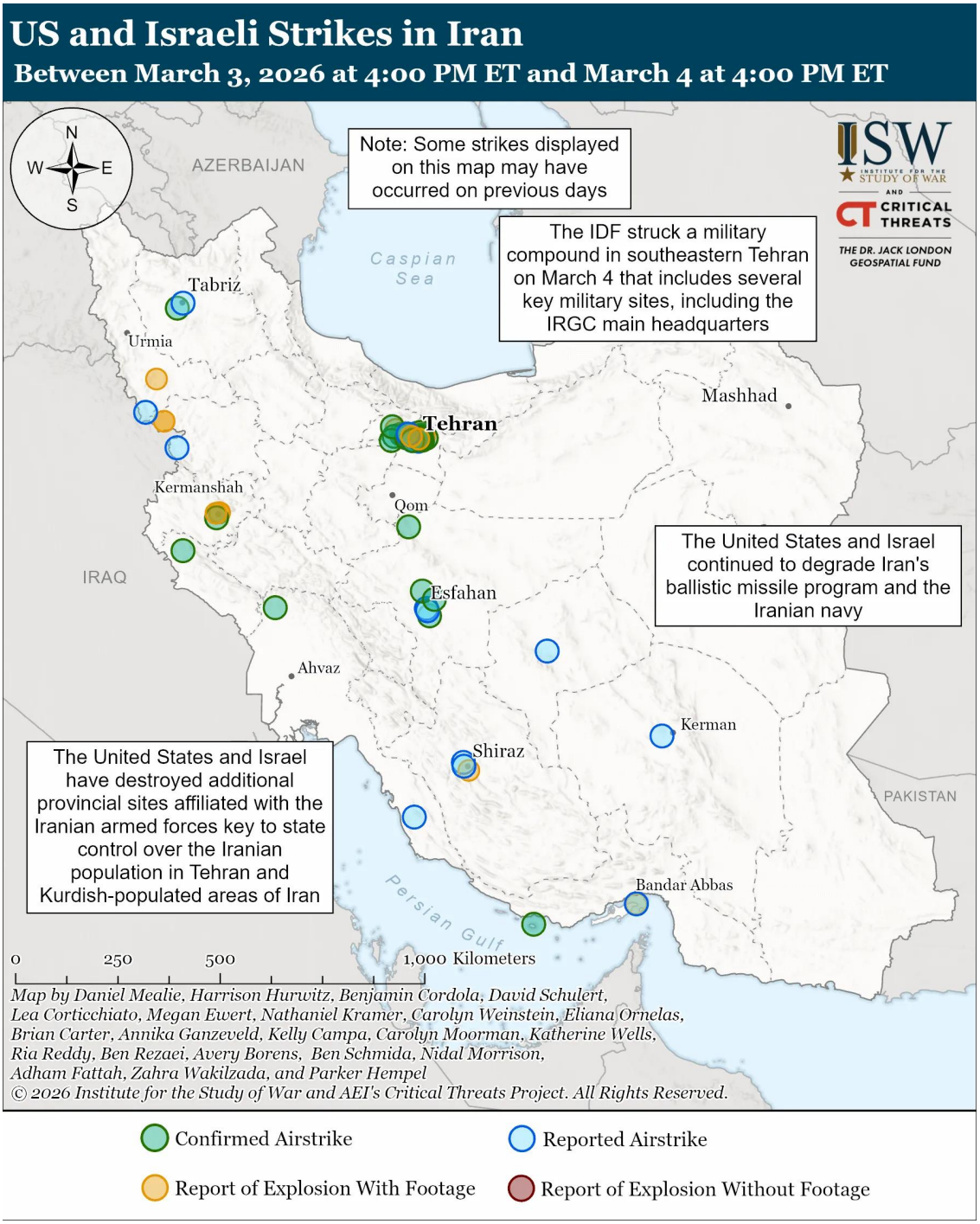
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There are reports that Kurdish groups moving from Iraqi Kurdistan have begun a cross-border ground operation in Iran. ISW-CTP has observed no corroborating evidence of such an operation, and a senior Iraqi Kurdistan official denied on March 4 that any groups from Iraqi Kurdistan had begun a ground offensive in Iran.[50] A Fox News correspondent reported on March 4 that "thousands of Iraqi Kurds have launched a ground offensive in Iran," citing an unspecified US official.[51] Unspecified Kurdish officials told the Associated Press on March 4 that Kurdish groups "based in northern Iraq" are preparing for a cross-border operation in Iran.[52] Five Iranian Kurdish political parties officially formed the "Coalition of Political Forces of Iranian Kurdistan" on February 22.[53] Iranian forces have continued to strike Kurdish militias in Iraq since the war began on February 28.[54]

The Mobarizoun Popular Front (MPF) announced on March 3 that it targeted the Iranian LEC Commander of Tardast station in Zahedan, Sistan and Baluchistan Province.[55] This marks the first time the insurgency group has attacked Iranian security forces since the war began. The MPF

claimed that the LEC Commander had a prominent role in suppressing and intimidating Zahedan's residents.[56] The MPF is a coalition of four Baloch organizations in Sistan and Baluchistan that has historically posed security issues for the Iranian regime in southeastern Iran.[57]

US and Israeli Air Campaign

The US-Israeli combined force continues to degrade Iran's ballistic missile program. US Central Command (CENTCOM) said on March 4 that combined force strikes on ballistic missile facilities have reduced Iranian ballistic missile launches by 86 percent since February 2.[58] The IDF said it struck a chemical plant that produces missile components west of Tehran in Garmdareh, Alborz Province, on March 3.[59] Iranian media also reported sounds of explosions near Garmdareh on February 3.[60] The James Martin Center for Non-Proliferation Studies posted satellite imagery from March 3 that shows IDF strikes damaged or destroyed at least eight buildings.[61] The IDF said that the site produced raw materials for solid-fuel surface-to-surface missiles.[62]



The combined force also struck the Esfahan South Missile Base, likely with at least two bunker buster bombs, on March 3, according to satellite imagery from the Martin Center.[63] This is the third combined force strike on the Esfahan South Missile Base since the conflict began on February 28.[64]

The combined force conducted at least three airstrikes on two vehicles and a building near the Kashan Missile Base, Esfahan Province, likely on March 2, according to satellite imagery from the Martin Center.[65] A researcher at the Martin Center said that Iran previously used the Kashan Missile Base to launch missiles at Israel during the October 7 War in 2024.[66] The Kashan Missile Base is located near

the 840th Missile Group in Aran va Bidgol, Esfahan Province.[67]

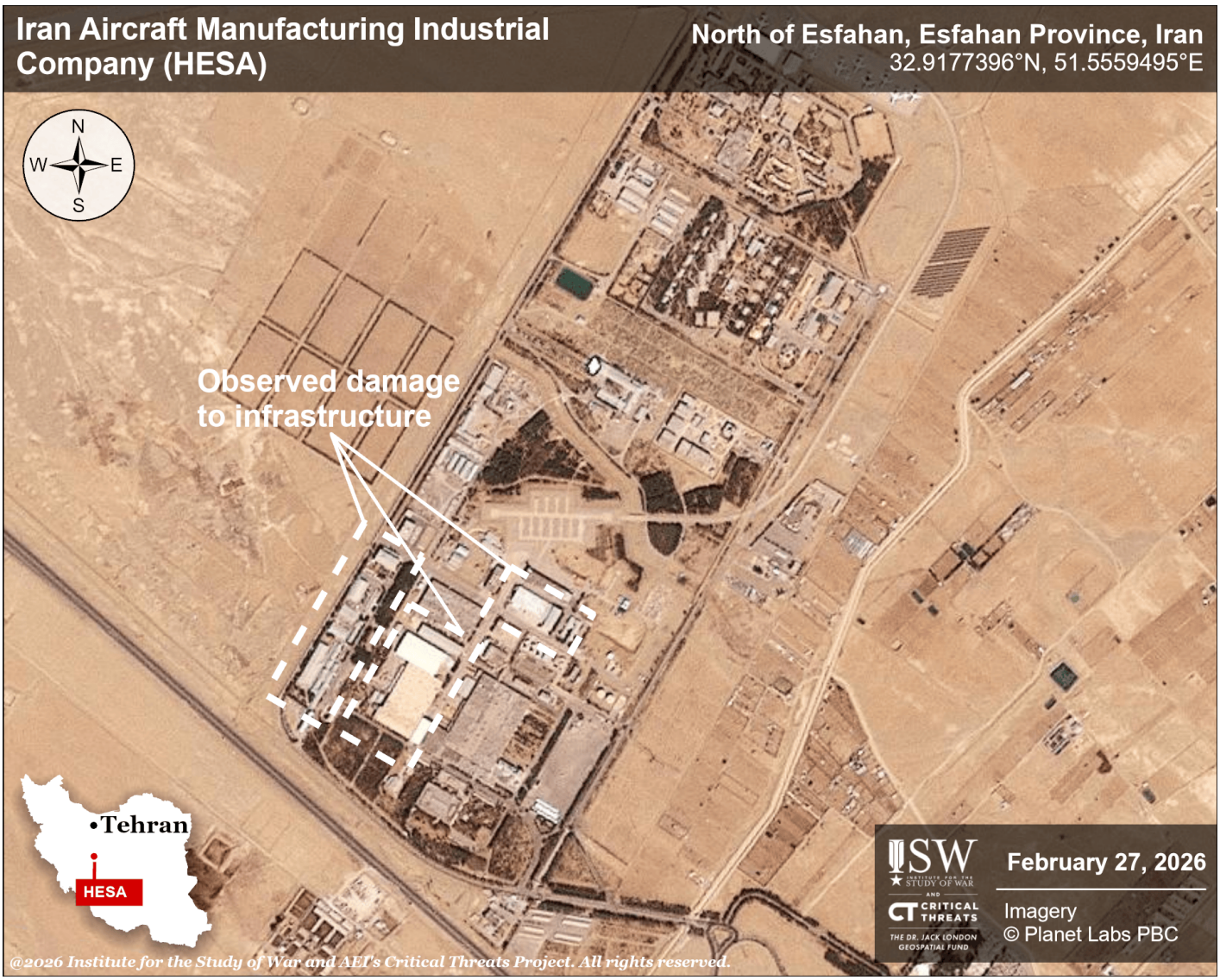
Combined force airstrikes on the Dezful Missile Base, Khuzestan Province, destroyed at least seven buildings between March 1 and March 3, according to satellite imagery from the Martin Center.[68] The strikes indicate that Iran used the Dezful site for some form of ballistic missile production, but this is likely the first recorded strike at the facility.[69] ISW-CTP did not record Israeli strikes on Dezful during the 12-Day War.

The combined force conducted several airstrikes on the Southwest Tabriz Missile Base, East Azerbaijan Province, which inflicted heavy damage on the facility and destroyed nearly every building at the facility, according to satellite imagery captured on March 3.[70] The combined force likely struck the facility on March 3, given that smoke from a presumed strike is visible in some published satellite imagery.[71] Combined force airstrikes also targeted a likely surface-to-air missile (SAM) position at the facility and a possible radar.[72] The Southwest Tabriz Missile Base is an underground facility for housing and launching ballistic missiles. The base also reportedly stores Shahab missiles.[73] The IDF previously struck the Tabriz Missile Base during the 12-Day War.[74]

An Israeli Air Force (IAF) F-35 struck a mobile ballistic missile launcher located on a highway south of Kermanshah City on March 4.[75] The IAF published footage of the strike on February 4, and an Israeli analyst geolocated the strike the same day.[76]

The combined force struck a state-owned drone production facility in Esfahan Province. Commercially available satellite imagery shows at least nine impact points at Iran Aircraft Manufacturing Industrial Company (HESA) in Shahin Shahr, Esfahan Province, between March 1 and 2. At least five buildings show visible damage. HESA is a state-owned subsidiary of the Iranian Defense and Armed Forces Logistics Ministry.[77] HESA manufactures Ababil and Shahed-series drones for the IRGC.[78] Israel struck HESA during the June 2025 war.[79]

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Iranian Retaliation

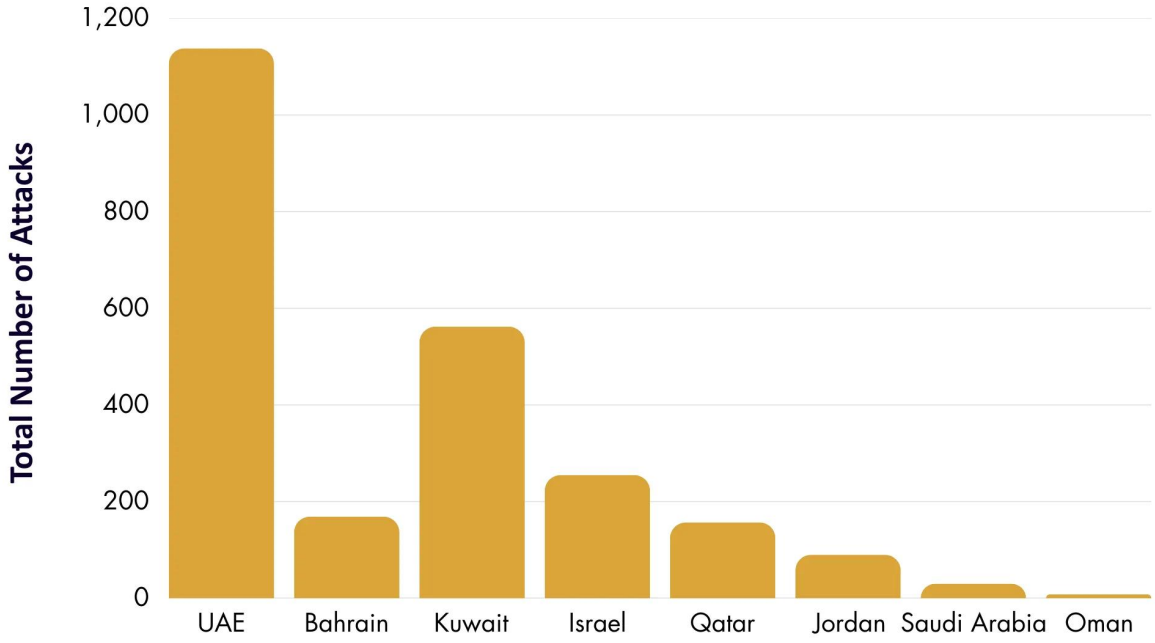
Iran has continued to launch ballistic missiles at Israel since ISW-CTP's last data cutoff on March 4.[80] Iran conducted at least two missile barrages targeting Israel between March 4 at 8:00 AM ET and March 4 at 4:00 PM ET.[81] One of the barrages reportedly included three ballistic missiles, two of which the IDF intercepted, while the third fell in Jordan.[82] ISW-CTP did not observe any reports of impacts in Israel.

Iran has continued to launch a greater number of drones in its attacks as the number of ballistic missile launches continues to fall, which likely reflects the combined forces' success in degrading Iran's ability to launch ballistic missiles. Iran launched at least 158 ballistic missiles, a total of 798 missiles, and 1,628 drones since the war started on February 28.[83] The consistently low

level of Iranian ballistic missile launches compared to Iranian drones reflects the continued degradation of Iran's ballistic missile capabilities by the combined force. The IDF assessed on March 3 that the combined force had destroyed around 300 Iranian ballistic missile launchers.[84] US Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Dan Caine noted on March 4 that Iran's ballistic missile fire is down 86 percent compared to February 28 and has decreased 23 percent within the past 24 hours.[85] US and Israeli strikes on Iranian command-and-control networks may also be limiting Iran's ability to launch large missile barrages.

Iran's retaliatory attacks have heavily focused on targeting the Gulf countries rather than Israel. Most of Iran's retaliatory attacks have targeted the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Iran has reportedly launched 255 drones and missiles targeting Israel since February 28, which is relatively small compared to the 2,171 drones and missiles Iran has launched at the Gulf countries.[86] 1,138 of these 2,171 Iranian drone and missile attacks targeted the UAE, which exemplifies how the UAE is taking the most hits in this war.[87] An Iranian official close to the Iranian regime said on March 4 that Iran seeks to expand the war to regional countries and noted that Israel is not the regime's first priority.[88]

Iranian Attacks on the Gulf Countries and Israel Since February 28

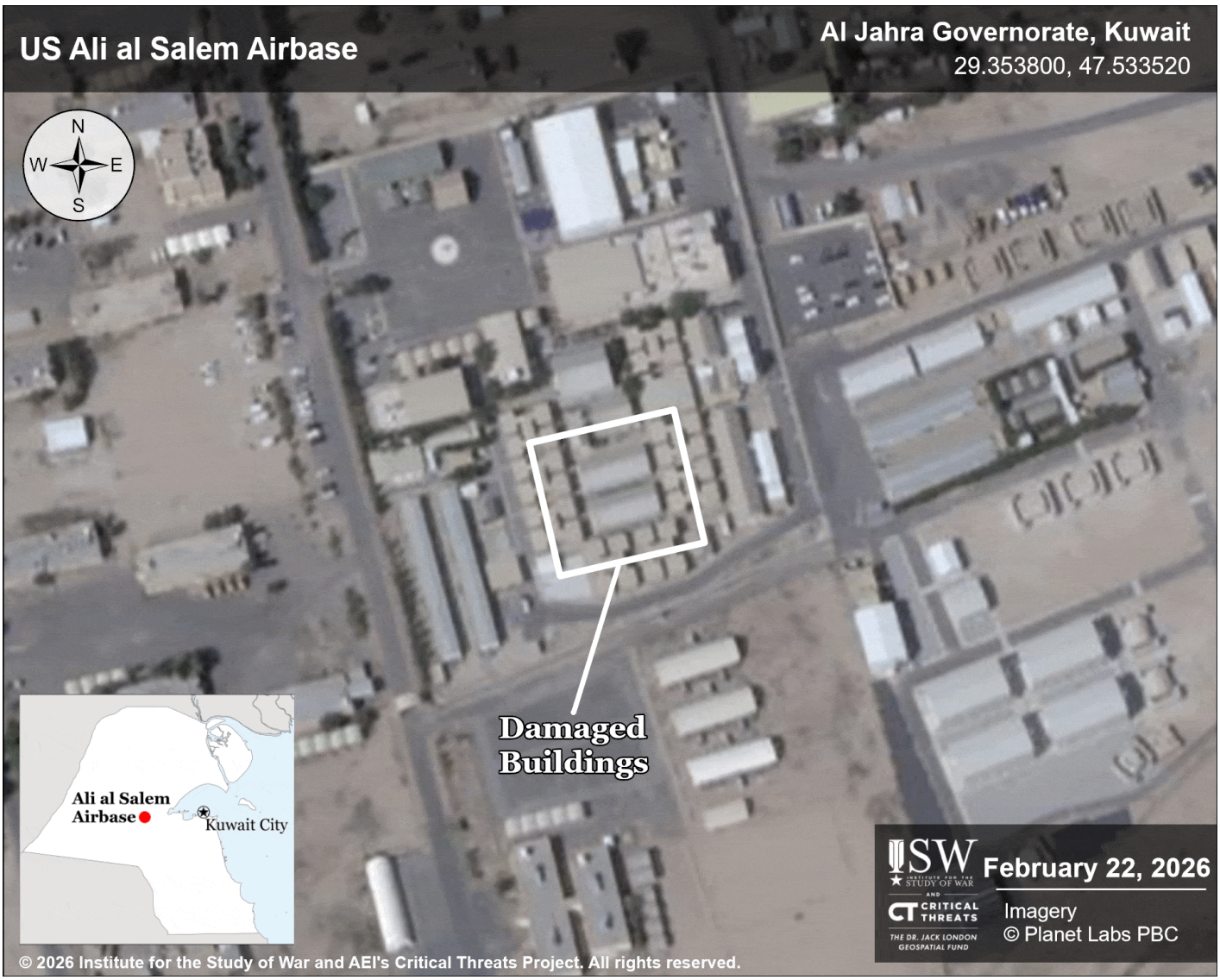


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All data from Western and regional media reports.

Iranian strikes targeting US bases in the region have caused some material damage and casualties. Commercially available satellite imagery captured on March 4 shows that Iranian airstrikes on the Ali al Salem Airbase in Kuwait damaged several buildings, including aircraft shelters and equipment warehouses. Iran targeted the Ali al Salem Airbase on February 28 and March 2.[89] Ali al Salem Airbase has long served as a crucial US military base in the region that provides a variety of capabilities, including air surveillance, force protection, combat rescue, aero medical evacuation, and

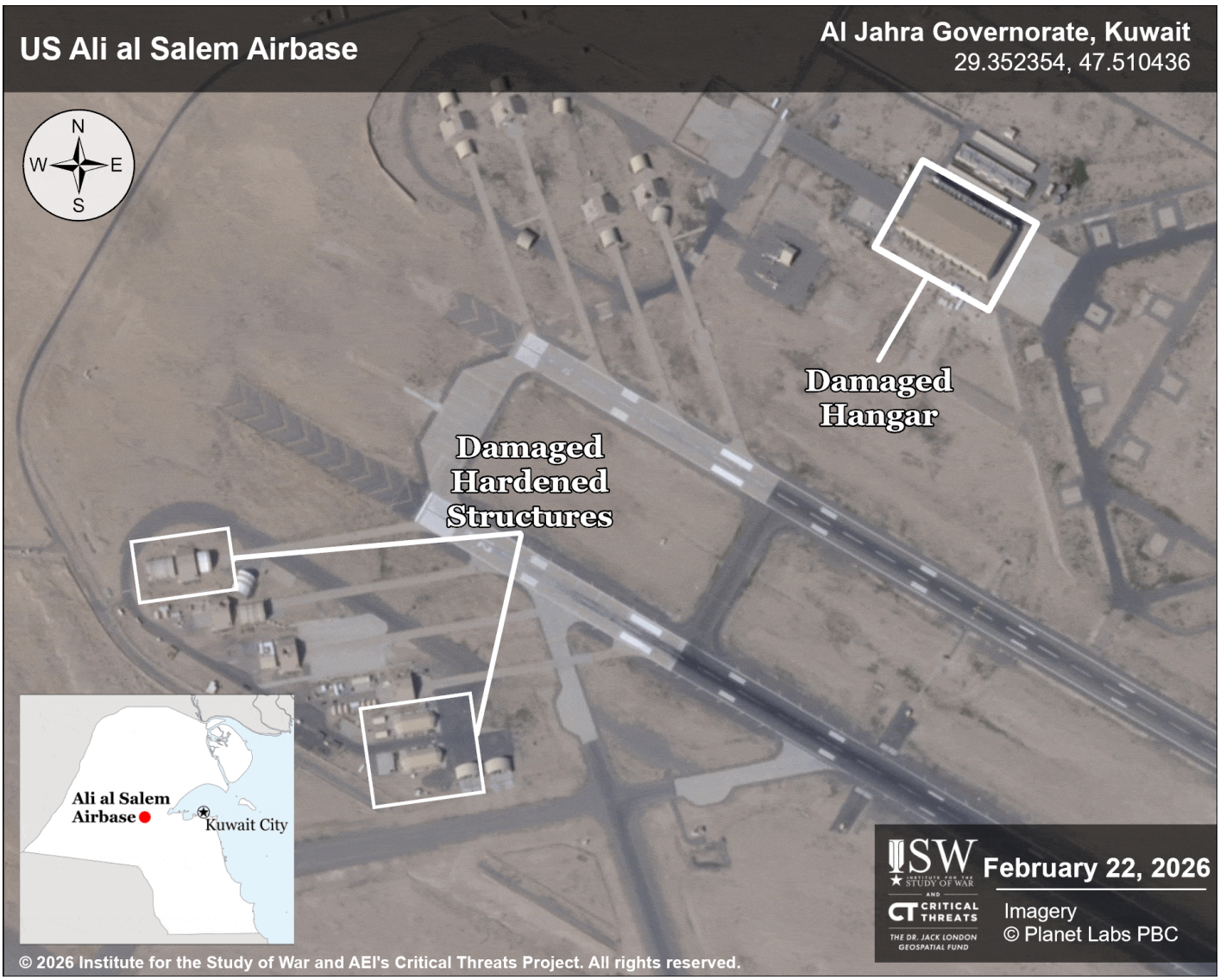
combat support.[90] The airbase hosts the US Air Force 386th Air Expeditionary Wing that supports coalition forces' missions and was a key logistics hub for US Operation Inherent Resolve.[91] The New York Times reported on March 3 that Iranian strikes also damaged structures that are part of or near communication and radar systems on at least seven US military sites across the region.[92] These sites included Ali al Salem Airbase, al Udeid Airbase in Qatar, Camp Arifjan in Kuwait, the US Navy's Fifth Fleet Headquarters in Bahrain, and Prince Sultan Airbase in Saudi Arabia.[93] Iran has previously attempted to attack the US military's communication capabilities.[94] The Iranian drone attack on Port Shuaiba, Kuwait, on March 1 killed four US Army reserve soldiers.[95]



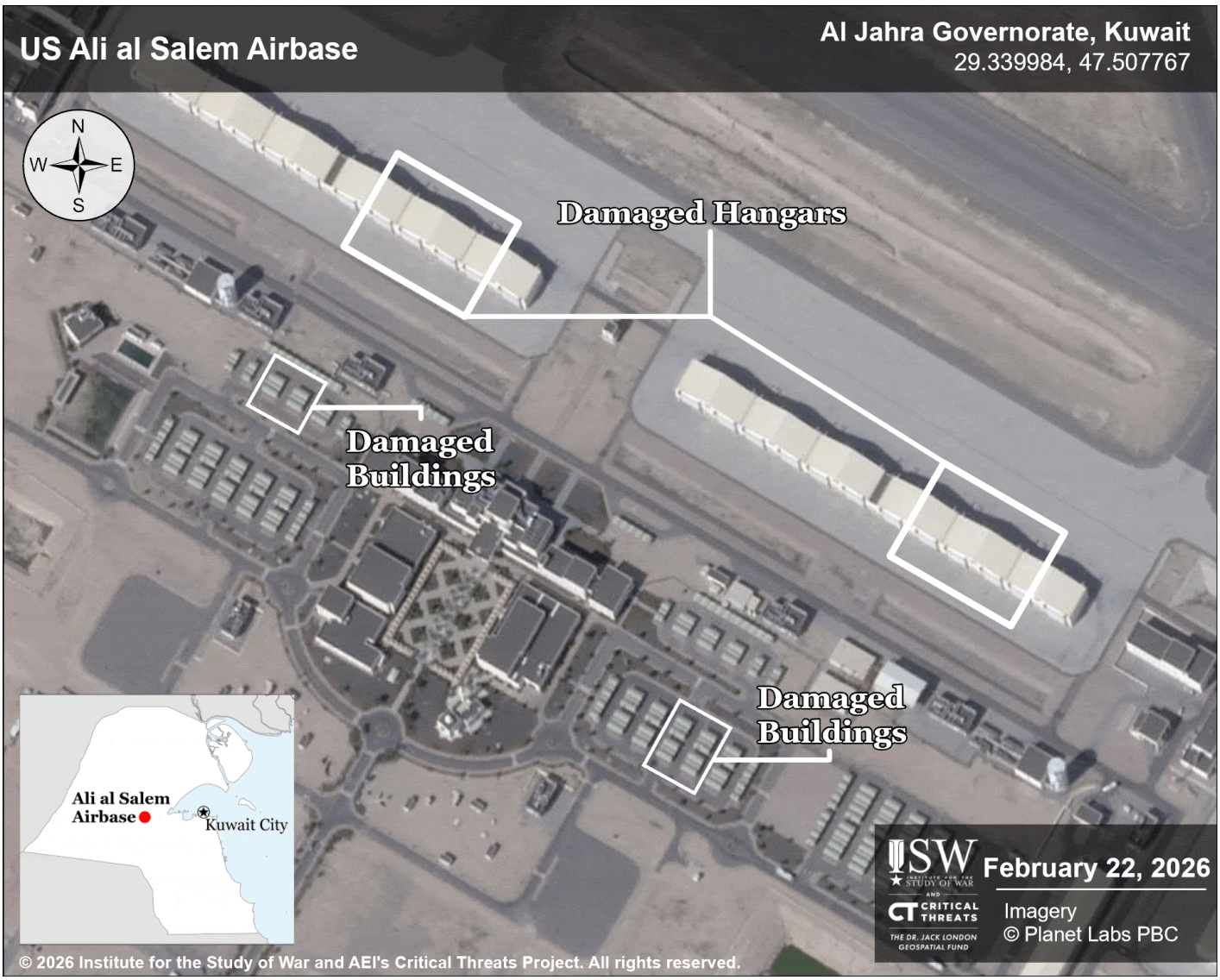

US Ali al Salem Airbase
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Damaged Buildings
Ali al Salem Airbase
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CT CRITICAL THREATS
February 22, 2026
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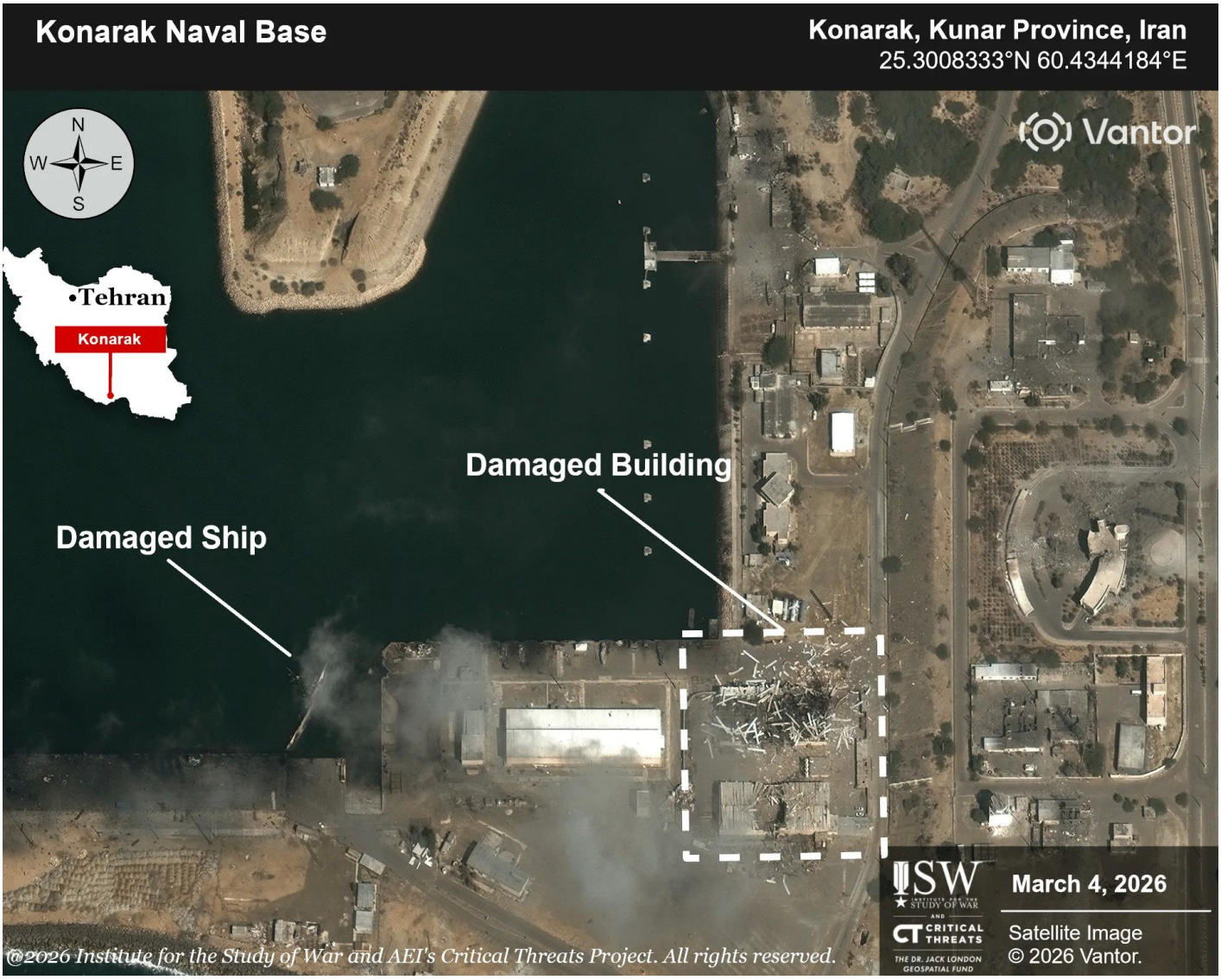


Iranian attacks targeting energy infrastructure in the Gulf have continued to disrupt the regional oil, gas, and international shipping industries. Vessel traffic through the Strait of Hormuz is down by approximately 90 percent on March 4.[96] Danish shipping giant Maersk suspended on March 4 cargo booking acceptance in and out of the UAE, Oman, Iraq, Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain, and Saudi Arabia immediately and until further notice.[97] Maersk only made an exception for the Port of Salalah in Oman and the Dammam and Jubail ports in Saudi Arabia.[98] Maersk previously noted on March 1 that it was halting transit through the Suez Canal and the Strait of Hormuz.[99] Iraq is reportedly facing a total electricity cut-off due to ”technical issues.”[100] Iraq previously halted oil production at the Rumaila oil field, which is operated by British Petroleum (BP) PLC, due to storage shortages.[101] Qatar also fully shut down gas liquefaction on March 4 and will not be able to return to normal production and export levels “for at least a month.”[102] Companies have reportedly warned other Gulf states, specifically Saudi Arabia and the UAE, that they may also need to halt oil production due to limited storage capacity ”within weeks.”[103] European natural-gas prices have surged roughly 70 percent since the war started on February 28.[104] The war has also prompted some oil and fuel buyers, specifically in Asia, to cut back on exports and tighten regional supplies.[105]

The combined force has severely degraded the Iranian navy. CENTCOM said it has struck or sunk more than 20 Iranian ships, including the recent sinking of the IRIS Dena off the southern coast of Sri Lanka, and the IRGC Navy’s IRIS *Shahid Sayyad Shirazi*, a Soleimani-class corvette, off the coast of Bandar Abbas on March 3.[106] The Artesh Navy has only four frigates and one corvette left in service,

along with dozens of fast attack craft.[107] The sinking of the IRIS Dena means that the combined force has destroyed all Iranian Moudge-class frigates in the Artesh Navy Southern Fleet. The combined force sank both the IRIS *Sahand* and the IRIS *Jamaran* on February 28.[108] There is a single Moudge-class frigate still in service, IRIS *Deylaman*, which is part of the Northern Fleet in the Caspian Sea. The Northern Fleet, given its position in the Caspian Sea, is irrelevant to the combined force's efforts to prevent Iran from retaliating against merchant shipping in the Persian Gulf.[109] The IRGC Navy, which is responsible for operations in the Persian Gulf, retains three remaining Soleimani-class corvettes, one Abu Mahdi al Muhandis-class corvette, and dozens of fast attack craft.[110] The reduction in Iran's naval capabilities will also prevent it from blocking the Strait of Hormuz using conventional means, such as sea mines. All future attempts by the Iranian navy to blockade the Strait of Hormuz will likely employ unconventional forces such as small boats, unmanned surface vessels (USVs), and underwater drones.

Commercially available satellite imagery captured on March 4 showed damage to a building and a vessel at the Artesh Navy 3rd Naval District base in Konarak, Sistan and Baluchistan Province. Combined force strikes sank the IRIS *Bayandor* and IRIS *Naghdi*, Iran's two remaining Bayandor-class patrol frigates, at the port on or before March 1.[111]



Iran will continue to attempt to disrupt international shipping through the Strait of Hormuz as part of a broader effort to impose a cost on the Gulf states using missiles and drones until the combined force degrades the ability of Iran to do so. The United Kingdom Maritime Trade

Operations (UKMTO) reported five maritime security incidents in and around the Strait of Hormuz on March 3 and March 4, which were likely Iranian attacks on shipping.[112] The UKMTO reported an explosion near an unspecified vessel off the coast of Muscat, Oman, on March 3. The explosion did not injure the crew or the vessel.[113] The UKMTO separately reported that an unspecified projectile struck the Panamanian-flagged *Gold Oak* Cargo Ship off the coast of the UAE on March 3, causing damage to the vessel but not injuring the crew.[114] The UKMTO also reported that an unknown projectile struck the Marshall Islands-flagged *Libra Trader* oil tanker off the coast of the UAE on March 3, causing damage to the vessel but no injuries to the crew.[115] The UKMTO reported that an unknown projectile struck the Maltese-flagged*Safeen Prestige* Cargo Ship just above the water line off the coast of Oman on March 4.[116] This strike was likely caused by an Iranian USV, given its impact location on the vessel, which subsequently caused a fire in the engine room and forced the crew to abandon ship.[117] The UKMTO previously reported a likely Iranian USV attack on an unspecified vessel 50 nautical miles north of Muscat, Oman, which forced the vessel to abandon ship on March 1.[118] Iran may have used USVs to attack the commercial vessel because USVs can inflict greater damage to vessels than unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs). The UKMTO also reported on March 4 that unknown projectiles landed near a Liberian-flagged container ship but did not hit it.[119] An unspecified senior Iranian naval commander told Iranian media on March 4 that the IRGC navy targeted more than 10 ships and oil tankers in the Strait of Hormuz since February 28.[120]

I**ranian regime officials are debating who should become the next Supreme Leader, with Ali Khamenei's son, Mojtaba Khamenei, emerging as the reported favorite.[121]** The combination of public reports and leaks about the supreme leader's succession indicates that an internal debate over Khamenei's successor is underway, particularly within the Assembly of Experts. The Assembly of Experts is an 88-member clerical body that is responsible for appointing and supervising the Supreme Leader, according to the Iranian constitution.[122] Assembly of Experts member Ahmad Khatami announced on March 4 that "the leadership options have been determined" and that the Assembly of Experts is "close to choosing the leader."[123] Three Iranian officials told the New York Times that the Assembly of Experts held two virtual meetings on March 3 to discuss who would become the next Supreme Leader of Iran.[124] The Iranian officials stated that Mojtaba emerged as the "clear front-runner."[125] A pro-Iran Iraqi media outlet reported on March 3 that the Assembly of Experts is considering six options to become the next Supreme Leader.[126] The options are Guardian Council member Alireza Arafi, senior cleric Hashem Hosseini Bushehri, senior cleric and grandson of the first Supreme Leader Hassan Khomeini, former president Hassan Rouhani, Expediency Discernment Council head Amoli Larijani, and Mojtaba Khamenei.[127]

Axis of Resistance Response

Hezbollah claimed that the group launched 11 attacks targeting IDF positions and forces in northern and central Israel and southern Lebanon since ISW-CTP's last data cutoff.[128] Hezbollah conducted a total of 17 attacks against Israeli forces on March 4. Hezbollah on March 4 targeted Israeli missile defense bases, air bases, and an IDF staging point in northern Israel.[129] Hezbollah claimed three drone attacks and one missile attack targeting missile defense bases in Kiryat Elazar and Ain Shemer, northern Israel.[130] Hezbollah also claimed that the group attacked two air bases in northern and central Israel.[131] Hezbollah claimed multiple missile and drone attacks on two Israeli bases in northern Israel since March 3.[132] Hezbollah also claimed that its fighters injured an unspecified number of IDF forces in a direct fire rocket attack in Kiryat Shmona, northern Israel.[133] Hezbollah claimed attacks on Israeli forces in southern Lebanon, including a Merkava tank in Talunm al Nahas, Nabatieh District, and Israeli forces in Khiam, Marjaayoun District.[134] The IDF has not confirmed or commented on any of these attacks at the time of this writing. The IDF Navy intercepted a Hezbollah

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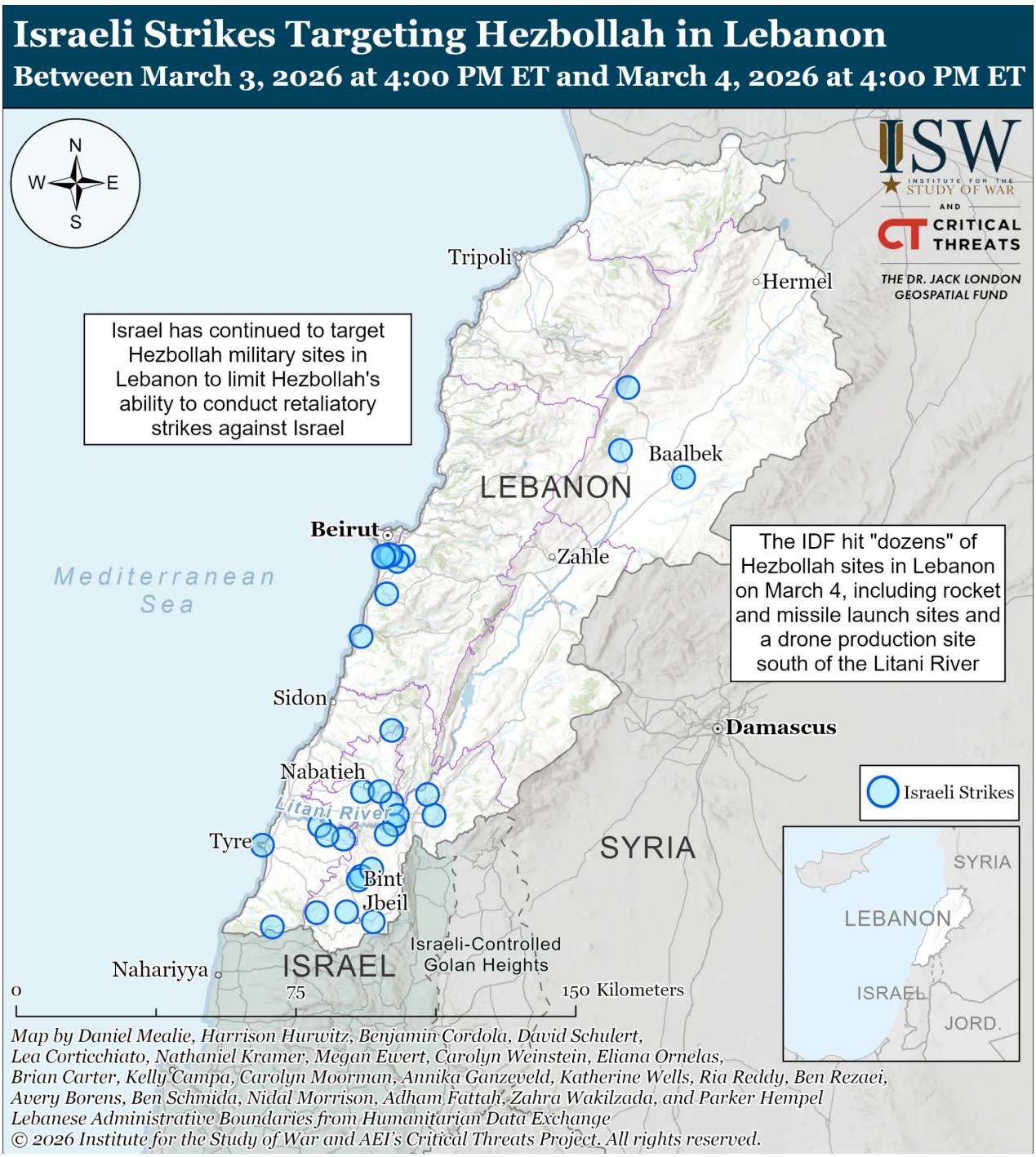
drone fired from Lebanon on March 4.[135] The IDF reported that two soldiers from the 401st Armored Brigade, 162nd Division, were injured by anti-tank fire in southern Lebanon.[136]

The IDF Spokesman Brigadier General Effie Defrin reported that the IDF has no intelligence indicating that an attack on unspecified sites in central Israel on March 4, with concurrent fire from Iran and by Hezbollah in Lebanon, was a coordinated effort.[137] A senior Israeli official told an Israeli media correspondent on March 4 that Iran and Hezbollah have attempted to coordinate their attack timing on the unspecified sites in central Israel.[138] The Iranian military is currently experiencing challenges in coordinating its own operations within Iran between units in the Iranian military. It is unlikely that Iran could coordinate simultaneous attacks with Hezbollah fighters in Lebanon, given the current command and control challenges Iran is experiencing.

The IDF has advanced and reportedly established at least one position in southern Lebanon as part of Israel's goal to prevent direct fire attacks on northern Israeli towns.[139] The IDF has reportedly advanced into Khiam and Mays al Jabal, Marjaayoun district, southern Lebanon.[140] Lebanese media reported that the IDF established a position in front of the Khiam municipality building.[141] The municipality building is located about 1.5 miles (2.48 kilometers) from Israel's Tal al Hamamis outpost, one of Israel's five permanent positions it has occupied since February 2025.[142] The IDF reported that three divisions are operating in southern Lebanon.[143] The IDF 91st Division is operating in eastern southern Lebanon, the 210th Division is operating in the Mount Dov (Sheeba Farms) area, and the 146th Division (Res.) is operating in western southern Lebanon.[144] An unspecified Israeli spokesperson told Reuters on March 4 that the IDF is "positioning troops a little farther" into Lebanon to protect northern Israeli communities from attacks.[145] Israeli Defense Minister Israel Katz and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said on March 3 that the IDF will seize territory in southern Lebanon to prevent Hezbollah's direct fire attacks on northern Israeli towns.[146]

The IDF has continued to conduct airstrikes targeting Hezbollah military sites in Lebanon to degrade Hezbollah's ability to conduct retaliatory attacks against Israel. IDF reported that it hit "dozens" of Hezbollah targets, particularly in the south of the Litani River, including rocket and missile launch sites and a drone production site.[147] The IDF also targeted two Hezbollah operatives in Beirut.[148] The IDF has not confirmed the identity of the two individuals at the time of this writing, however.

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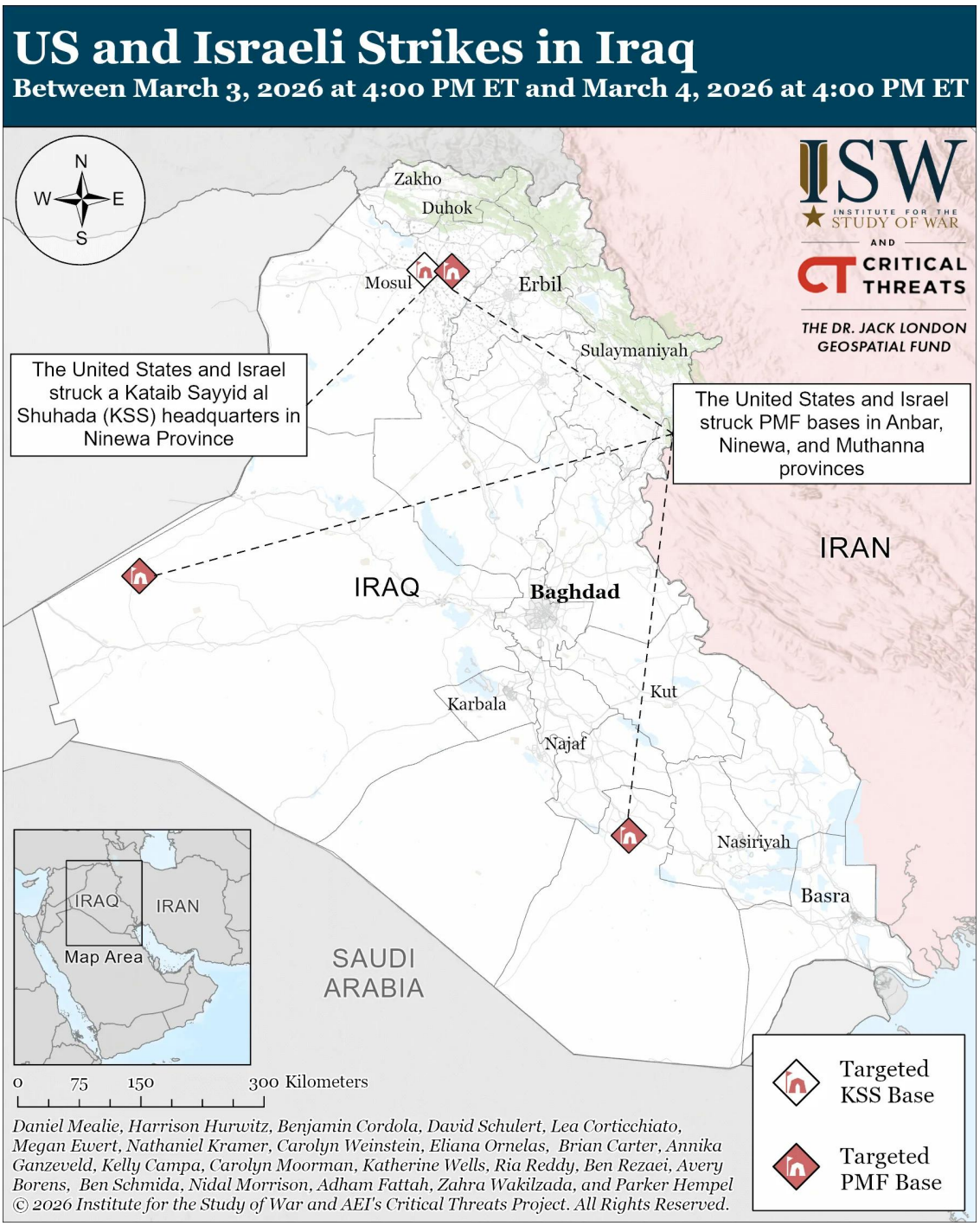


The Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) has reportedly conducted operations to disarm Hezbollah in southern Lebanon, after the government banned Hezbollah military activities in Lebanon on March 2.[149] The LAF reported that it is continuing to coordinate with UNIFIL and the US-chaired ceasefire monitoring committee to disarm Hezbollah.[150] The LAF reported that it has arrested 26 Lebanese citizens and one Palestinian for illegally possessing weapons and ammunition.[151] Unspecified Lebanese security sources told Lebanese media on March 4 that the LAF patrols seized an unspecified number of ”rocket launchers“ from multiple southern Lebanese towns.[152] Lebanese President Joseph Aoun said on March 2 that Hezbollah’s March 1 rocket attack on northern Israel was fired from a position north of the Litani, where the LAF had not yet deployed to disarm Hezbollah.[153] The Lebanese Cabinet declared on March 2 that all Hezbollah military and security activity is illegal, demanded that Hezbollah hand over all of its weapons to the state, and called for Hezbollah to be relegated to only a political organization.[154]

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The United States and Israel continued to strike Iranian-backed Iraqi militias on March 3 and 4 to degrade their ability to conduct retaliatory attacks against US forces and Israel. The United States and Israel struck a Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) base in Diyala Province, Iraq, on March 3, killing one fighter.[155] Several Iranian-backed Iraqi militias operate under the PMF, and some of these militias answer to Iran instead of the Iraqi prime minister.[156] The United States and Israel separately struck PMF bases in al Qaim, Anbar Province, and Samawah, Muthanna Province, on March 3.[157] A security source told Iraqi media that the strike in Samawah injured three fighters.[158] The combined force recently carried out strikes targeting PMF bases in Diyala, Anbar, and Muthanna provinces on March 1.[159] The United States and Israel also reportedly struck a Kataib Sayyid al Shuhada headquarters and two 30th PMF Brigade bases in Ninewa Province on March 4.[160] The combined force has carried out several waves of strikes targeting 30th PMF Brigade bases in Ninewa Province since March 1.[161] The 30th PMF Brigade is primarily composed of Shabab fighters and aligned with the Badr Organization, which is both an Iranian partner militia and a political party.[162] The combined force separately struck a Kataib Hezbollah vehicle in Babil Province on March 4.[163] A security source told Iraqi media that the strike killed two Kataib Hezbollah members, including commander Abu Hassan al Faraji.[164] The United States has previously conducted pre-emptive airstrikes targeting Iranian-backed Iraqi militias in Iraq to prevent the militias from launching attacks.[165]

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Iranian-backed Iraqi militias continue to conduct attacks against US forces. Likely Iranian-backed Iraqi militias targeted the US military's former Victory Base at Baghdad International Airport on March 4 with at least two drones.[166] A security source told Iraqi media that air defenses intercepted two drones attempting to target the base.[167] The United States transferred control of the Victory Base to the Iraqi government in 2011, but many Iranian-backed actors continue to assert that the area is still a US base.[168] Saraya Awliya al Dam, which is commonly believed to be a front group for larger Iraqi militias, previously claimed responsibility for targeting the base on March 1.[169]

The Houthis warned unspecified Arab countries on March 4 that attacking Iran would prompt their entry into the war, according to Iranian Supreme National Security Council (SNSC)-affiliated media.[170] The Houthis likely aim to deter Gulf countries from attacking Iran. The Houthis have not yet conducted any retaliatory attacks against the United States or Israel, which is notable because the Houthis were the only Axis of Resistance member that participated in the June 2025 Israel-

Iran War.[171] The Houthis could decide at any time to attack US interests or Israel in response to the combined strike campaign, however.

Other Activity

The Iranian Intelligence Ministry announced on March 4 that security forces detained an unspecified number of "terrorist mercenaries" and seized large quantities of "urban warfare equipment, sums of euros and dollars, and a Starlink device" in an unspecified location in Iran.[172] The Intelligence Ministry warned of harsh punishments for individuals deemed "domestic mercenaries" in Iran.[173]

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Endnotes

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Iran Update Morning Special Report, March 5, 2026

Avery Borens, Adham Fattah, Ria Reddy, Brian Carter

Analyst Notes: Data Cutoff: 8:00 AM ET

The Institute for the Study of War (ISW) and the Critical Threats Project (CTP) at the American Enterprise Institute are publishing two updates daily to provide analysis on the war with Iran. The morning update will focus on US and Israeli strikes on Iran and Iran and the Axis of Resistance's response to the strikes. The evening update will be more comprehensive, covering events over the past 24-hour period and refining items discussed in the morning update.

Key Takeaways

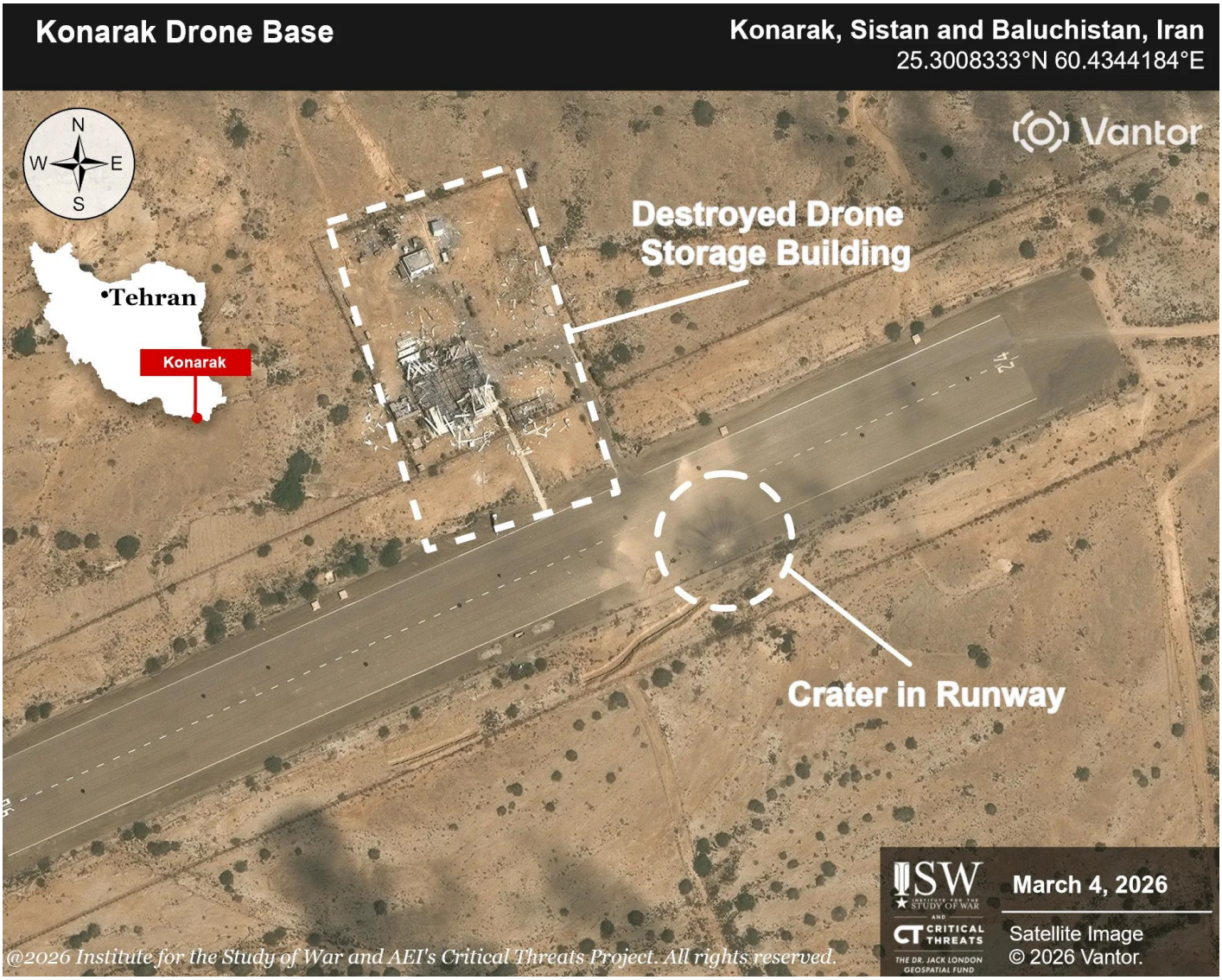
1. The combined force has continued to degrade Iran's ballistic missile and drone capabilities to disrupt Iran's ability to launch retaliatory attacks against Israel and US forces. The decrease in retaliatory Iranian drone and missile attacks strongly suggests that the US-Israeli effort to destroy Iran's ballistic missile and drone capabilities has had considerable success.
2. The combined force has continued to target Iran's internal security and government institutions. The strikes were concentrated in Tehran and northwestern Iran. The regime has historically been concerned about anti-regime activity in northwestern Iran.
3. Iran launched attacks targeting Turkey and Azerbaijan on March 4 and 5. These attacks mark the 10th and 11th countries to come under Iranian fire.
4. Hezbollah claimed that the group conducted 7 attacks targeting Israel Defense Forces (IDF) positions and forces in northern Israel and southern Lebanon since ISW-CTP's last data cutoff at 4:00 PM ET on March 4. Hezbollah claimed on March 4 that its fighters engaged Israeli ground forces in Dhayra, Tyre District, and Khiam, Marjaayoun. These mark the first direct engagements between Hezbollah and the IDF since the fall 2024 Israel-Hezbollah conflict.

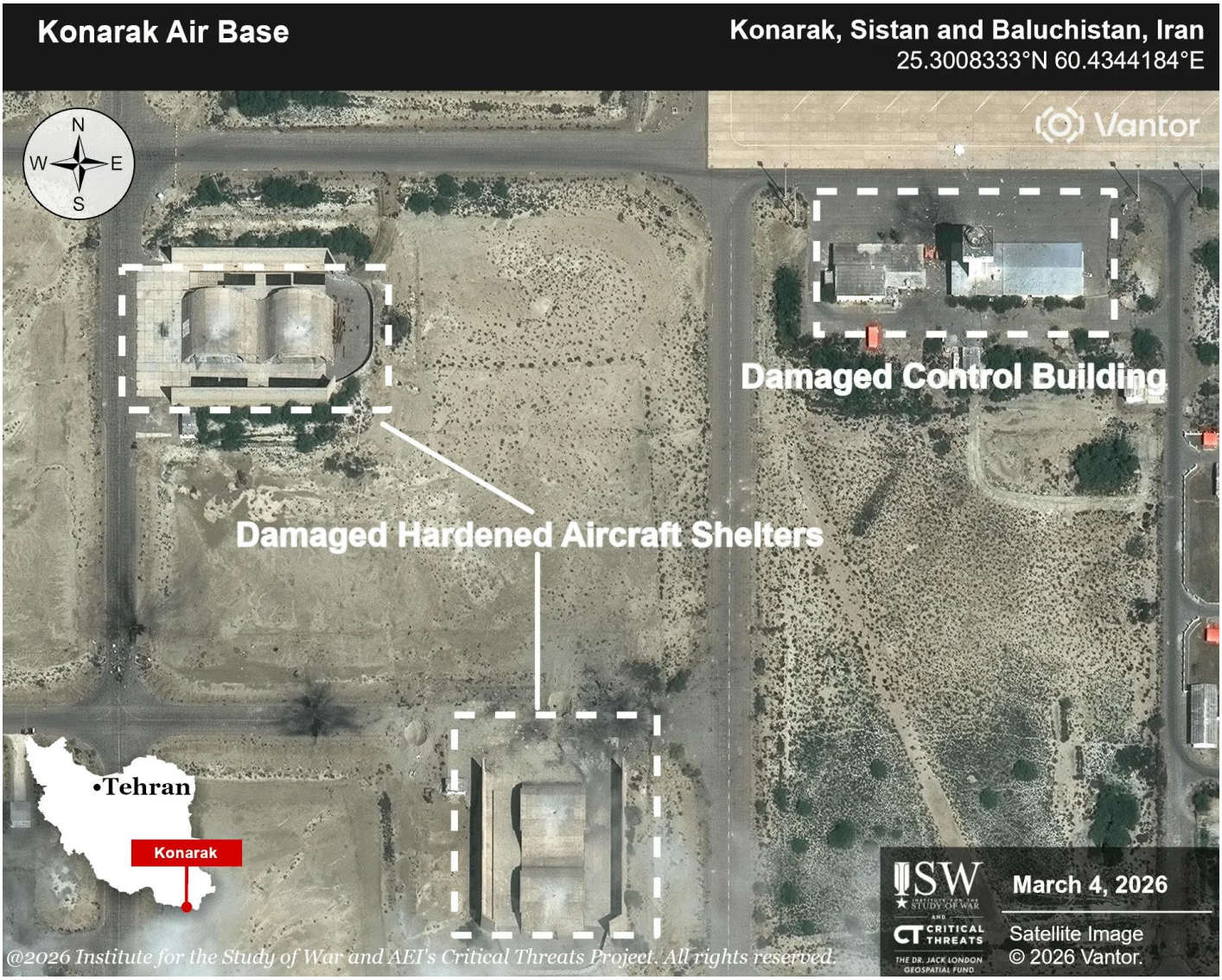
US and Israeli Air Campaign

The combined force has continued to degrade Iran's ballistic missile and drone capabilities to disrupt Iran's ability to launch retaliatory attacks against Israel and US forces. Commercially available satellite imagery captured on March 4 shows that the combined force struck the Konarak drone base in Konarak, Sistan and Baluchistan Province, destroying a drone storage building and cratering the runway. The runway craters will temporarily prevent takeoffs. The combined force struck the drone base on March 1.[1] Commercially available satellite imagery captured on March 4 shows the combined force also struck the Konarak Airbase and damaged hardened aircraft shelters and a control building. The

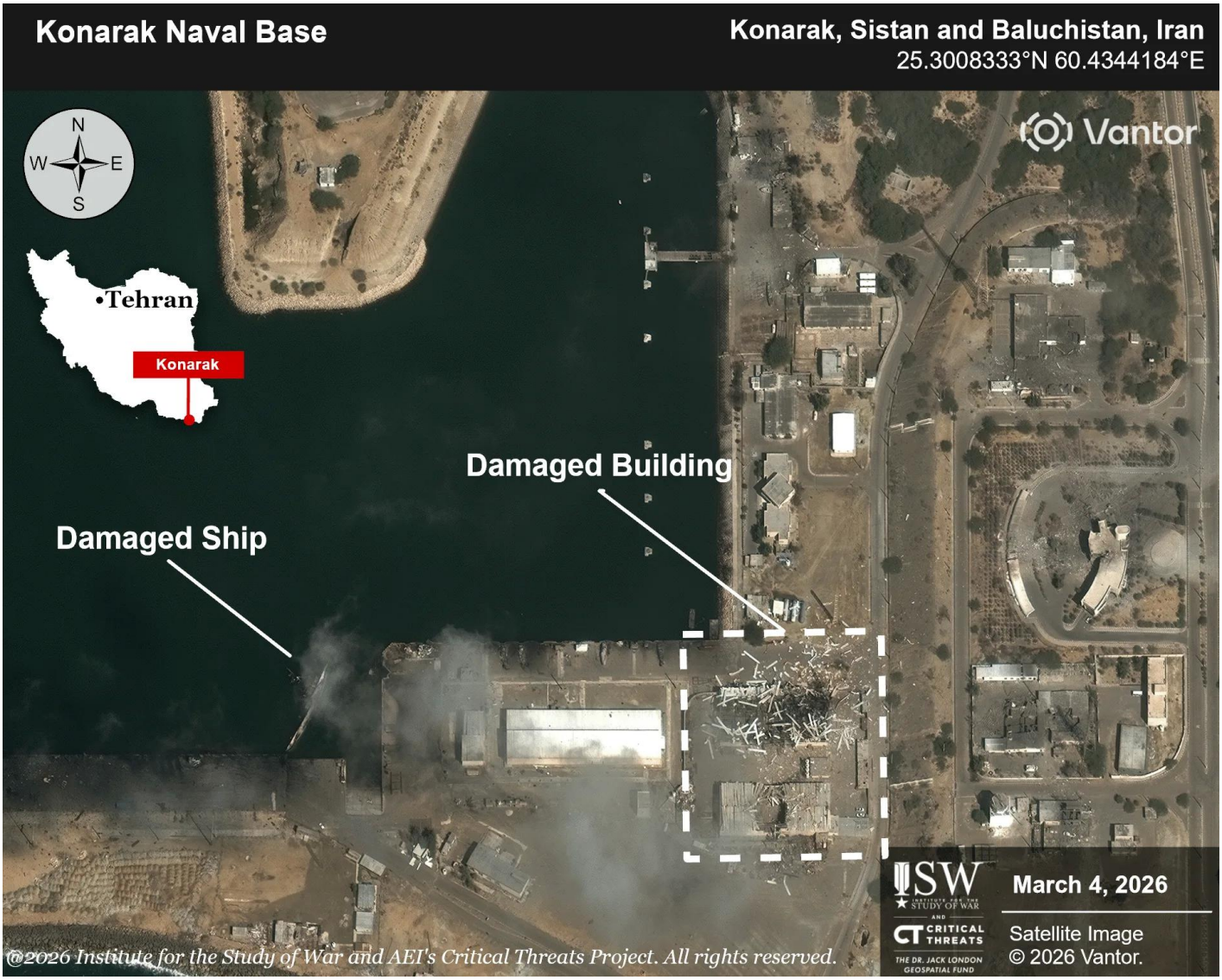
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Konarak Airbase was reportedly transformed from a civilian airport into a military facility to launch drones.[2] Commercially available satellite imagery captured on March 4 also shows that the combined force destroyed an unspecified facility at the Khorramabad Missile Base in Khorramabad, Lorestan Province. The Khorramabad Missile Base reportedly contained multiple launchers and storage tunnels for ballistic and cruise missiles, specifically Shahab-3 medium-range ballistic missiles.[3] Israel previously struck the base in June 2025.[4] The decrease in retaliatory Iranian drone and missile attacks strongly suggests that the US-Israeli effort to destroy Iran's ballistic missile and drone capabilities has had considerable success.[5]





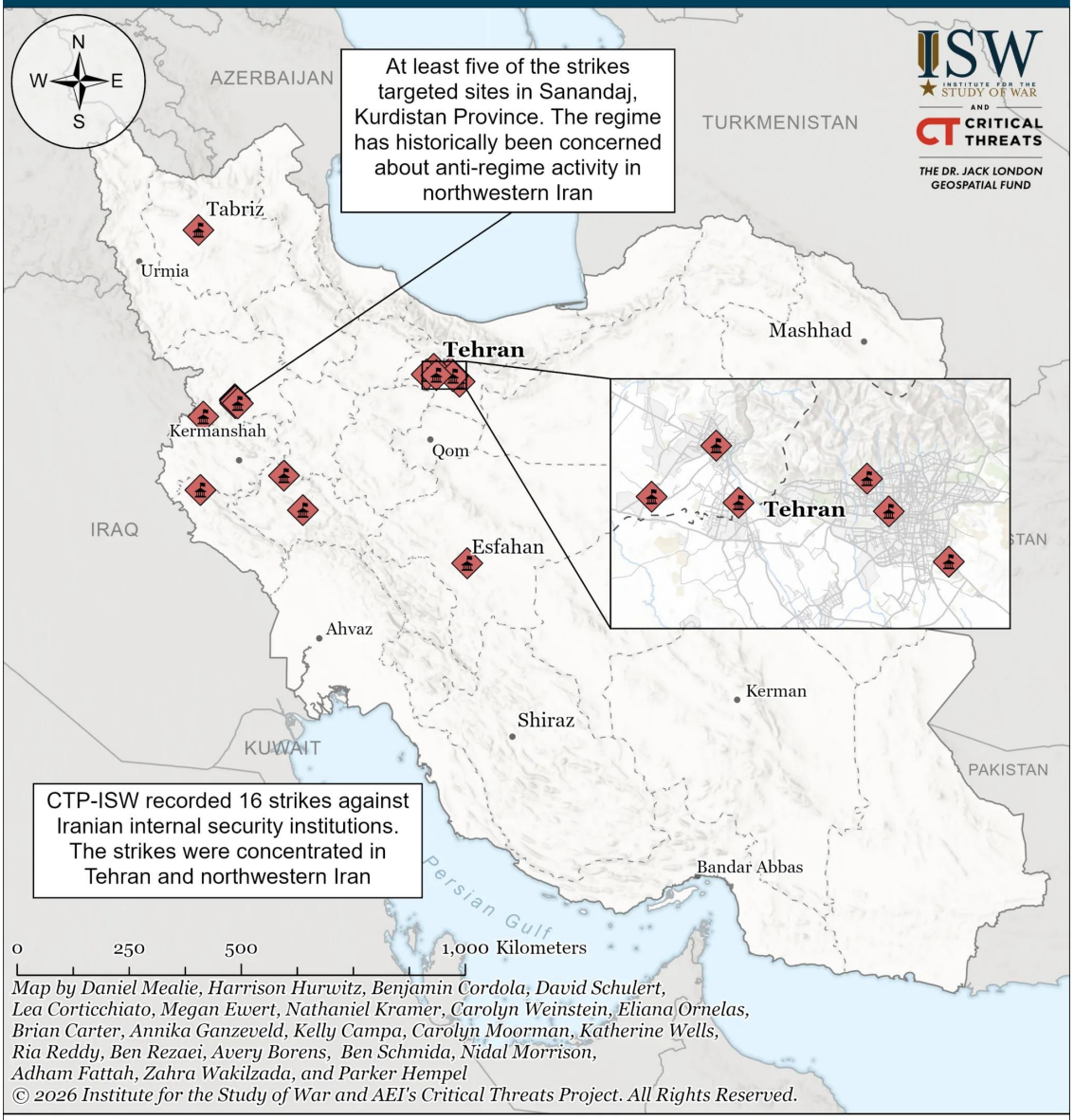
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The combined force has continued to target Iran's internal security and government institutions. The combined force struck three police stations and one Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB) station in Sanandaj, Kurdistan Province.[6] Commercially available satellite imagery confirms that the combined force struck the Sanandaj Police Station No. 15. The combined force reportedly struck the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) Ground Forces' 22nd Divisional Base in Sanandaj.[7] The regime used intense force to quell protests in Kurdistan Province during the 2022 Mahsa Amini protests.[8] The combined force also struck Law Enforcement Command (LEC) Headquarters across at least four provinces, including two in Lorestan Province.[9] An open source intelligence (OSINT) account reported without footage on March 5 that the combined force "leveled" the Lorestan Province LEC Headquarters.[10] The combined force also reportedly struck the IRGC Ground Forces' 31st Ashoura Mechanized Division, which operates in Tabriz, East Azerbaijan Province.[11] The Ashoura Division fought in Syria to support the Assad regime.[12]

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Targeted Iranian Institutions for Domestic Stability and State Control
From March 4, 2026, at 4:00 PM ET to March 5, 2026, at 8:00 AM ET



Map by Daniel Mealie, Harrison Hurwitz, Benjamin Cordola, David Schulert, Lea Corticchiato, Megan Ewert, Nathaniel Kramer, Carolyn Weinstein, Eliana Ornelas, Brian Carter, Annika Ganzeveld, Kelly Campa, Carolyn Moorman, Katherine Wells, Ria Reddy, Ben Rezaei, Avery Borens, Ben Schmida, Nidal Morrison, Adham Fattah, Zahra Wakilzada, and Parker Hempel

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Targeted Internal Security Sites

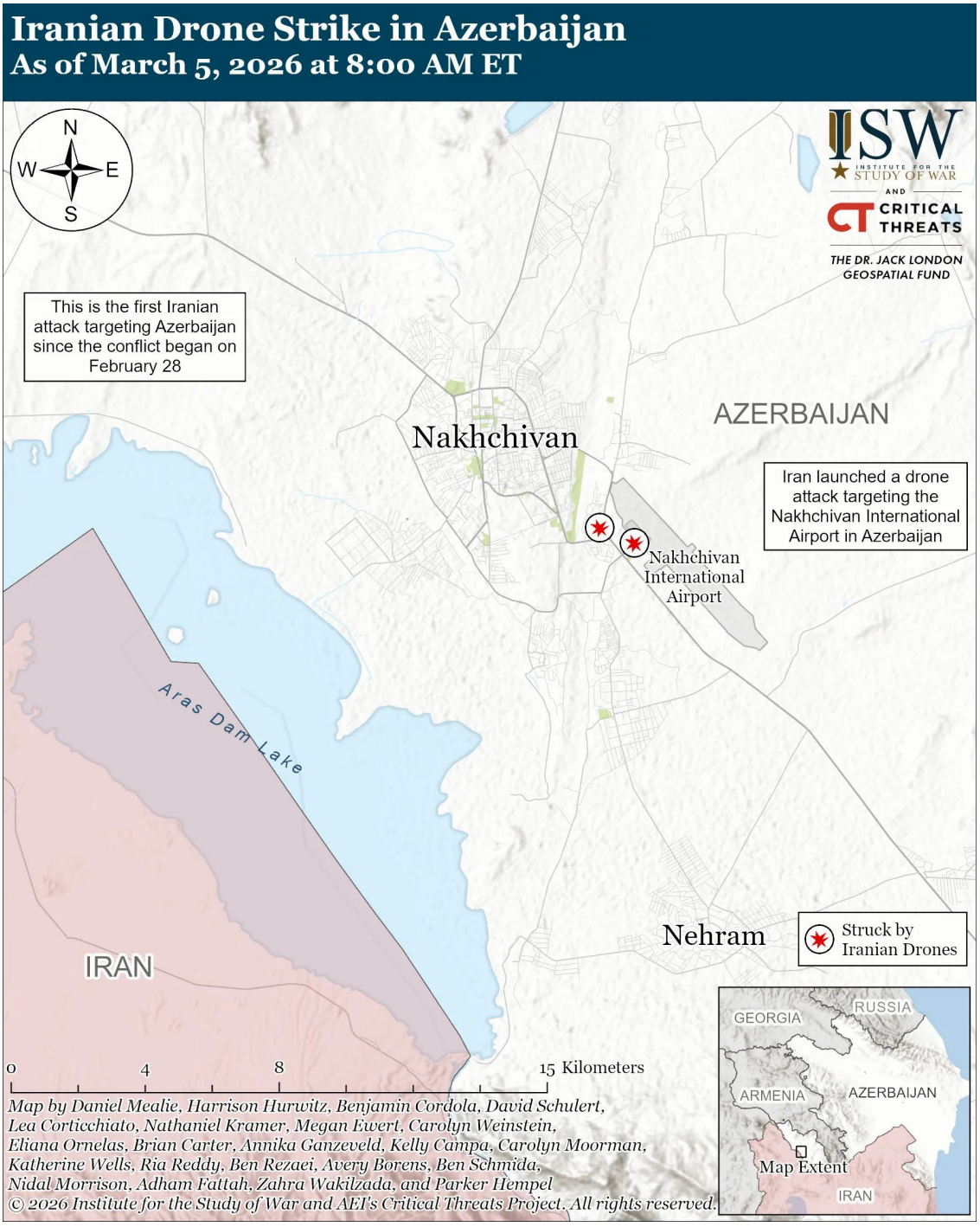


Iranian Retaliation

Iran launched attacks targeting Turkey and Azerbaijan on March 4 and 5. These attacks mark the 10th and 11th countries to come under Iranian fire.[13] Azerbaijan reported that an Iranian drone struck a terminal building at the Nakhchivan International Airport, which is located approximately six miles (10 kilometers) from the Azerbaijan-Iran border.[14] Azerbaijan reported that a second Iranian drone struck close to a school building in a nearby village.[15] The Azerbaijani Defense Ministry stated that these drone attacks will “not remain unanswered” and noted that Azerbaijan is preparing the “necessary” response measures.[16] The Iranian Armed Forces General Staff denied the attack.[17] The Turkish Defense Ministry reported on March 4 that NATO defense systems intercepted a ballistic missile that was launched from Iran towards Turkish airspace.[18] The ministry stated that Turkey will take ”all necessary steps to defend [its] territory.”[19] Iran has regularly targeted US forces, ports, oil and gas

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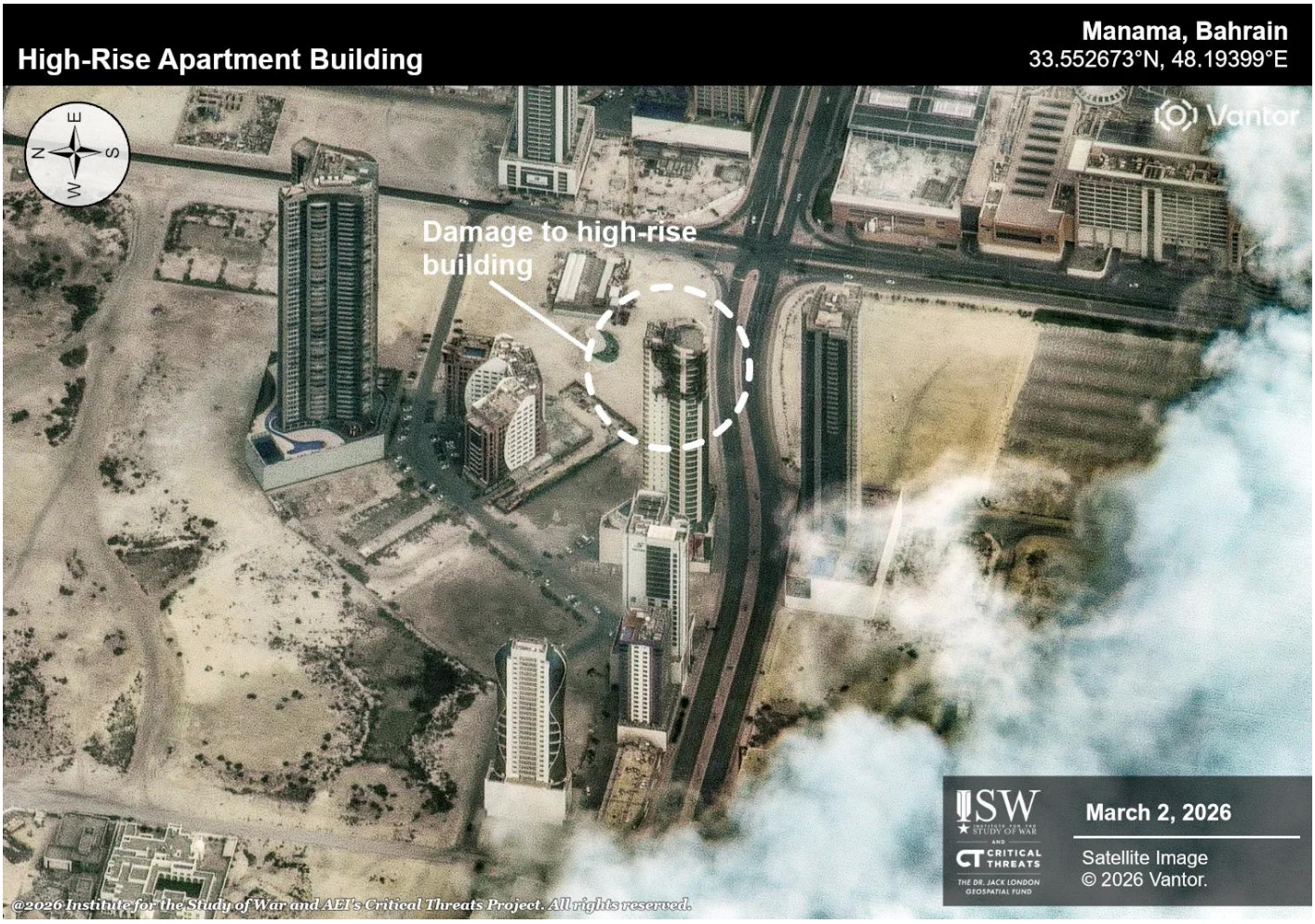
facilities, and civilian infrastructure in neighboring countries and the Gulf States since the conflict began on February 28.[20] An Iranian attack damaged a civilian high-rise apartment in Manama, Bahrain, for example.



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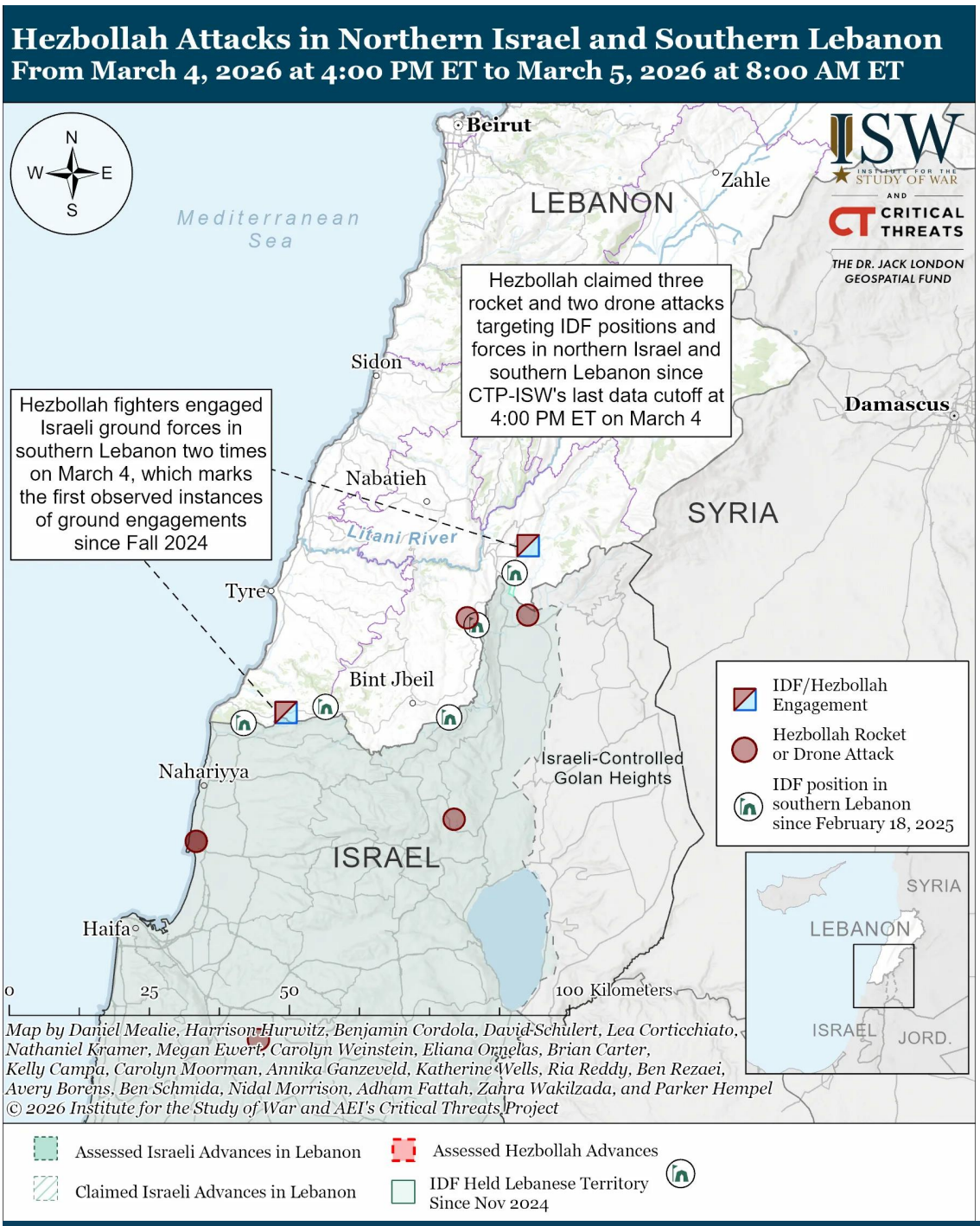
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Axis of Resistance Response

Hezbollah claimed that the group conducted 7 attacks targeting Israel Defense Forces (IDF) positions and forces in northern Israel and southern Lebanon since ISW-CTP's last data cutoff at 4:00 PM ET on March 4. Hezbollah claimed on March 4 that its fighters engaged Israeli ground forces in Dhayra, Tyre District, and Khiam, Marjaayoun.[21] These mark the first direct engagements between Hezbollah and the IDF since the Fall 2024 Israel-Hezbollah conflict. Hezbollah claimed that it launched two separate drone and rocket attacks targeting the Rafael Advanced Defense Systems' military industries complex in Acre, northern Israel.[22] Rafael Advanced Defense Systems is an Israeli state-owned organization that develops weapons and military technology for the IDF.[23] Hezbollah previously targeted the organization during the Fall 2024 conflict.[24] Hezbollah also claimed three drone and rocket attacks targeting the Ain Zeitim Base and IDF forces in northern Israel and southern Lebanon.[25]

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Endnotes

[1] https://t.me/BenTzionM/6912 ; https://t.me/BenTzionM/6913
[2] https://x.com/posted_news/status/2027877400306917456/photo/1
[3] https://www.nti.org/education-center/facilities/imam-ali-missile-base/ ; https://missilethreat.csis.org/missile/shahab-3/ ; https://x.com/MarioNawfal/status/1934502451303834027

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[4] https://www.ynetnews dot com/article/c6cisoigs
[5] https://www.timesofisrael dot com/liveblog_entry/top-us-general-iran-missile-launches-down-86-from-first-day-of-conflict/ ; https://x.com/CENTCOM/status/2029293740049715563?sort_replies=likes
[6] https://x.com/trbrtc/status/2029406685123756354?s=20;
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[8] https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/data-analysis-of-the-mahsa-amini-protest-movement
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[21] https://t.me/mmirleb/10252 ; https://t.me/mmirleb/10255
[22] https://t.me/mmirleb/10253 ; https://t.me/mmirleb/10261
[23]
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https://www.wsj.com/world/middle-east/israel-and-hezbollah-ramp-up-cross-border-attacks-as-war-moves
-closer-19f6bfff?mod=middle-east_news_article_pos1
[25] https://t.me/mmirleb/10254 ; https://t.me/mmirleb/10258 ; https://t.me/mmirleb/10264

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Iran Update Evening Special Report, March 5, 2026

Avery Borens, Ben Rezaei, Katherine Wells, Nidal Morrison, Parker Hempel, Benjamin Schmida, Adham Fattah, Ria Reddy, Nicholas Carl, Brian Carter

Analyst Notes: Data Cutoff: 4:00 PM ET. Information Cutoff: 5:00 PM ET.

The Institute for the Study of War (ISW) and the Critical Threats Project (CTP) at the American Enterprise Instituteare publishing two updates daily to provide analysis on the war with Iran. The morning update will focus on US and Israeli strikes on Iran and Iran and the Axis of Resistance's response to the strikes. The evening update will be more comprehensive, covering events over the past 24-hour period and refining items discussed in the morning update.

Key Takeaways

1. The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) has continued strikes targeting Iranian ballistic missile infrastructure in order to degrade Iranian missile capabilities. The IDF reported on March 5 that Israeli aircraft had struck hundreds of missile launch sites across Iran and rendered over 300 ballistic missile launchers inoperable since February 28. Degrading Iranian air defenses allows US and Israeli aircraft to operate with less risk and greater freedom of operation over Iranian airspace.
2. The US and Israeli combined force has advanced to the next phase of their campaign, which will focus on targeting Iranian defense industrial assets, especially missile production facilities. The first phase of the campaign suppressed Iranian air defenses, decapitated its command and control, and limited its ability to retaliate with ballistic missiles and drones. The IDF issued an evacuation warning on March 5 for the Abbas Abad Industrial Zone and Shenzar Industrial Zone in Pakdasht, Tehran Province, likely in preparation to target Iran's defense industrial base.
3. The combined force continues to conduct airstrikes targeting key internal security sites in and around Tehran City as well as Kurdish-populated areas of northwestern Iran. These targets range from regional Law Enforcement Command (LEC) and Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) headquarters to local police stations in areas that have been hotspots for unrest.
4. The combined forces have continued to strike the IRGC Ground Forces' special forces and rapid response units in southwestern Iran. The combined force has not yet struck other IRGC or Artesh special forces bases or infrastructure at scale across the country. The internet shutdown may be affecting ISW-CTP's ability to observe these strikes, however.
5. US President Donald Trump said on March 5 that he would support Kurdish forces conducting an offensive into Iran. Trump told Reuters that he would be "all for" a Kurdish offensive into Iran but did not commit to supporting the operation with airstrikes. Senior Iraqi Kurdish officials have denied that Kurdish forces are deploying or planning to deploy into Iran, however.
6. US President Donald Trump told Western media on March 5 that the United States must be

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involved in the process of selecting a new supreme leader in Iran. Trump stated that he will not accept a new Iranian leader who will continue former Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei's policies.
7. The Artesh and Iranian state media claimed that Iranian forces carried out drone strikes against US forces at Camp Buehring, Kuwait, on March 5. The Iranian Artesh separately launched drone strikes that targeted a US base in Erbil, Iraq, on March 5, according to Iranian media.

Toplines

The US and Israeli combined force has advanced to the next phase of their campaign, which will focus on targeting Iranian defense industrial assets, especially missile production facilities.[1] The first phase of the campaign suppressed Iranian air defenses, decapitated its command and control, and limited its ability to retaliate with ballistic missiles and drones.[2] US Central Command (CENTCOM) Commander Admiral Brad Cooper and US Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth held a press conference on March 5 to give an update on the state of the campaign.[3] Cooper said that the combined force achieved air dominance over Iran, which will enable the force to reach targets deep inside Iran.[4] Air dominance is when air power creates the conditions that allow joint forces to operate with "impunity" throughout the adversary's battlespace.[5] Cooper added that Iranian ballistic missile attacks have decreased by 90 percent since the war began, and drone attacks are down 83 percent.[6] US Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth indicated during the press conference that the United States and Israel will expand offensive air operations as the war continues.[7] CENTCOM has reportedly requested additional military intelligence officers from the Department of Defense to support CENTCOM operations against Iran until at least mid-June 2026 and potentially through September 2026, according to a notification obtained by Politico on March 4.[8]

Israeli officials echoed these points on March 5. Israeli Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Eyal Zamir announced on March 5 that Israel is transitioning to the "next stage" of the campaign, transitioning from establishing air superiority and destroying Iranian ballistic missile systems to targeting other unspecified Iranian military capabilities and the Iranian "regime's foundations."[9]

The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) has continued strikes targeting Iranian ballistic missile infrastructure in order to degrade Iranian missile capabilities. The IDF reported on March 5 that Israeli aircraft had struck hundreds of missile launch sites across Iran and rendered over 300 ballistic missile launchers inoperable since February 28.[10] The IDF added that Israeli aircraft struck dozens of ballistic missile launchers as part of a wave of strikes on approximately 200 targets in western and central Iran.[11] These strikes targeting missile capabilities likely reduce the Iranian ability to conduct large-scale missile barrages by destroying launchers and destroying infrastructure required to prepare and fire missiles.

The IDF has also continued striking Iranian air defense systems in order to maintain air superiority over Iran. IDF Chief of Staff Major General Eyal Zamir stated on March 5 that Israeli pilots have conducted approximately 2,500 strikes and used over 6,000 munitions during the campaign.[12] Degrading Iranian air defenses allows US and Israeli aircraft to operate with less risk and greater freedom of operation over Iranian airspace. Zamir added that the IDF has destroyed around 80 percent of Iran's air defense systems.[13] Israeli aircraft struck an Iranian air defense system in Esfahan Province on March 4.[14] The combined forces separately targeted radar systems near Kish Island in the Persian Gulf on March 5.[15] Anti-regime media previously reported strikes on radar infrastructure on Kish Island on March 3 and February 28.[16]

The IDF issued an evacuation warning on March 5 for the Abbas Abad Industrial Zone and

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Shenzar Industrial Zone in Pakdasht, Tehran Province, likely in preparation to target Iran's defense industrial base.[17] The Abbas Abad Industrial Zone hosts companies linked to Iran's defense industrial base, including Asre Sanat Eshragh Company, which has procured aluminum alloy products for entities owned or controlled by the Iranian Ministry of Defense and Armed Forces Logistics (MODAFL).[18] Asre Sanat Eshragh has supplied aluminum alloys to Iran Electronics Industries (IEI) and the Iran Aviation Industries Organization (IAIO) since at least 2016.[19] The United States sanctioned Iran Electronics Industries (IEI) and the Iran Aviation Industries Organization (IAIO), both MODAFL-controlled defense industrial entities involved in Iranian military and missile programs, in August 2019.[20] Iran often uses industrial zones to support its military and defense industrial base, including the procurement and production of ballistic missile components and drones. [21] The IDF also struck hangars and bunkers in a restricted area of the Artesh Shahid Farashahi ammunition depot in Manzariyeh, Qom Province, likely as part of its ongoing campaign to degrade Iranian military logistics and weapons storage infrastructure.[22]



Satellite imagery from March 4 confirms that the combined force struck the Parchin Military Complex east of Tehran for the second time since February 28 and damaged several buildings.[23] Iran has used the Parchin complex to develop and manufacture advanced munitions, including drones and missiles.[24] The Parchin complex also played a key role in Iran's pre-2003 nuclear weapons program. The IDF struck the Parchin complex in June 2025.[25]

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The combined force continues to conduct airstrikes targeting key internal security sites in and around Tehran City as well as Kurdish-populated areas of northwestern Iran. These targets range from regional Law Enforcement Command (LEC) and Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) headquarters to local police stations in areas that have been hotspots for unrest. Open-source intelligence (OSINT) analysts reported that combined force airstrikes targeted and damaged two key bases for IRGC Ground Forces Sarallah Headquarters on March 5, including the Mohammad Rasulullah Security Branch's Imam Reza Unit in Tehran City's northwestern suburbs and the 7th Tehran Municipality Region's Motahari Basij Resistance Regional Base in central Tehran.[26] Basij security units are trained and equipped to suppress urban protests and conduct anti-riot operations and intimidate and arrest protesters under IRGC direction.[27] An OSINT analyst confirmed airstrikes at an unspecified IRGC base in Parand town in southwestern Tehran Province on March 5.[28] ISW-CTP was unable to confirm the location of the base, however.

OSINT analysts reported that combined forces struck at least two IRGC Ground Forces bases in Harsin and Ravansar, Kermanshah Province, in northwestern Iran on March 5.[29] Commercially available imagery and an Israeli open-source intelligence account confirmed that the combined force also conducted airstrikes targeting an IRGC Intelligence Building and IRGC Ground Forces Nabi Akram Operational Division in Kermanshah City, Kermanshah Province, on March 5.[30] OSINT analysts confirmed airstrikes on March 4 that targeted IRGC sites in Baneh, Kurdistan Province, and struck the IRGC Ground Forces 15th Khordad Base, as well.[31] OSINT analysts published footage of airstrikes in

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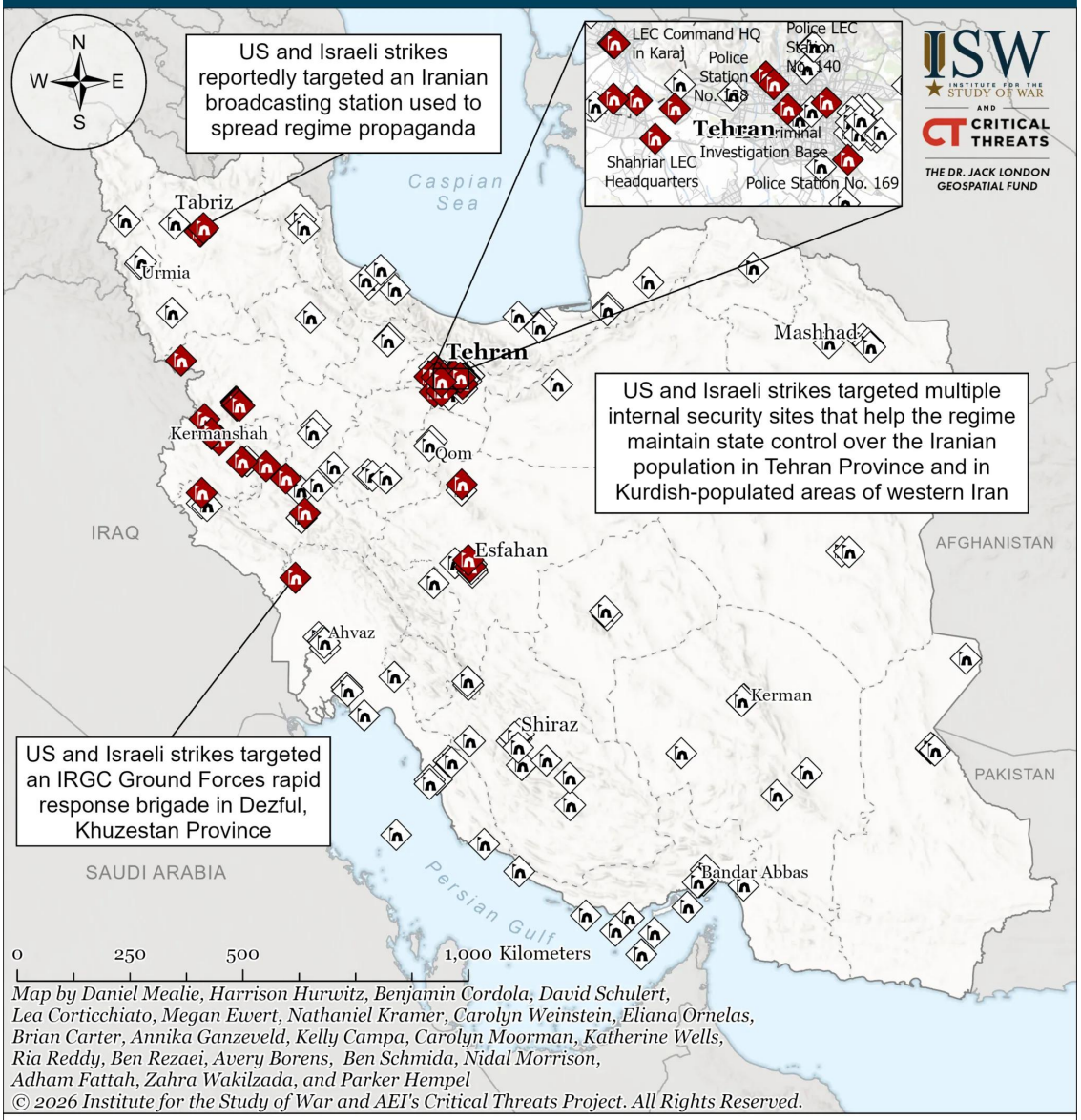
Kashan, Esfahan, on March 5, in which citizens claimed that the target was a civilian sports complex that the IRGC had been using.[32]



Iranian diaspora media and an OSINT analyst posted footage of airstrikes at two LEC command centers in Qom and Shahriar towns near Tehran City, and two local police stations in northern Tehran City and in southern Tehran Province.[33] Commercially available satellite imagery confirmed that another struck the LEC West Azerbaijan Province headquarters in Urmia, West Azerbaijan, in northwestern Iran. OSINT analysts on March 5 also reported airstrikes damaged local police stations in Kermanshah city in recent days and Esfahan City on March 5.[34]

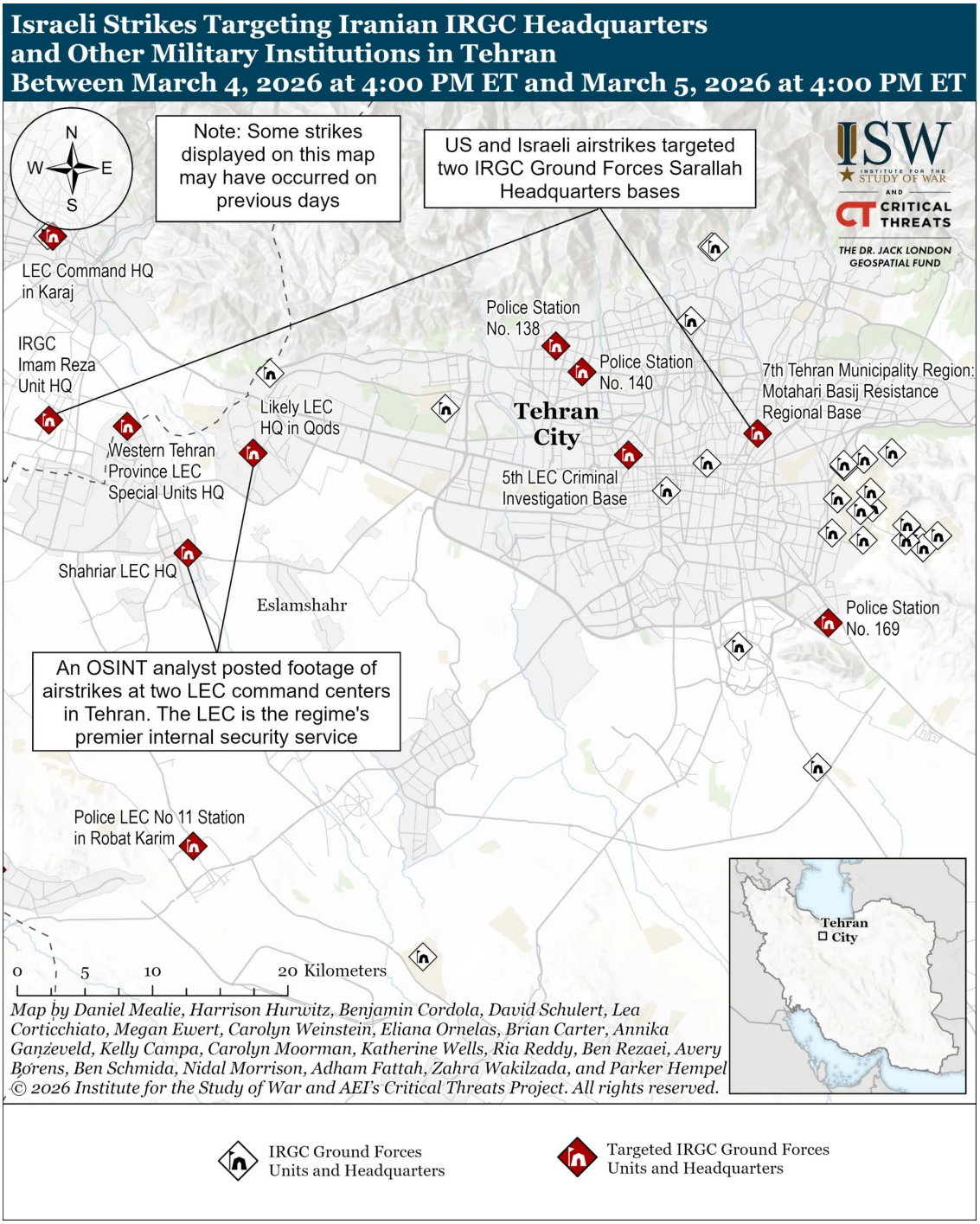
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US and Israeli Strikes Against Internal Security Between March 4, 2026 at 4:00 PM ET and March 5, 2026 at 4:00 PM ET



Map by Daniel Mealie, Harrison Hurwitz, Benjamin Cordola, David Schulert, Lea Corticchiato, Megan Ewert, Nathaniel Kramer, Carolyn Weinstein, Eliana Ornelas, Brian Carter, Annika Ganzeveld, Kelly Campa, Carolyn Moorman, Katherine Wells, Ria Reddy, Ben Rezaei, Avery Borens, Ben Schmida, Nidal Morrison, Adham Fattah, Zahra Wakilzada, and Parker Hempel

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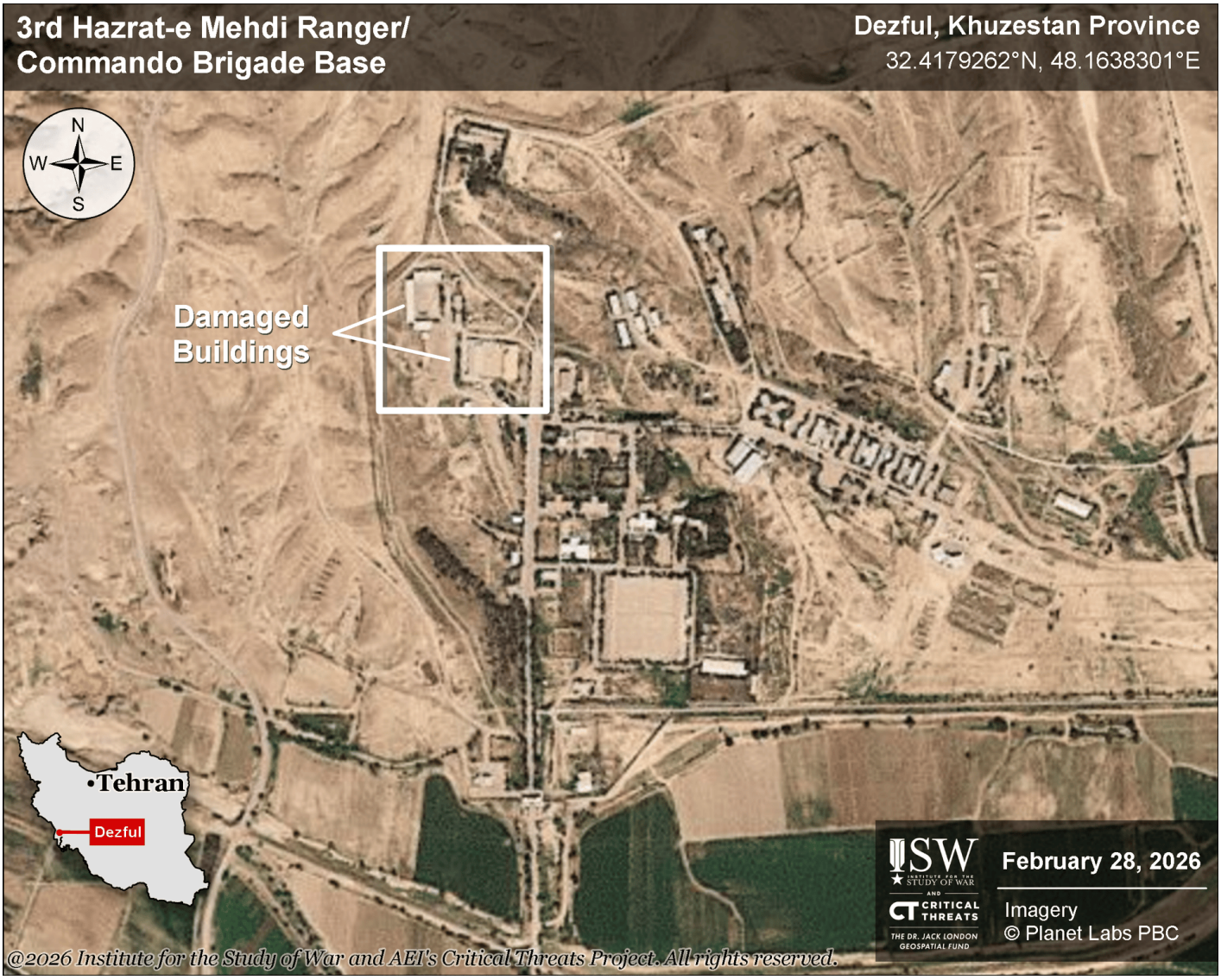


The combined forces have continued to strike the IRGC Ground Forces special forces and rapid response units in southwestern Iran. Commercially available satellite imagery from March 5 showed airstrike damage at the IRGC 3rd Hazrat-e Mehdi Ranger Brigade base, which is in Khuzestan Province, southwestern Iran. The 3rd Hazrat-e Mehdi is a rapid response force. An OSINT analyst separately reported on March 3 that an airstrike targeted the Fajr Division base in Shiraz City, Fars Province.[35] The Fajr Division is a special forces unit. The combined force has not yet struck other IRGC or Artesh special forces bases or infrastructure at scale across the country. The internet shutdown may be affecting ISW-CTP's ability to observe these strikes, however.[36] The internet shutdown in Iran is very likely restricting the Iranian people's efforts to post images and videos from within the country.[37]

An Israeli OSINT analyst assessed that airstrikes in Tabriz, East Azerbaijan, on March 5 targeted either the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB) broadcast station or a radio repeater.[38] The Iranian regime uses IRIB facilities to distribute regime propaganda.[39] The combined force previously targeted at least

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four IRIB facilities in Tehran and Kurdistan Province since the start of the war.[40]



Insurgency

US President Donald Trump said on March 5 that he would support Kurdish forces conducting an offensive into Iran.[41] Trump told Reuters that he would be “all for” a Kurdish offensive into Iran but did not commit to supporting the operation with airstrikes.[42] Some Western media outlets have reported that Trump is in contact with Iraqi and Iranian Kurdish leaders to encourage them to foment an uprising in Iran.[43] Senior Iraqi Kurdish officials have denied that Kurdish forces are deploying or planning to deploy into Iran, however.[44] Iranian forces have continued to attack Iraqi Kurdish bases in Erbil with drones. Regime-affiliated media reported on March 5 that Iranian forces struck the headquarters of an Iraqi Kurdish militia.[45] Iranian security forces claimed that Iran’s northwestern and southeastern borders are fully secure. The IRGC Hamzeh Seyyed ol Shohada Operational Base in Urmia, West Azerbaijan, stated that Iran’s northwest border is “in complete security.”[46] The governor of Dehloran, Ilam Province, denied any reports of Kurdish attacks on March 5.[47]

Sistan and Baluchistan Province’s deputy LEC commander said on March 5 that “terrorist activity” there had increased.[48] The Mobarizoun Popular Front (MPF)–a coalition of anti-regime Baloch militias–announced on March 3 that it attacked a local LEC commander in Zahedan, Sistan and

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Baluchistan Province, marking the first claimed MPF attack since the war began on February 28.[49]

Supreme Leader Succession

US President Donald Trump told Western media on March 5 that the United States must be involved in the process of selecting a new supreme leader in Iran.[50] The combined US-Israeli force killed Iranian Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei on February 28.[51] The Iranian constitution stipulates that the president, the judiciary chief, and a member of the Guardian Council will take over the responsibilities of the Supreme Leader until Iran's Assembly of Experts convenes to select a new leader.[52] The Iranian Expediency Discernment Council appointed Guardian Council member Ali Reza Arafi as the third member of the Leadership Council on March 1.[53] The Assembly of Experts has not announced a new supreme leader at the time of this writing. Trump told Axios that Khamenei's son, Mojtaba Khamenei, is the most likely successor, but noted that he would not accept Mojtaba Khamenei's appointment.[54] Trump stated that he will not accept a new Iranian leader who will continue former Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei's policies.[55] There are other unconfirmed reports that the Assembly of Experts may select Mojtaba Khamenei as the next supreme leader.[56]

Iranian Retaliation

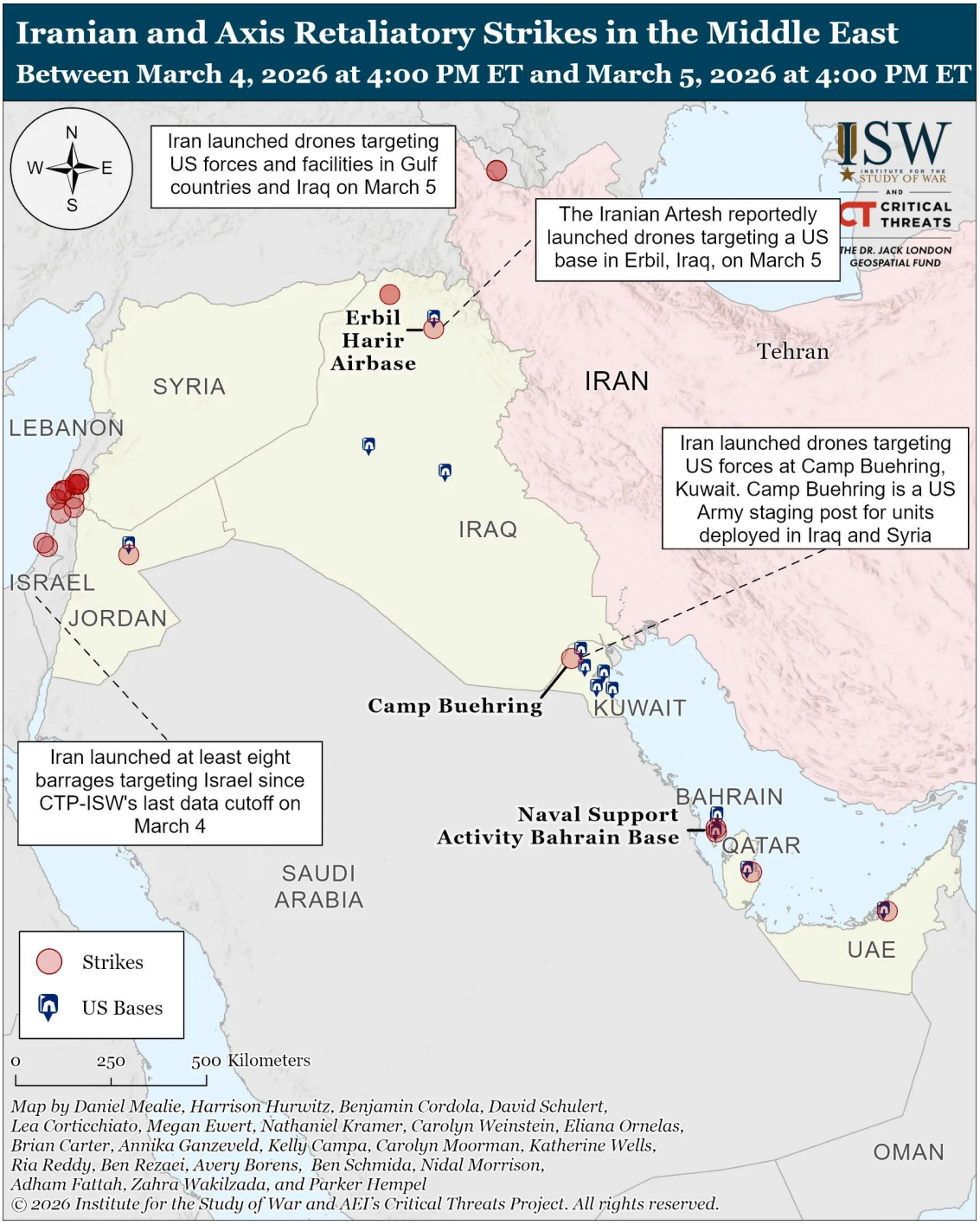
Iran continued to target US forces and facilities with drone attacks in the Gulf Countries and Iraq on March 5. The Artesh and Iranian state media claimed that Iranian forces carried out drone strikes against US forces at Camp Buehring, Kuwait, on March 5.[57] An Iranian drone previously struck Camp Buehring on March 1.[58] An Iranian drone strike previously killed six US service members at a US base in Kuwait on March 1.[59] Iran last attacked a US base in the Gulf on March 4, when Iran struck al Udeid Airbase, Qatar, with a ballistic missile. The attack caused no casualties.[60]

The Iranian Artesh separately launched drone strikes that targeted a US base in Erbil, Iraq, on March 5, according to Iranian media.[61] The exact Artesh target in Erbil Province is unclear, but Iranian drone strikes have previously struck the US base at the Erbil International Airport and the al Harir base in Iraq.[62] A likely Iranian or Iranian-backed militia drone struck a power generator at the US-operated Sarsang oil field in Duhok Province, Iraq, on March 5, causing a fire and forcing the facility to close temporarily.[63] HKN Energy, a US company, operates the Sarsang Oilfield.[64]

The IDF said that it expects Iranian ballistic fire at Israel to stop soon, which corresponds with Israeli media reports that Iran launched only "a handful" of missiles on March 5.[65] Iran launched at least eight barrages, mostly targeting Northern and Central Israel, since ISW-CTP's last data cutoff on March 4.[66] The eighth barrage included what appeared to be an Iranian ballistic missile with a cluster warhead.[67] An Iranian ballistic missile with a cluster warhead previously landed near Tel Aviv, Israel, on March 3, injuring at least 12 people.[68] Iran previously fired ballistic missiles with cluster warheads during the 12-Day War.[69] One ballistic missile landed in Moshav Bareket, in central Israel, on March 5, but did not cause casualties or material damage.[70] A second ballistic missile during Iran's eighth barrage likely landed in Tel Aviv, Israel, but Israeli media has not confirmed the impact at the time of this writing.[71] A senior, unspecified IDF official told Israeli media that the IDF expects Iranian ballistic fire at Israel to stop soon, after the combined force destroys Iran's remaining ballistic missile launchers.[72] The IDF also told Israeli media that the rate of Iranian ballistic missile fire continues to decrease and that Iran only launched a "handful" of missiles during the first three barrages on March 5.[73] Israeli media added that Iranian ballistic missiles have struck Israel 13 times since February 28.[74] This number likely does not reflect the two most recent impacts that ISW-CTP recorded on March

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5, however.



Iran conducted numerous drone attacks and some ballistic missile attacks targeting Arab Gulf countries on March 5. Iranian drone attacks appear to primarily target the UAE.

The Emirati Defense Ministry said that it:

- Intercepted six of seven detected Iranian ballistic missiles. The seventh missile landed in the UAE.[75]
- Intercepted 125 of 131 detected drones. Six drones landed in the UAE.[76]

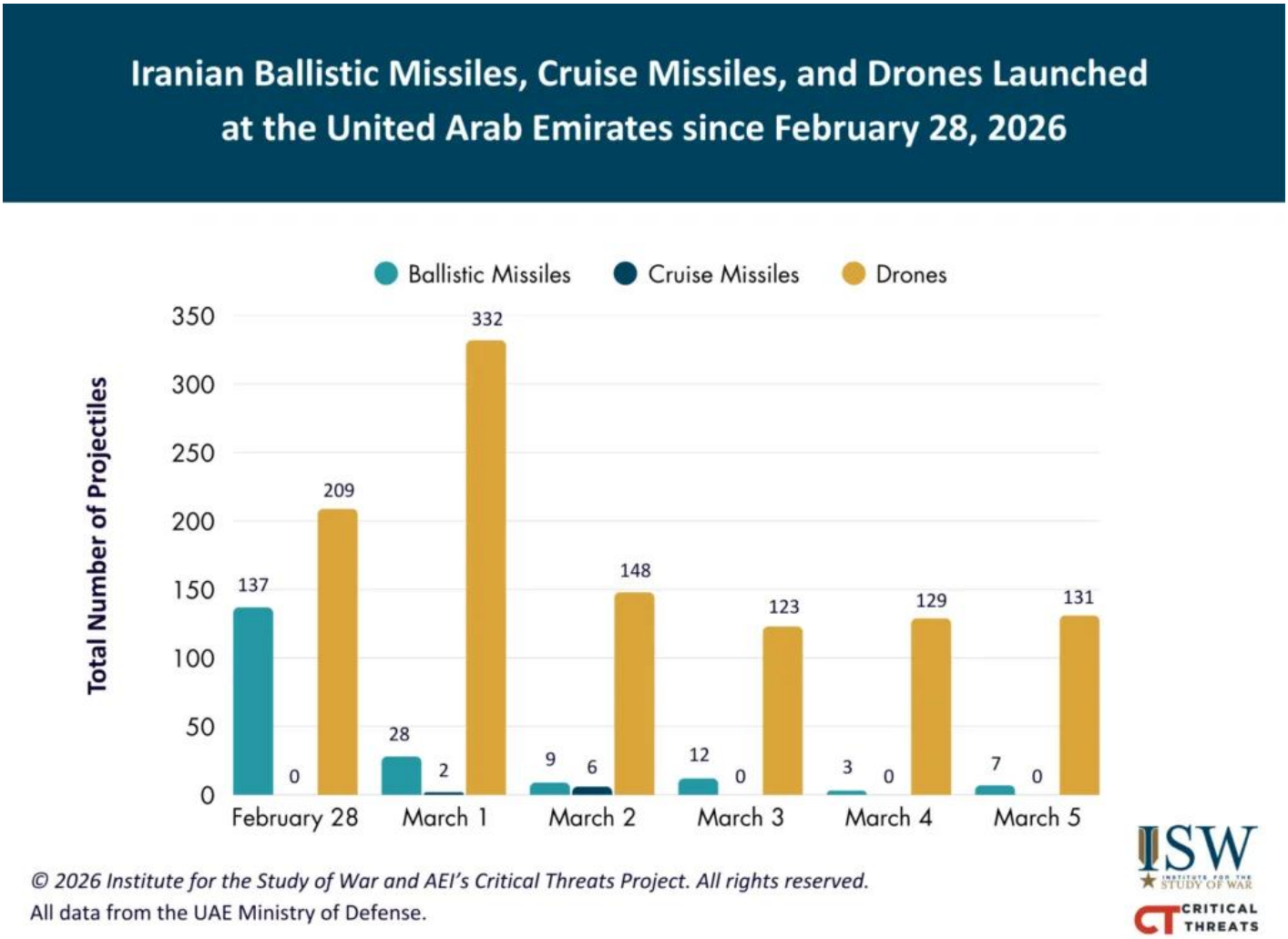
The Qatari Defense Ministry said that it:

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- Intercepted 13 of 14 detected ballistic missiles. The fourteenth missile landed in the sea.[77]
- Intercepted four of four detected drones.[78]

Saudi Arabia separately intercepted three Iranian cruise missiles and an Iranian drone on March 4.[79] Drone interception shrapnel also wounded several people near the Al Dhafra Air Base in Abu Dhabi, UAE.[80] The UAE Defense Ministry said Iranian strikes have killed 3 people and wounded 94 others since February 28.[81]

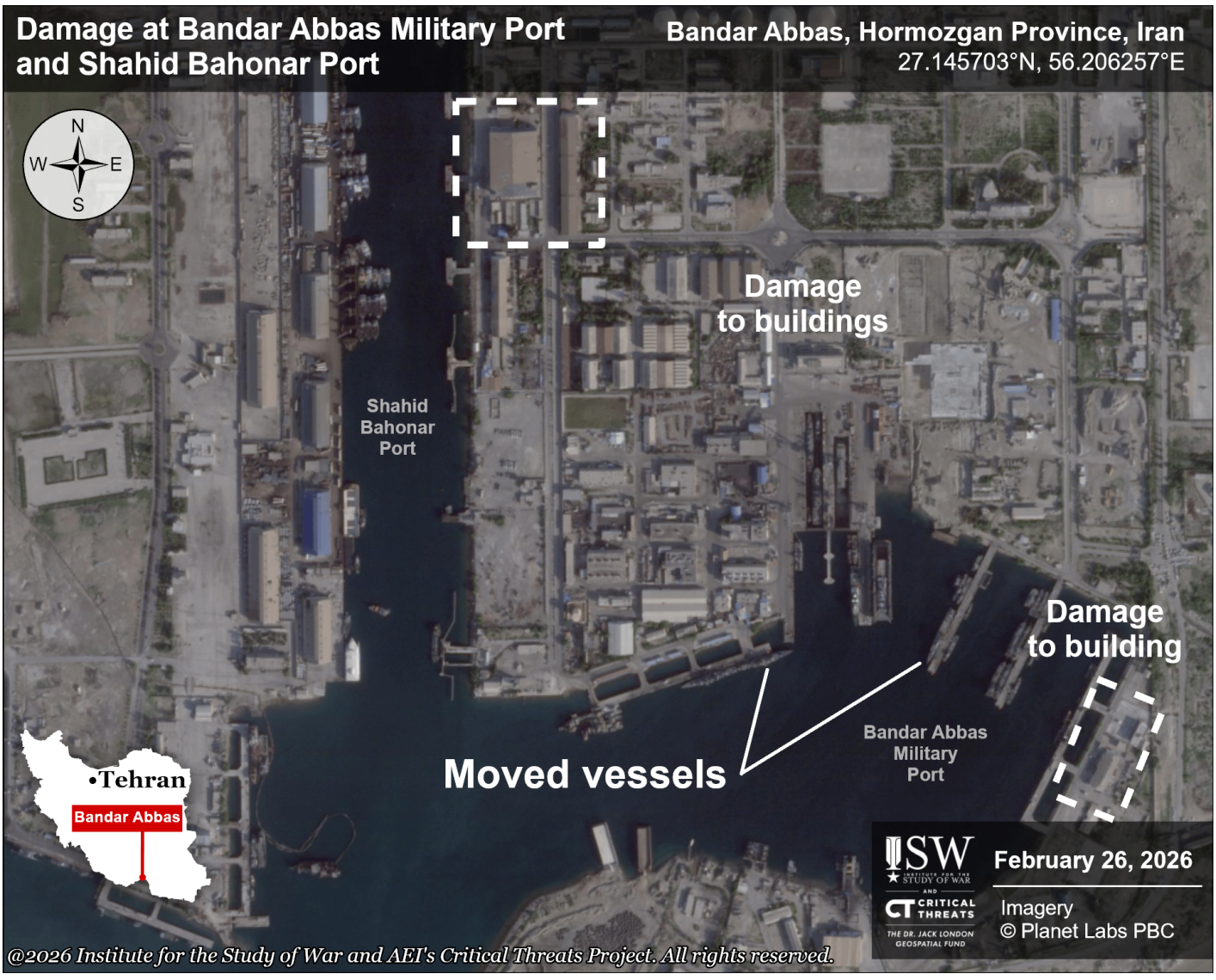
Data from the Emirati Defense Ministry shows that Iran has consistently launched over 100 drones per day at the UAE over the past four days.



Iranian drone and ballistic missile attacks on Gulf energy infrastructure have continued to disrupt the regional energy industry. At least two Iranian ballistic missiles struck the Bahrain Petroleum Company's (BAPCO) refinery near Ma'ameer, Bahrain, on March 5, which started a fire at the facility.[82] An Iranian ballistic missile or drone also struck an undetermined area of Doha, Qatar, on March 5.[83] Saudi Arabia has shifted crude exports from Strait of Hormuz facilities to the Red Sea via pipelines in response to the conflict, but the Red Sea system can only partially offset the disruption, according to Kepler analysts cited by the *Wall Street Journal*.[84] Qatar recently shut down gas liquification on March 4 and will not return to normal production and export levels "for at least a month."[85]

The combined force has continued to strike targets at the Bandar Abbas Military Port as the

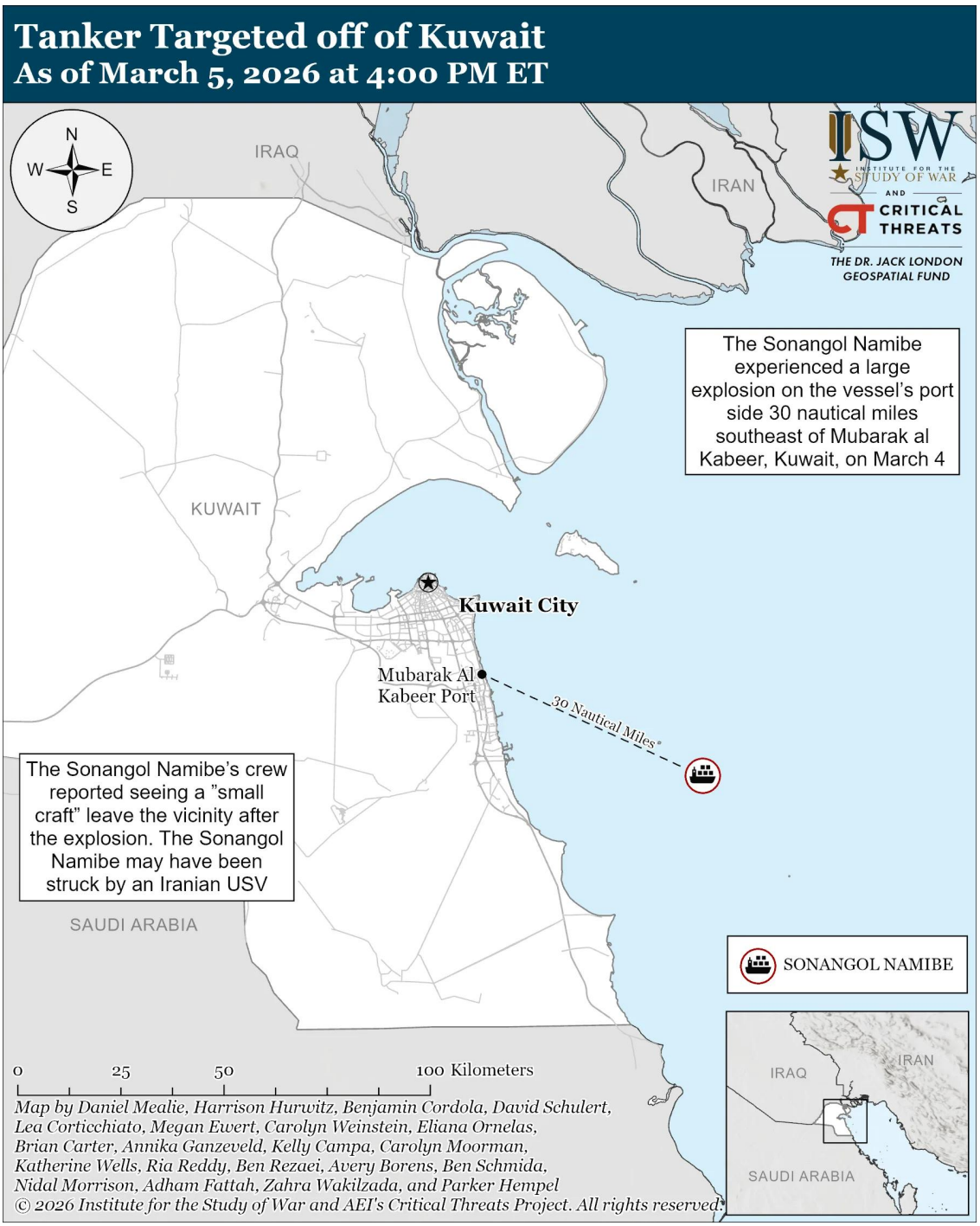
force seeks to disrupt the Iranian navy's ability to attack international shipping and US Navy vessels. Commercially available satellite imagery captured on March 4 shows that the combined force struck multiple sites at the Bandar Abbas Military Port, Hormozgan Province. The Bandar Abbas Military Port is home to the IRGC Navy Headquarters, the IRGC Navy 1st Naval District, and the Artesh Navy Southern Forward Naval Headquarters.[86] The commercially available satellite imagery shows damage to a drone storage facility at the port for the IRGC Navy's 1st Saheb ol Zaman Regional base. The IDF previously struck this drone storage facility during the 12-Day War.[87] The commercially available satellite imagery also shows damage to the Artesh Navy Factory dry docks and an unknown building located next to Iranian submarine docks. The unknown building may be associated with the Iranian submarine force due to its proximity to the submarine docks. Two Iranian Kilo-class submarines were undergoing repairs at the docks, and one Kilo-class sat idle according to commercially available satellite imagery captured on February 26.[88] The Kilo-class submarines are not visible on commercially available satellite data from March 4. ISW-CTP cannot assess whether the idle submarine moved before the conflict or whether they have been sunk. US CENTCOM also confirmed that the United States has struck Iranian submarines in the first 48 hours of the campaign, however.[89] The combined strike force has repeatedly hit Iranian vessels and facilities at the Bandar Abbas Military Port since February 28.[90]



Iran is continuing to attempt to disrupt international shipping within the Persian Gulf as part of a broader effort to impose a cost on the Gulf states. United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO) reported on March 4 that an oil tanker, later identified as the Bahamas-flagged *Sonangol*

Namibe, experienced a large explosion on the vessel's port side 30 nautical miles southeast of Mubarak al Kabeer, Kuwait.[91] The *Sonangol Namibe's* crew reported seeing a "small craft" leave the vicinity after the explosion.[92] The oil tanker reportedly experienced a hull breach but reported no fires and that the crew was unharmed.[93] This incident marks the northernmost attack against a commercial vessel in the Persian Gulf since the start of the conflict on February 28.[94] The IRGC Navy claimed on March 5 that it conducted "missile strikes" targeting a "US tanker" in the northern Persian Gulf.[95] The IRGC Navy stated that Iran will target US, Israeli, and European vessels if detected.[96] The IRGC Navy did not name the vessel it attacked, but it is likely referring to the attack on the *Sonangol Namibe*. Reuters reported on March 5 that initial assessments indicated that the vessel was attacked by an Iranian Unmanned Surface Vessel (USV).[97] Iran may have used USVs to attack the commercial vessel because USVs can inflict greater damage to vessels than unmanned aerial vehicles. The UKMTO previously reported that an unspecified actor, almost certainly Iran, launched two unmanned surface vessels (USV) at an unspecified vessel 50 nautical miles north of Muscat, Oman, on March 1.[98]

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Iran is reportedly continuing to load and export goods to foreign markets, despite the war. Reuters, citing commercially available ship tracking data, reported that two Iranian-flagged dry bulk carrier cargo vessels departed Iranian ports on March 5.[99] The two Iranian cargo vessels were reportedly headed to Kuantan, Malaysia.[100] Both vessels have previously been sanctioned by the US for supporting Iranian sanctions evasions.[101] The departures mark the first Iranian attempt to transport cargo to other nations via the Strait of Hormuz since the start of the war.[102] Commercially available ship tracking data from March 5 showed that at least one of the Iranian cargo vessels passed through the Strait of Hormuz and entered the Gulf of Oman on March 5. Commercially available satellite imagery from March 5 separately showed four oil tankers reportedly loading eight million barrels of crude oil at Kharg Island, Iran's main oil export terminal.[103] Oil exports are Iran's economic lifeline and are critical to sustain its economy and military.[104]

Multiple European nations have agreed to send naval vessels to defend Cyprus from further

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drone attacks. Italian Defense Minister Guido Crosetto said on March 5 that Italy, France, the Netherlands, and Spain would provide unspecified “naval assets” to defend Cyprus “in the coming days.”[105] Multiple French naval vessels are en route or have arrived at Cyprus.[106] French President Emmanuel Macron on March 3 ordered the French *Charles de Gaulle* aircraft carrier battle group to deploy to the Mediterranean.[107] The French military announced that the French frigate *Languedoc* arrived off the coast of Cyprus on March 5.[108] UK Defense Secretary John Healey announced on March 5 that the British air defense destroyer HMS *Dragon* will arrive off Cyprus “within the next couple of weeks.”[109] Iranian-made drones hit Cyprus on March 1.[110] Cyprus houses thousands of British soldiers and two British military bases.[111]

Axis of Resistance Response

Hezbollah claimed that the group conducted six attacks targeting IDF positions and forces in northern Israel and southern Lebanon since ISW-CTP’s last data cutoff at 8:00 AM ET on March 5.[112] Hezbollah claimed it launched a guided missile and two rocket barrages targeting IDF forces in Jabal Balat, Tyre District, and Markaba, Marjaayoun District, respectively.[113] Hezbollah also claimed it conducted two separate attacks targeting the IDF Yaara barracks and the IDF Naftali Base in northern Israel.[114] Three Lebanese sources “familiar with the deployments” told Reuters on March 5 that Hezbollah ordered its Radwan Force to deploy to southern Lebanon to block Israeli tank advances shortly after Hezbollah launched its first attack against Israel on March 2.[115] It is unclear how many Radwan fighters have deployed to southern Lebanon at the time of this writing. The Radwan Force is Hezbollah’s elite special operations unit that Hezbollah, with Iranian support, built to conduct major ground attacks into Israel in the event of war.[116] The majority of the Radwan Force, which has approximately 2,000 fighters, moved north of Litani River after the November 2024 Israel-Hezbollah ceasefire agreement.[117] This Reuters report comes shortly after Hezbollah directly engaged Israeli forces for the first time in the war on March 5.[118]

The IDF continued its “forward defense maneuver[s]” in southern Lebanon on March 5. An Israeli media correspondent reported that the IDF reinforced its forces in at least ten strategic positions in southern Lebanon and is preparing to deploy additional battalions.[119] The IDF has mobilized approximately 20,000 reservists since the conflict began on February 28.[120] The IDF published footage of the 300th Regional Brigade (91st Division) operating in southern Lebanon.[121] The 300th Regional Brigade has previouslyoperated in southern Lebanon to dismantle Hezbollah infrastructure.[122] The IDF published footage of the 810th Infantry Brigade (210th Division) conducting operations in Mount Hermon, southern Lebanon, to “expose enemy infrastructure” and prevent Hezbollah fighters from establishing positions along the border.[123] The 810th Infantry Brigade was formed in September 2024 and conducted numerous raids targeting Hezbollah infrastructure during the Fall 2024 conflict.[124]

The IDF has continued to conduct airstrikes targeting Hezbollah military sites in Lebanon to degrade Hezbollah’s ability to conduct retaliatory attacks against Israel. IDF Spokesperson Brigadier General Effie Defrin reported that the IDF has struck over 320 Hezbollah targets in Lebanon since the conflict began on February 28.[125] The IDF struck over 80 Hezbollah targets in the past day.[126] The IDF conducted airstrikes targeting Hezbollah fighters, rocket launchers, and command centers, including a Unit 127 command center, in southern Lebanon and Beirut on March 4 and 5.[127] Unit 127 is Hezbollah’s aerial unit responsible for developing, producing, and launching attack drones.[128] The IDF confirmed that it killed the following individuals:

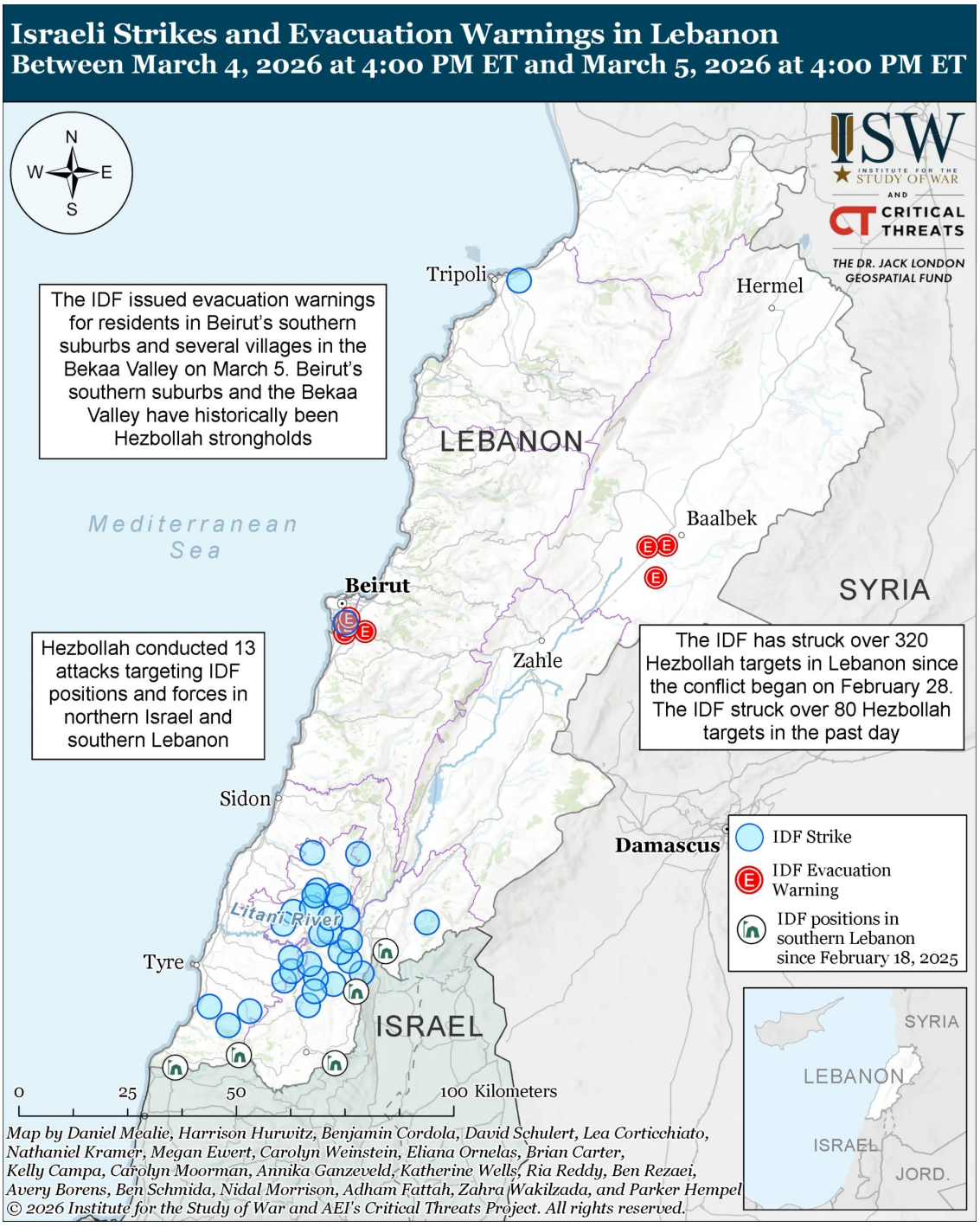
- **Zaid Ali Jamaa.[129]** Jamaa was a Hezbollah fire and artillery commander in southern Lebanon responsible for launching rockets, missiles, and drones at Israel. The IDF stated that Jamaa

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previously held several positions in Hezbollah, including the Hezbollah Khiam sector commander, and participated in fighting in Syria alongside the Assad regime.

- **Wasim Attallah Ali.[130]** Ali was a Hamas commander responsible for "training and exercises" for Hamas' military wing in Lebanon. The IDF Navy struck and killed Ali in Tripoli, which marks the first IDF strike in Tripoli since the war started on February 28.

The IDF issued evacuation warnings for residents in Beirut's southern suburbs and several villages in the Bekaa Valley on March 5.[131] Beirut's southern suburbs and the Bekaa Valley have historically been Hezbollah strongholds.[132] The IDF warned that it would soon strike Hezbollah "activities" in these areas.[133] IDF airstrikes have largely been concentrated in southern Lebanon, with some limited airstrike waves in Beirut.



The Lebanese government has continued to take unprecedented steps to limit Hezbollah and

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Iran's ability to operate in Lebanon. The Lebanese government announced on March 5 that it will ban any IRGC activity in Lebanon and seeks to deport IRGC members from Lebanon.[134] Lebanese Information Minister Paul Morcos stated that the Lebanese cabinet ordered Lebanese security forces to prevent any IRGC members from conducting any security or military activities and to arrest them in preparation for deportation.[135] The government also decided that Iranian civilians will no longer have visa-free entry into Lebanon.[136] The government's action against the IRGC comes after the government declared Hezbollah's military and security activities illegal on March 2.[137] The government's recent steps represent an inflection in Lebanese politics because no previous Lebanese government has taken such direct steps against Hezbollah or the IRGC.

Unspecified forces landed in Anbar Province, Iraq, near the Saudi border on March 3, according to Iraqi media. Iranian-backed Iraqi militias have previously attacked regional US allies from this region of Iraq.[138] The Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) Karbala Operations Command's 41st Brigade responded to the reported landing site, according to Iraqi media, citing an ISF security cable.[139] The Iraqi Joint Operations Command (JOC) confirmed on March 4 that unknown forces conducted an airstrike and fired at the responding unit, killing one Iraqi soldier, injuring two others, and damaging two ISF military vehicles.[140] No actor has claimed responsibility at the time of this writing. Deputy JOC Commander Lieutenant General Qais al Muhammadawi said on March 5 that the Iraqi government asked the US-led international coalition for clarification.[141]

The reported landing site is near the border from which Iranian-backed Iraqi militias have launched drone attacks into Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates since 2019.[142] Iranian-backed Iraqi militias threatened on March 2 to expand their attacks to regional countries that host US troops.[143]

Iranian-backed Iraqi militia Harakat Hezbollah al Nujaba military adviser Abdul Qadir al Karbalai threatened on March 5 to target "the Zionist agent Barzani" as well as his family members and businesses if his militia attacks Iraqi security forces or Iranian-backed Iraqi parties.[144] It is unclear to which Barzani family member Karbalai was referring.

Iranian-backed Iraqi militias continue to attack US forces. The Islamic Resistance in Iraq, which is a coalition of Iranian-backed militias, claimed on March 4 that it had conducted 29 unspecified operations with "dozens" of missiles and drones targeting "enemy" bases in Iraq and the region.[145]

Iranian-backed Iraqi militias threatened to expand their attacks to target unspecified European forces if they join the US-Israeli strike campaign against Iran. The Islamic Resistance in Iraq and a Harakat Hezbollah al Nujaba military adviser published separate statements on March 4, warning that any European country that joins the US-Israeli strike campaign will become a "legitimate target."[146]

The ISF likely seized at least three trucks carrying missile launch platforms and a drone in two provinces on March 4 and 5, respectively, to disrupt Iranian-backed Iraqi militias' attacks on US forces. A security source told Iraqi media on March 4 that the ISF Basra Operations Command seized two trucks containing missile launch platforms in Basra Province.[147] The ISF Eastern Salah al Din Operations Command seized a truck carrying a drone in Salah al Din Province on March 5.[148] The United States and Israel have also conducted several airstrikes targeting Iranian-backed militias across Iraq since March 1 to disrupt their attacks.[149]

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Other Activity

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy told Italian media on March 5 that Ukraine is willing to share its expertise countering Iranian Shahed drones with the US, European, and Gulf countries.[150] Zelenskyy said that Ukraine has received requests from the US, European, and Middle Eastern partners to share Ukraine's counter-drone expertise and experiences, particularly in countering Iranian-made drone types.[151] Zelenskyy said that Ukraine will provide its counter-drone expertise to countries that send their representatives to Ukraine.[152]

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Iran Update Morning Special Report, March 6, 2026

Ben Rezaei, Parker Hempel, Carolyn Moorman, Brian Carter

Analyst Notes: Data Cutoff: 8:00 AM ET.

The Institute for the Study of War (ISW) and the Critical Threats Project (CTP) at the American Enterprise Institute are publishing two updates daily to provide analysis on the war with Iran. The morning update will focus on US and Israeli strikes on Iran and Iran and the Axis of Resistance's response to the strikes. The evening update will be more comprehensive, covering events over the past 24-hour period and refining items discussed in the morning update.

Key Takeaways

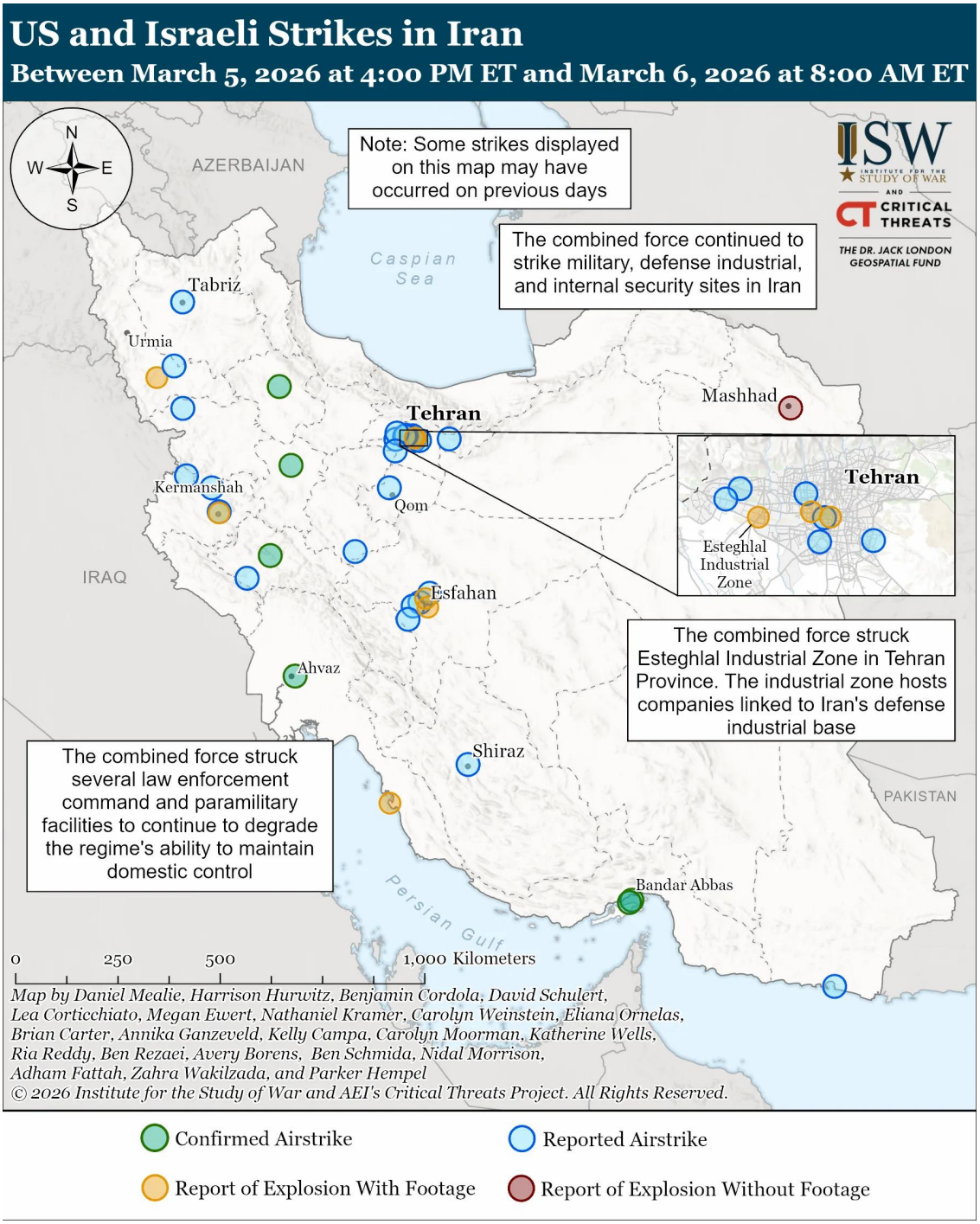
1. The combined force has targeted the Iranian internal security infrastructure on March 6 to degrade the regime's ability to maintain domestic control. The combined force targeted several law enforcement command and paramilitary facilities, including police stations in Kurdistan and West Azerbaijan Provinces, and two Basij Resistance bases in Tehran Province on March 6.
2. The combined force has targeted key Iranian military infrastructure across multiple provinces, including missile sites, command and control institutions, and naval facilities. The combined force struck a ballistic missile site in Zanjan Province and the Imam Ali Missile Base near Khorramabad in Lorestan Province.
3. Hezbollah claimed that the group conducted 18 attacks targeting Israel Defense Forces (IDF) positions and forces in northern Israel and southern Lebanon since ISW-CTP's last data cutoff at 4:00 PM ET. Hezbollah claimed on March 5 that its fighters engaged and shelled Israeli ground forces in Markaba, Khiam, and Wadi al Asafir, Marjaayoun District.

Toplines

The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) issued an evacuation warning on March 6 for the Shokouhiyeh Industrial Zone in Qom Province.[1] The industrial zone hosts companies linked to Iran's armed forces production networks, including Oje Parvaz Mado Nafar Company, which the United States sanctioned in 2021 for supporting the IRGC and producing engines used in Iranian drones. **[2]**

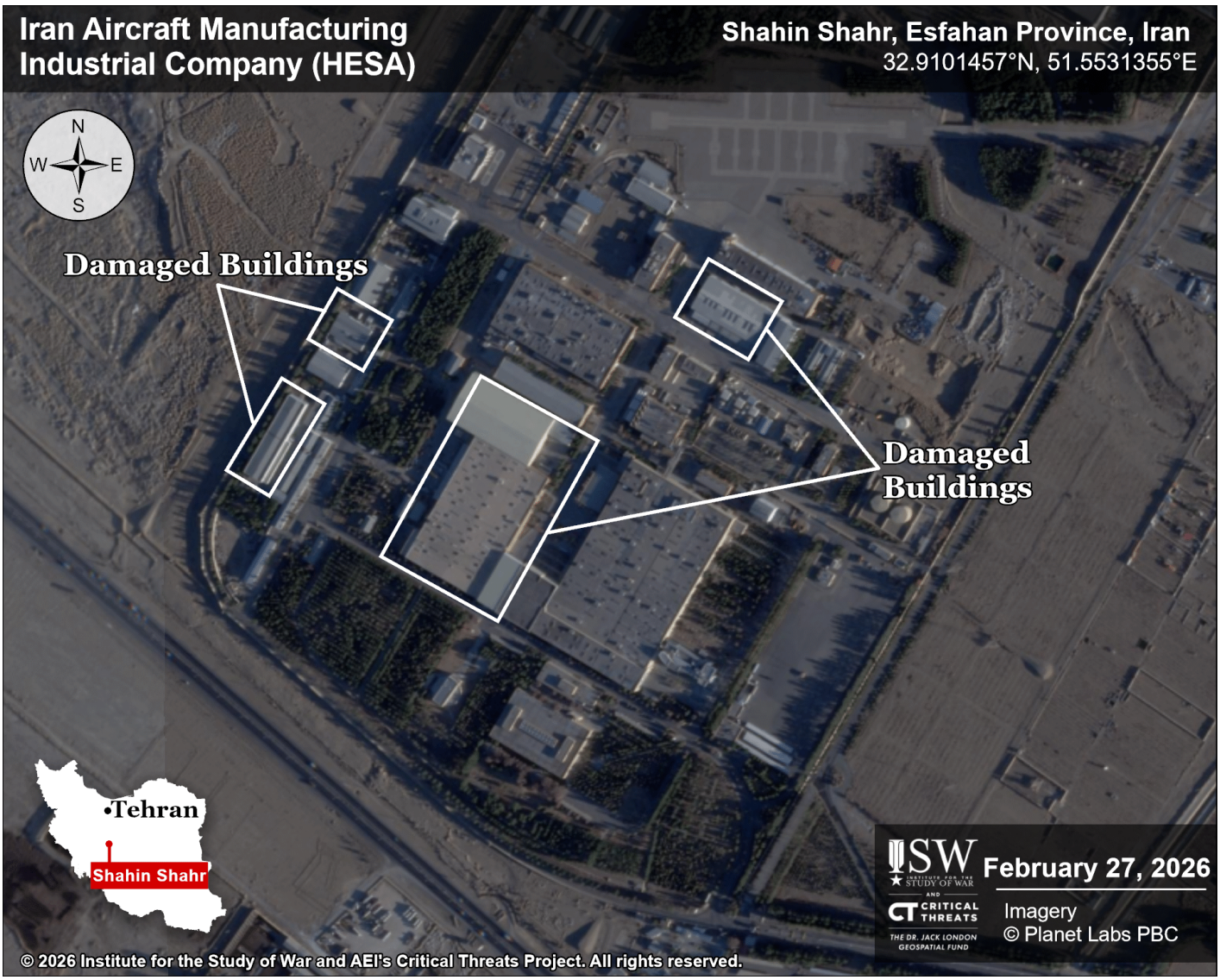
The combined forces struck Esteghlal Industrial Zone in Tehran Province on March 6.[3] The industrial zone hosts companies linked to Iran's defense industrial base, including Azmoon Pajohan Hesgar LLC.[4] The United States sanctioned Azmoon Pajohan Hesgar in 2024 for links to the Iranian Ministry of Defense and Armed Forces Logistics (MODAFL) under counter-proliferation sanctions.[5]

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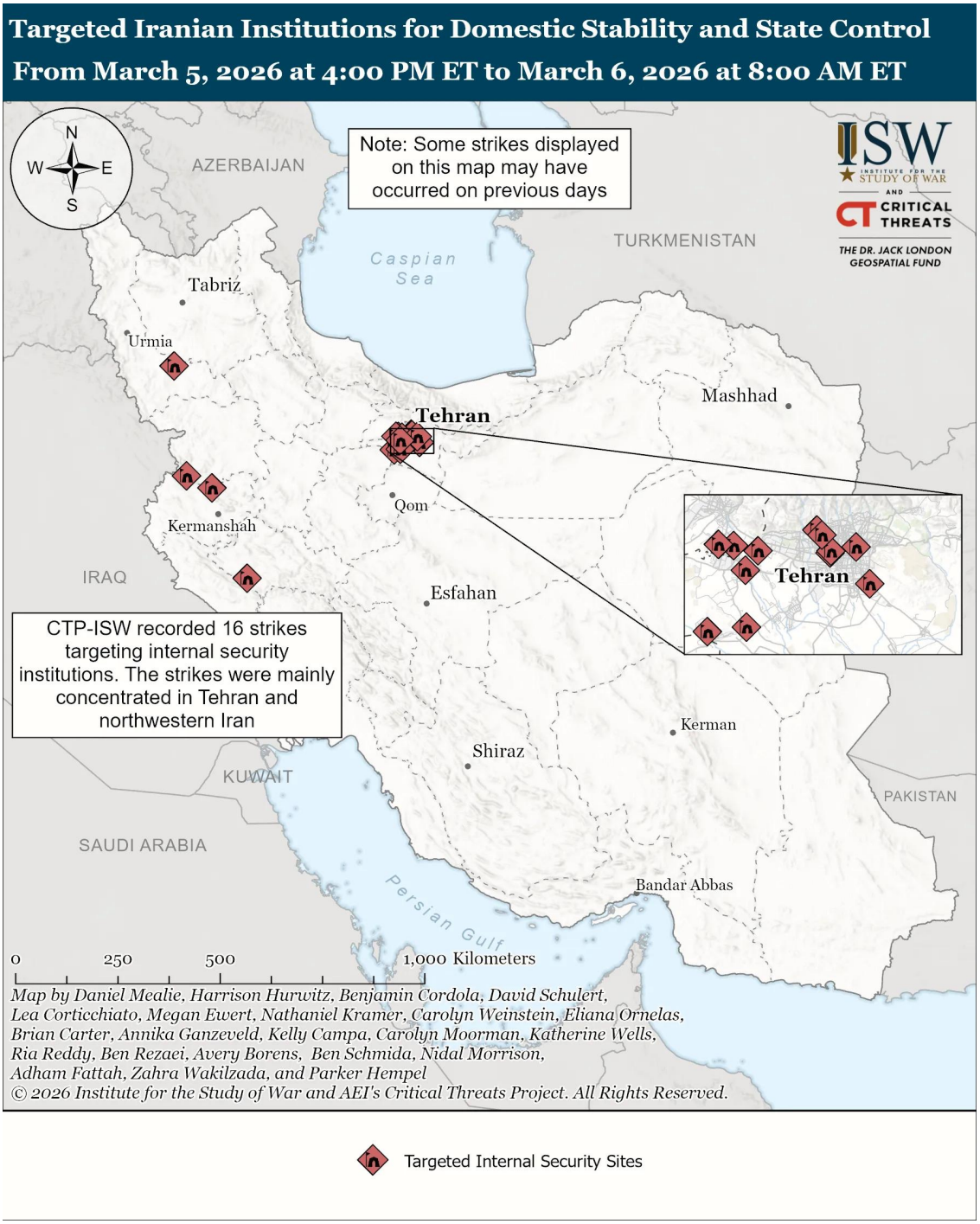
The combined force targeted the Iran Aircraft Manufacturing Industrial Company (HESA), which is an Iranian drone manufacturing facility in Shahin Shahr, Esfahan Province, on March 2.[6] Satellite imagery from March 2 shows multiple damaged buildings at the facility.[7] HESA operates under the Iranian Defense and Armed Forces Logistics Ministry and produces Ababil- and Shahed-series drones.[8] The United States sanctioned HESA in 2008 for supporting Iran’s military aircraft and drone programs.[9]

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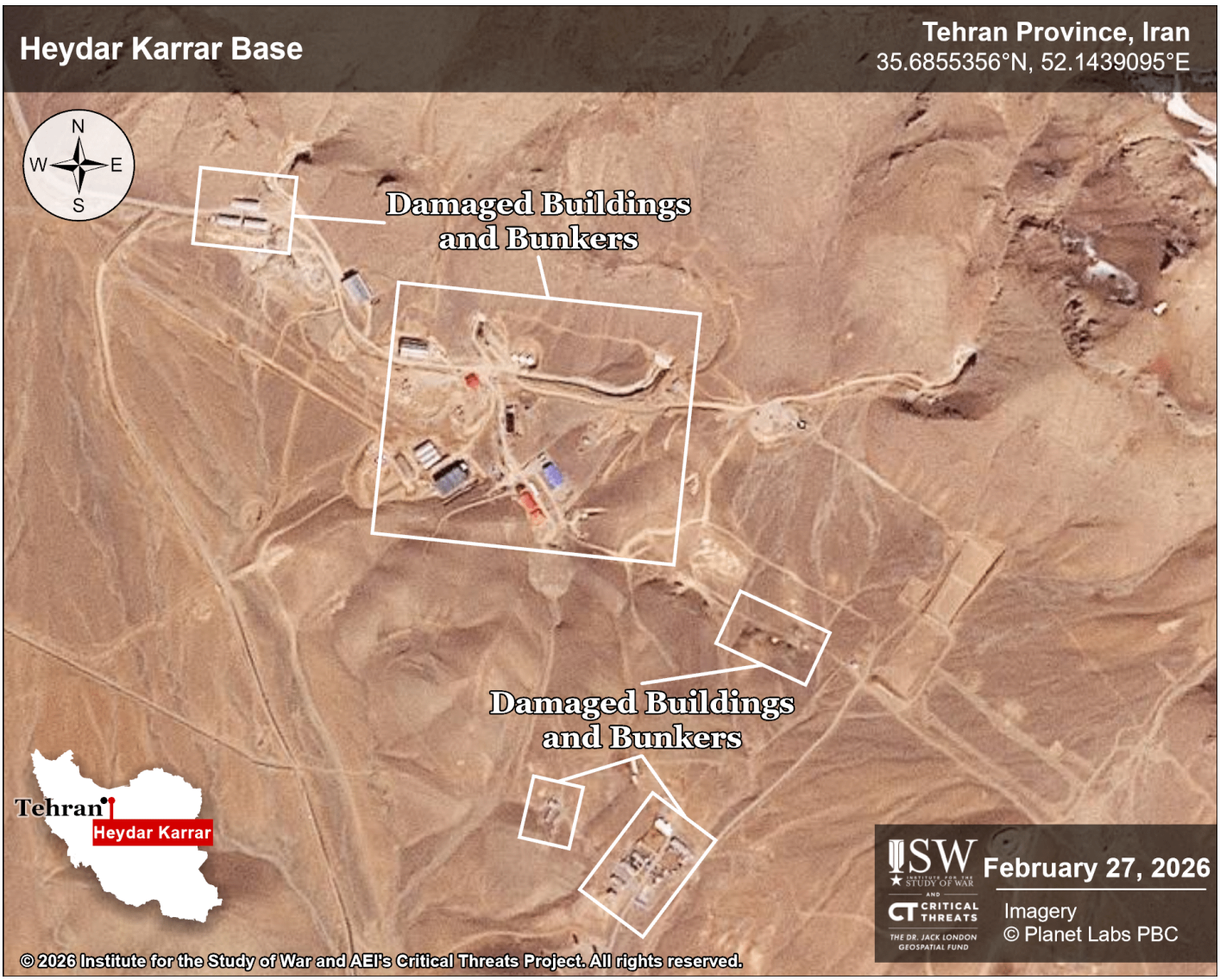
The combined force targeted the Iranian internal security infrastructure on March 6 to degrade the regime's ability to maintain domestic control. The combined force targeted several law enforcement command and paramilitary facilities, including police stations in Kurdistan and West Azerbaijan Provinces, and two Basij Resistance bases in Tehran Province on March 6.[10] The combined force also struck IRGC positions in Ilam, Kermanshah, and Lorestan provinces.[11] These facilities support the regime's internal security apparatus, including the IRGC, Basij, and Law Enforcement Command, which the regime relies on to suppress unrest and maintain internal stability.

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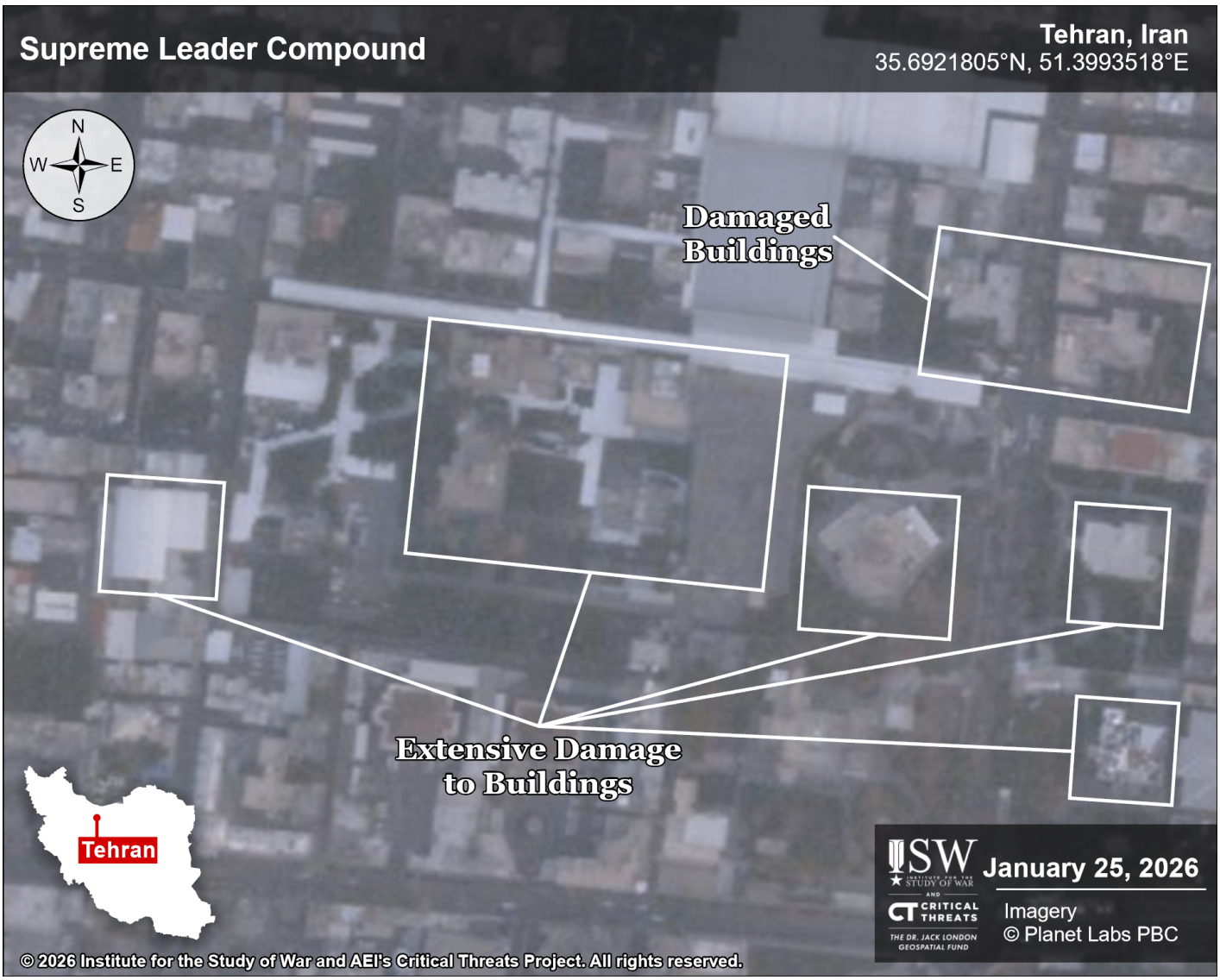
The combined force has targeted key Iranian military infrastructure across multiple provinces, including missile sites, command and control institutions, and naval facilities. The combined force struck a ballistic missile site in Zanjan Province and the Imam Ali Missile Base near Khorramabad in Lorestan Province.[12] The combined force also targeted the Heydar Karar missile base in Absard, Tehran Province, on March 6.[13]

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The combined force targeted senior Iranian political leadership and regime decision-making infrastructure in Tehran on March 6.[14] The IDF reported on March 6 that it targeted facilities associated with the Iranian supreme leader's compound and other government sites, including an underground bunker beneath the supreme leader's compound in the Pastour neighborhood, central Tehran.[15] The combined force killed former Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei in the same area on February 28.[16]

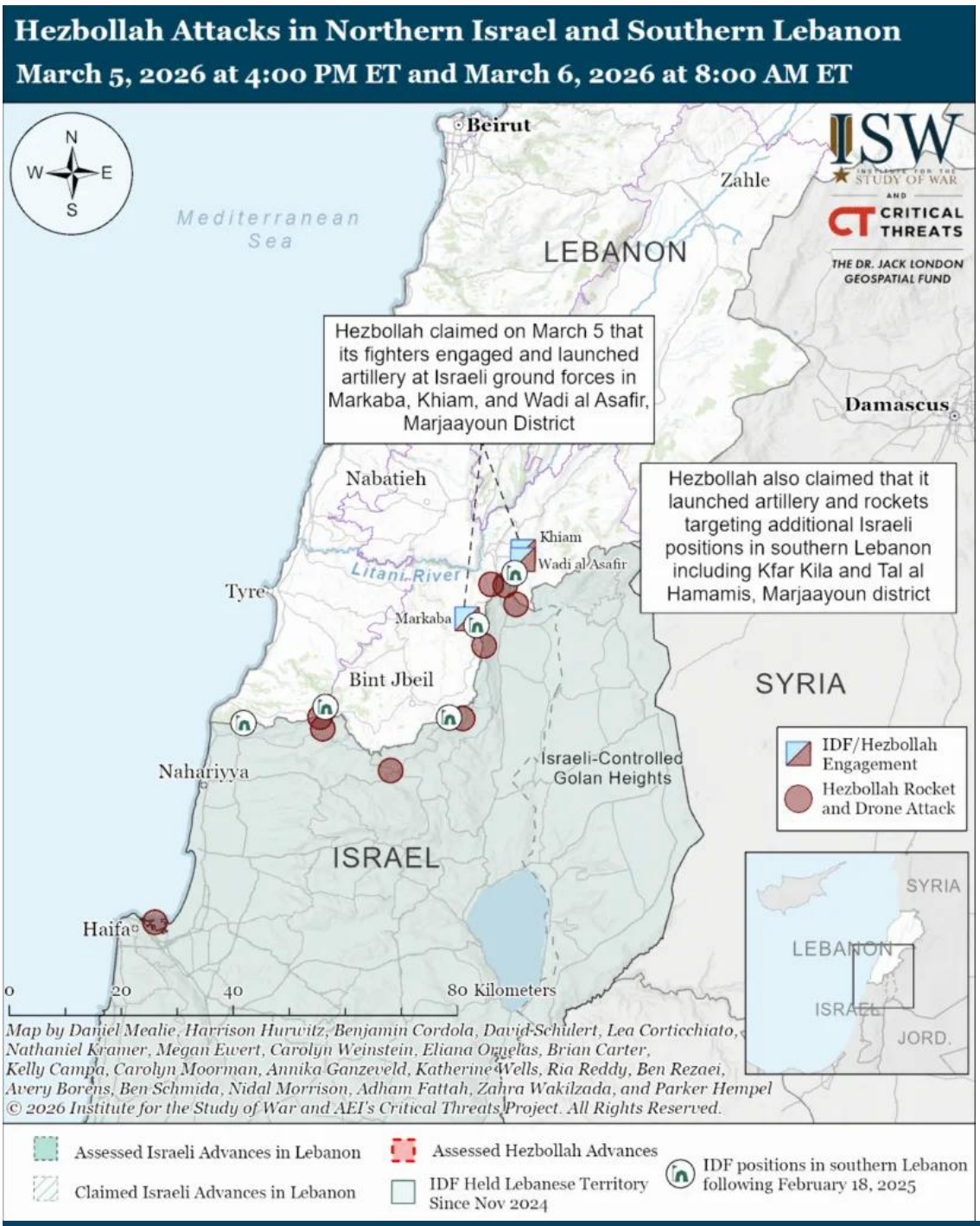
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Axis of Resistance Response

Hezbollah claimed that the group conducted 18 attacks targeting Israel Defense Forces (IDF) positions and forces in northern Israel and southern Lebanon since ISW-CTP's last data cutoff at 4:00 PM ET. Hezbollah claimed on March 5 that its fighters engaged and shelled Israeli ground forces in Markaba, Khiam, and Wadi al Asafir, Marjaayoun District.[17] Hezbollah claimed that the group's attack inflicted Israeli casualties and caused unspecified Israeli units to withdraw.[18] The IDF reported that seven 84th Infantry Brigade (162nd Division) soldiers were injured in southern Lebanon, though it is unclear if this occurred during these engagements with Hezbollah.[19] The 84th (Givati) Infantry Brigade previously conducted counterterrorism (CT) operations along the Israel-Lebanon border and in Gaza.[20] Hezbollah also claimed that it launched rockets and artillery targeting additional Israeli positions in southern Lebanon, including Kfar Kila, and Tal al Hamamis, Marjaayoun District.[21] The Tal al Hamamis outpost is one of Israel's five permanent positions in southern Lebanon that it has occupied since February 2025.[22] Hezbollah said on March 5 and 6 that it launched multiple rocket and drone attacks targeting northern Israeli towns and military installations, including the Haifa Naval Base, Yoav barracks, and Zarit barracks, all in northern Israel.[23] Hezbollah previously targeted these Israeli military sites during the October 7 War.[24] Hezbollah has also repeatedly targeted the Haifa Naval Base since March 3.[25]

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Iran Update Evening Special Report, March 6, 2026

Parker Hempel, Ria Reddy, Ben Rezaei, Carolyn Moorman, Brian Carter, Jennie Olmsted, Jessica Sobieski

Analyst Notes: Data Cutoff: 3:00 PM ET

The Institute for the Study of War (ISW) and the Critical Threats Project (CTP) at the American Enterprise Instituteare publishing two updates daily to provide analysis on the war with Iran. The morning update will focus on US and Israeli strikes on Iran and Iran and the Axis of Resistance's response to the strikes. The evening update will be more comprehensive, covering events over the past 24-hour period and refining items discussed in the morning update.

Key Takeaways

1. Russia is reportedly sharing intelligence with Iran to support Iranian attacks against US forces in the Middle East, which highlights the deepening cooperation between two major US adversaries. Iran may not have regular access to high-quality satellite imagery, even from commercially available sources, and may be relying on Russia to get such imagery. Russian intelligence sharing, thus, may be supporting Iranian strikes on US military assets. Multiple people familiar with US intelligence stated that China may be preparing to provide Iran with financial assistance and missile components.
2. The US-Israeli combined force has continued strikes targeting Iranian ballistic missile infrastructure in order to degrade Iranian missile capabilities and ultimately destroy the Iranian ballistic missile program. US Central Command (CENTCOM) Commander Admiral Brad Cooper stated on March 5 that ballistic missile attacks from Iran have declined by roughly 90 percent since the strikes began. A campaign that destroys Iran's ballistic missile launchers, stockpiles, and production facilities would accomplish the US stated objective to "raze or level Iran's ballistic missile industrial base" and systematically dismantle Iran's missile production capability.
3. The combined force is continuing to target Iran's defense industrial base, especially facilities that support drone development. The IDF targeted the Shokouhiyeh Industrial Zone in Qom Province and the Esteghlal Industrial Zone in Tehran Province, as well as an ammunition production facility and an ammunition depot in Tehran and Fars provinces.
4. Iran has continued to retaliate against Israel, US bases in the Middle East, Gulf states, and other regional countries for the joint force strike campaign. Iran has launched at least six waves of ballistic missile attacks in the previous six days. The lower number of missile attacks further demonstrates the joint forces' success in degrading Iran's number of missile launchers.

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Toplines

NOTE: A version of the following text also appeared in The Institute for the Study of War's March 6 Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment:

Russia is reportedly sharing intelligence with Iran to support Iranian attacks against US forces in the Middle East, which highlights the deepening cooperation between two major US adversaries. Three officials familiar with the intelligence on Russia's support for Iran told the *Washington Post* on March 6 that Russia has given Iran the locations of US military assets, including warships and aircraft, since the US-Israeli February 28 strikes against Iran.[1] One of the officials characterized Russia's provision of targeting information to strike US forces in the Middle East as a "pretty comprehensive effort."[2] The *Washington Post* noted that analysts indicated that Russia's reported intelligence sharing fits the pattern of Iran's strikes against US command and control infrastructure, radars, and temporary structures. The Center for Naval Analyses (CNA) Principal Research Scientist Mike Peterson stated that Russia could be giving Iran high-quality satellite imagery with which Iran could identify what bases the United States and its allies are currently using and other information, such as the location of aircraft, intelligence stations, and logistics flows.[3] Iran may not have regular access to high-quality satellite imagery, even from commercially available sources, and may be relying on Russia to get such imagery. Prominent commercial publisher of satellite imagery, Planet Labs, enacted a policy on March 6, subjecting all new imagery collected over the Gulf States and adjacent conflict zones, excluding Iran, to a mandatory 96-hour delay before making it publicly available, and other companies have held policies to never release images of US or allied bases.[4] Russian intelligence sharing, thus, may be supporting Iranian strikes on US military assets.

China may be preparing to provide Iran with support, according to multiple people familiar with US intelligence on this issue.[5] The intelligence suggests that China may be preparing to provide Iran with financial assistance and missile components.[6] China has historically provided Iran with sodium perchlorate to support Iran's ballistic missile program.[7] Sodium perchlorate is a chemical precursor for solid missile propellant. European intelligence sources told CNN in October 2025 that Iran received 2,000 tons of sodium perchlorate in several shipments that arrived in Bandar Abbas, Iran, from China.[8] These shipments came amid Iranian efforts to rebuild its ballistic missile program following the June 2025 Israel-Iran war.[9]

Reuters reported on March 5, citing a source familiar with the matter, that US and Qatari officials are in talks with Ukraine to purchase Ukrainian interceptor drones to intercept Iranian Shahed drones.[10] The source stated that parties are also discussing the transfer of Ukrainian technologies that "listen out" for incoming enemy drones and "disrupt their communication signals," likely referring to acoustic sensors and electronic warfare (EW).[11] Ukraine manufactures and relies on relatively cheap Shahed interceptor drones that cost only a few thousand dollars each to produce.[12] Ukraine has years of experience defending against almost nightly large-scale Russian drone and missile strike packages, which have included Iranian-origin strike drones much like those the United States and its allies currently face in the Middle East.[13] Ukraine also has a reported 90 percent interception rate of such drones.[14] *The Telegraph* reported on March 4 that the UK sent Ukrainian-trained British drone operators to the Middle East as of March 3 to defend British bases in the region, and that the UK plans to deploy more later in the week.[15] One Western official told *The Telegraph* that these British drone operators have experience working in Ukraine, where they learned about layering sensing, warning, and targeting drones.[16]

US President Donald Trump said on March 6 that the United States would only accept Iranian "unconditional surrender."[17] Trump later told Axios that "unconditional surrender" could be a

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formal Iranian surrender.[18] Trump said that an Iranian ”unconditional surrender” could also be achieved when Iran can no longer fight against the United States ”because they don’t have anyone or anything to fight with.”[19] White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt told Fox that “unconditional surrender” is achieved when “Iran can no longer pose a threat to the U.S. and our troops in the Middle East.”[20]

The US-Israeli combined force has continued strikes targeting Iranian ballistic missile infrastructure in order to degrade Iranian missile capabilities and ultimately destroy the Iranian ballistic missile program. Iranian missile forces are already badly degraded. US Central Command (CENTCOM) Commander Admiral Brad Cooper stated on March 5 that ballistic missile attacks from Iran have declined by roughly 90 percent since the strikes began.[21] The IDF also estimated that Iran has around 100 to 200 missile launchers remaining.[22] Cooper added that the operation aims to “raze or level Iran’s ballistic missile industrial base” and systematically dismantle Iran’s missile production capability.[23] Cooper’s comments are consistent with the doctrinal definition of destroy, which is when an enemy force loses the physical means or will to fight. A destroyed force cannot function without being entirely rebuilt. A campaign that destroys Iran’s ballistic missile launchers, stockpiles, and production facilities would accomplish this military objective. Satellite imagery from March 4 to 5 shows strikes on multiple ballistic missile facilities, including the Imam Ali Missile Base in Khorramabad, Lorestan Province, the Heydar Karar missile base in Tehran Province, and a ballistic missile launch site in Zanjan Province.[24] Satellite imagery from March 6 also shows strikes on the Yazd Province missile base.[25] The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) stated on March 6 that it had struck over 400 targets in western Iran, including ballistic missile launchers, as part of efforts to reduce missile fire toward Israeli territory.[26] These strikes aimed to degrade Iran’s ability to launch ballistic missiles and limit the regime’s remaining launcher inventory.

The combined force is continuing to target Iran’s defense industrial base, especially facilities that support drone development. The IDF targeted the Shokouhiyeh Industrial Zone in Qom Province after it issued an evacuation warning on March 6.[27] The industrial zone hosts companies linked to Iran’s defense industrial base, including drone production networks.[28] The United States sanctioned a company with facilities in the industrial zone, Oje Parvaz Mado Nafar Company (Mado), in October 2021, for providing material support to the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and producing engines used in Iranian unmanned aerial vehicles such as the Shahed-131 and Shahed-136.[29] Mado reportedly manufactures drone propulsion systems that have been reverse-engineered from foreign designs and has supplied engines and components to IRGC-affiliated organizations and other Iranian defense firms involved in weapons development.[30] The combined force also targeted the Esteghlal Industrial Zone in Tehran Province on March 6.[31] The industrial zone hosts firms linked to Iran’s defense industrial base, including Azmoon Pajohan Hesgar LLC, which the United States sanctioned in 2024 for ties to Iran’s Ministry of Defense and Armed Forces Logistics (MODAFL).[32] The combined force separately targeted an ammunition production facility and an ammunition depot in Tehran and Fars provinces on March 6, likely as part of an ongoing campaign to degrade Iranian military logistics and weapons storage infrastructure.[33]

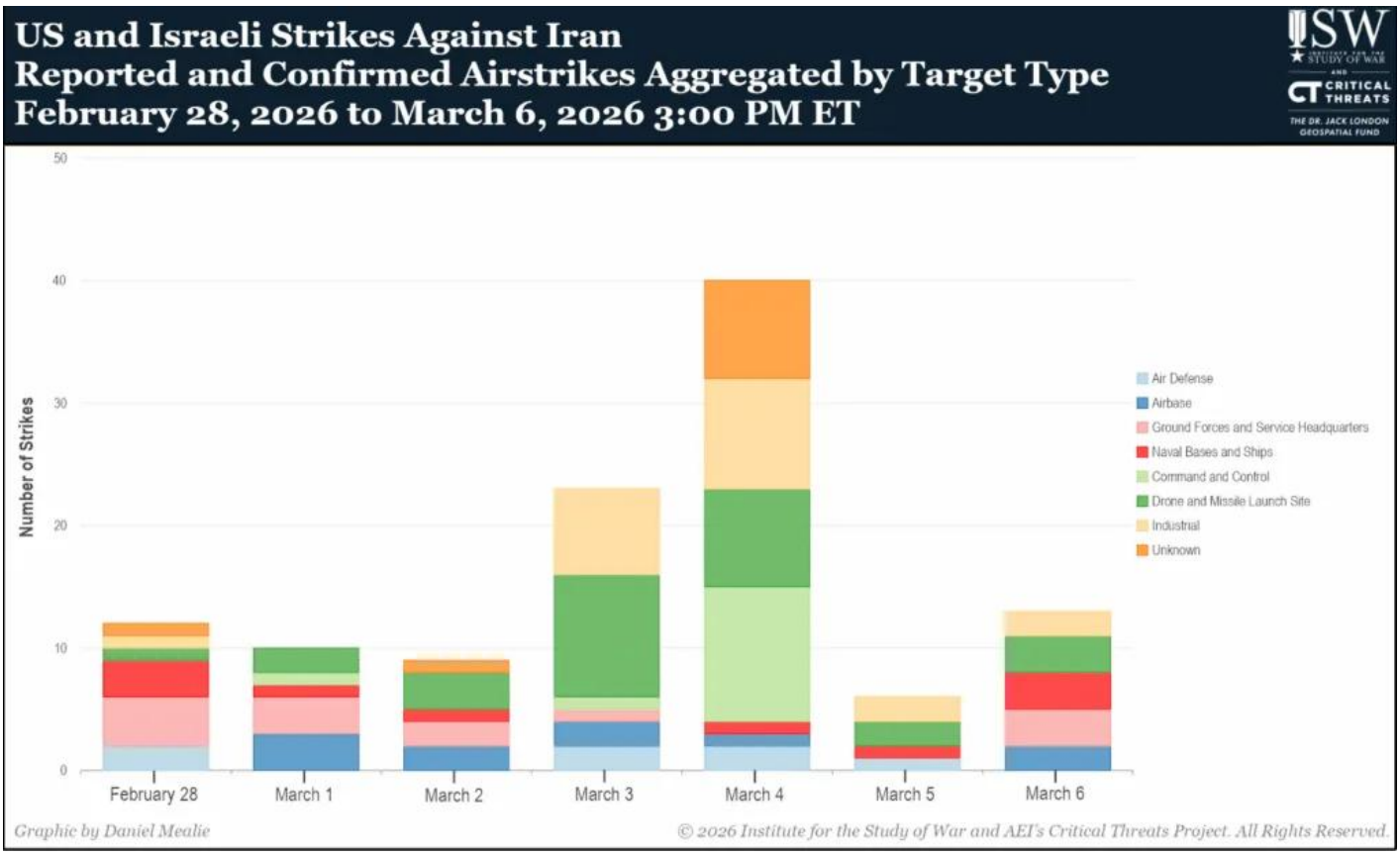
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US and Israeli Strikes Targeting Iranian Defense Industrial Sites

From March 5, 2026 4:00 PM ET to March 6, 2026 at 3:00 PM ET



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US and Israeli Air Campaign

The combined force has continued to destroy Iranian air defense infrastructure in order to maintain air superiority over Iran. The combined force targeted the Shiraz air defense center in Fars Province on March 6.[34] These strikes are consistent with the first phase of the campaign, which focused on suppressing Iranian air defenses. US CENTCOM Commander Admiral Brad Cooper stated on March 5 that US and Israeli forces have achieved air dominance over Iran, enabling the combined force to strike targets deep inside Iranian territory.[35] Air dominance is when air power creates the conditions that allow joint forces to operate with "impunity" throughout the adversary's battlespace.[36]

The combined force continued targeting the Iranian internal security infrastructure. The strikes targeted Law Enforcement Command facilities and Basij bases across Iran. These organizations play key roles in suppressing protests and maintaining regime control, and the strikes will likely degrade the regime's internal security apparatus if the combined force continues to strike these targets at scale throughout the country. The combined force also struck the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) Imam Ali Garrison in Sanandaj, Kurdistan Province, on March 5.[37] The garrison hosts the IRGC Beyt ol Moghaddas Provincial Unit and its 22nd Beyt ol Moghaddas Operational Division, which is responsible for internal security and counter-insurgency operations in Kurdistan Province.[38] The 22nd Beyt ol Moghaddas Operational Division falls under the Hamzeh Seyyed ol Shohada Operational Base, one of the IRGC Ground Forces' regional operational commands headquartered in Urmia, West Azerbaijan Province.[39] The European Union sanctioned the Beyt ol Moghaddas Unit for its role in suppressing protests and committing human rights abuses against demonstrators in Kurdish-populated areas of western Iran.[40] The combined force has also struck other internal security infrastructures in Ilam, Kurdistan, Kermanshah, and West Azerbaijan provinces.[41] These strikes are concentrated in Kurdish-populated areas, where the regime maintains internal security forces to manage unrest and counter Kurdish militant activity.[42]

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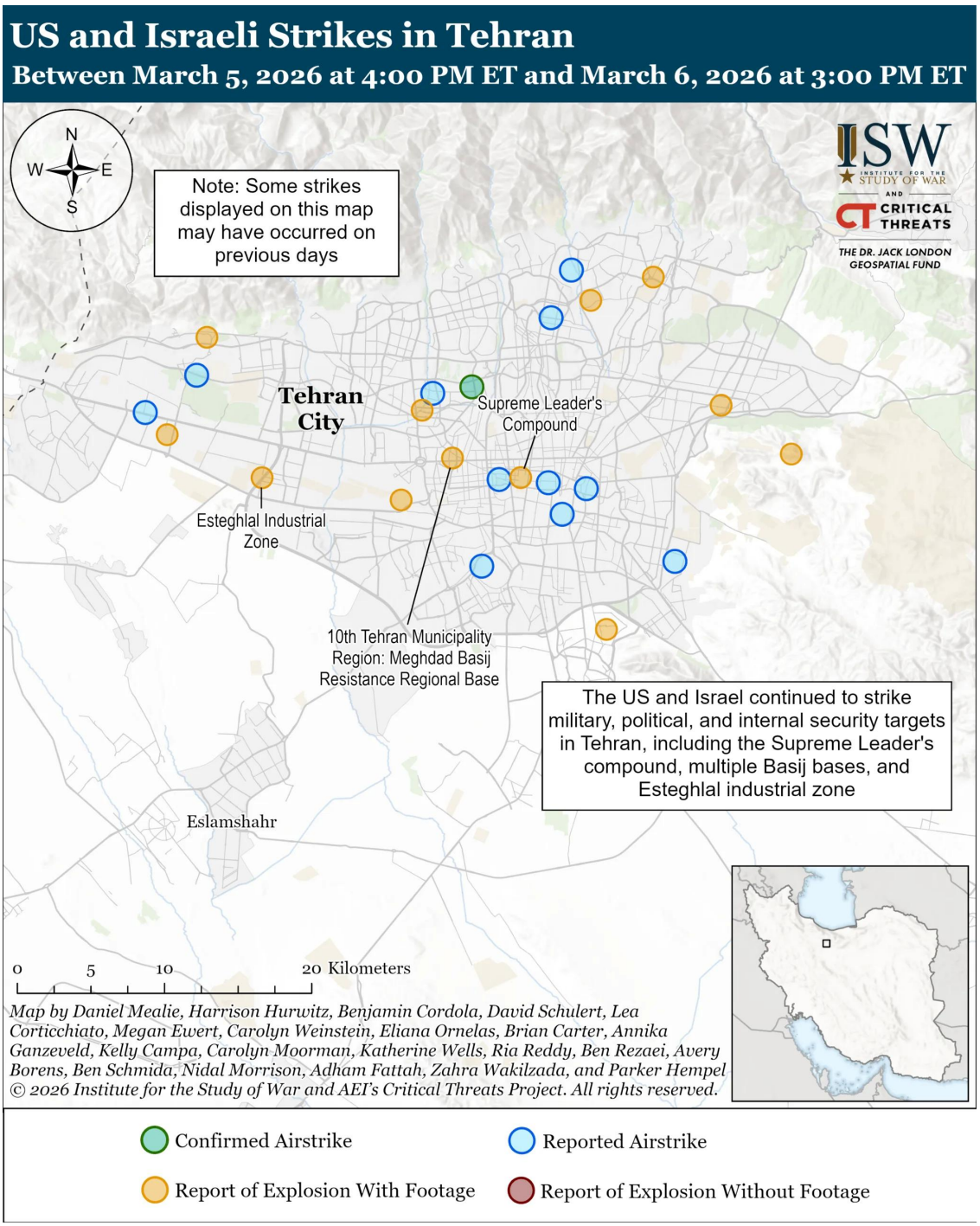


Israeli media, citing Israeli security sources, reported that the IDF targeted former Iranian Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei's Deputy Chief of Staff for Political and Security Affairs, Ali Asghar Hejazi, in an airstrike in Tehran on March 6.[43] It is unclear if Hejazi was killed at the time of this writing. The IDF confirmed on March 6 that it struck a senior Iranian official but did not specify who the official was or if they were killed.[44] Five people familiar with Khamenei's decision-making process told Reuters in June 2025 that Hejazi is one of Khamenei's closest advisers and is considered the "most powerful intelligence official" in Iran.[45] A February 2026 *New York Times* report similarly identified Hejazi as a member of Khamenei's inner circle, citing multiple senior Iranian officials, including one affiliated with Khamenei's office, and three IRGC members.[46] The reported targeting of Hejazi comes amid a broader Israeli decapitation campaign, which is likely disrupting Iran's ability to effectively retaliate against the US-Israeli strike campaign. US-Israeli strikes since February 28 have killed several senior Iranian officials, including former Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, former IRGC Commander Major General Mohammad Pakpour, and former Armed Forces General Staff Chief Major General Abdol Rahim Mousavi.[47]

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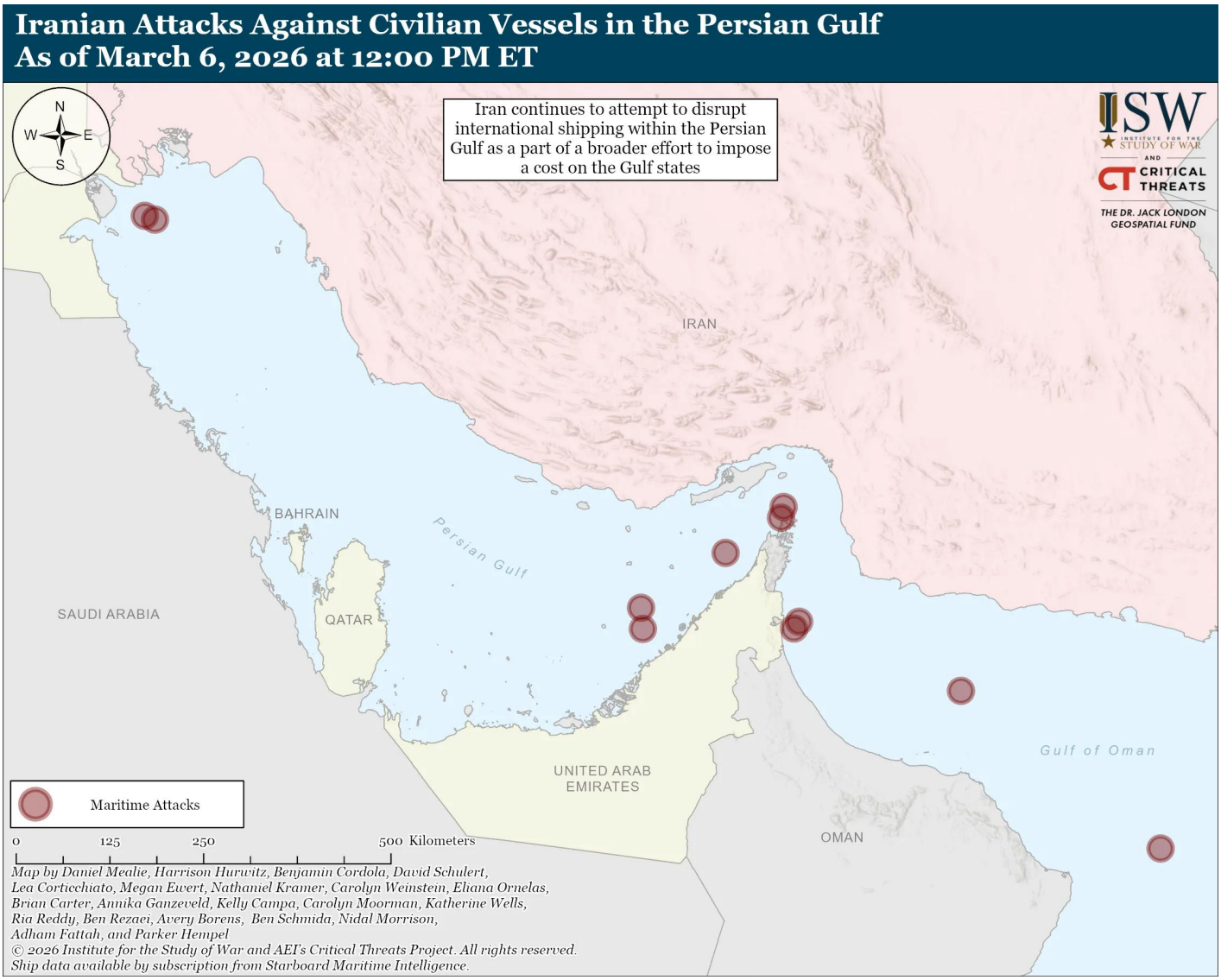


The combined force continues to degrade the Iranian Navy. Central Command (CENTCOM) Commander Admiral Brad Cooper said on March 5 that US forces have destroyed over 30 Iranian naval vessels since February 28.[48] This includes the IRGC Navy's IRIS *ShahidBagheri* drone carrier, which CENTCOM destroyed on March 5.[49] CENTCOM previously struck the *Shahid Bagheri* on February 28 but did not disclose details of the strike.[50] The *Shahid Bagheri* was a South Korean-built container ship that the IRGC Navy converted into a drone carrier and commissioned in February 2025.[51] CENTCOM's destruction of the *Shahid Bagheri* follows similar CENTCOM strikes on the IRIS *Dena* of the coast of Sri Lanka and the IRGC Navy's IRIS *Shahid Sayyad Shirazi*, of the coast of Bandar Abbas, on March 3.[52] The Sri Lankan navy separately said it took control of the Iranian IRIS *Bushehr*, a Bandar Abbas-class auxiliary support ship, off the coast of Sri Lanka on March 6, after the *Bushehr* suffered an engine malfunction.[53] The Sri Lankan Navy said it would take the Bushehr into the port of Trincomalee in eastern Sri Lanka and would impound the ship until further notice.[54] The Sri Lankan navy also evacuated the crew of the

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Bushehr to the Welisara Naval Base in Colombo for medical evaluations.[55] It is unclear if the *Bushehr* had an engine failure and, if it did, what caused the failure. The Bandar Abbas–class auxiliary support ships are West German–built vessels designed to sustain Iranian naval groups during extended operations by transporting fuel, supplies, ammunition, and other stores to accompanying warships.[56]

Iran is continuing to attempt to disrupt international shipping within the Persian Gulf as part of a broader effort to impose a cost on the Gulf states. United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO) reported on March 6 that unknown projectiles struck a tug boat assisting operations on the cargo ship *Safeen Prestige,* which Iran previously attacked, in the Strait of Hormuz.[57] The UKMTO reported that there are unconfirmed reports of casualties following the likely Iranian drone strike on the vessel.[58] A likely Iranian unmanned surface vessel (USV) struck the *Safeen Prestige* on March 4, which caused a fire in the engine room and forced the crew to abandon ship.[59] The likely Iranian drone strike on the tugboat is the 13th maritime incident in and around the Strait of Hormuz that the UKMTO has reported since the conflict began on February 28.[60]

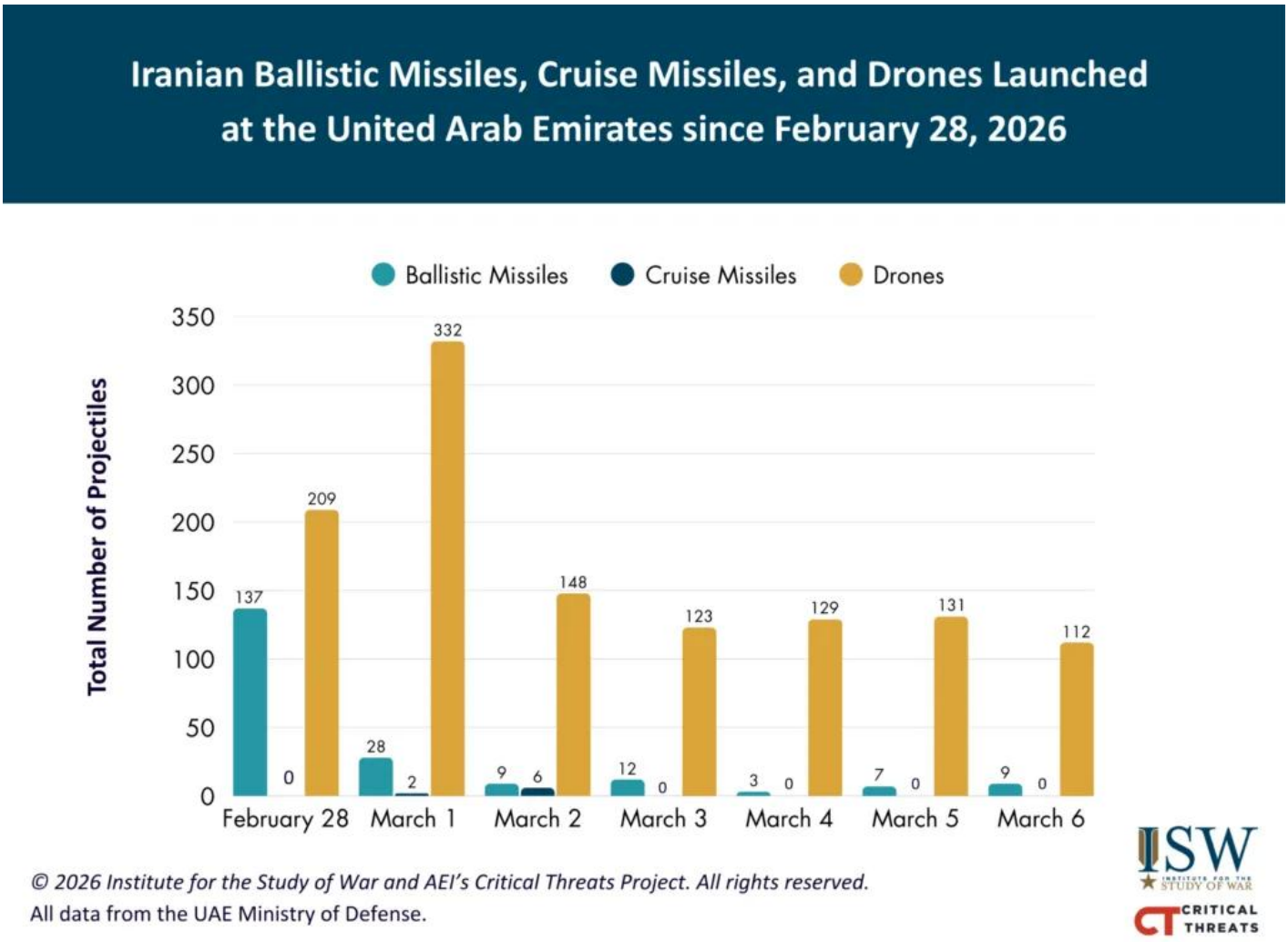


Iranian Retaliation

Iran has continued to retaliate against Israel, US bases in the Middle East, Gulf states, and other regional countries for the joint force strike campaign. The Pentagon said on March 5 that Iran has launched over 500 ballistic missiles and 2,000 drones since February 28.[61] Iran has conducted

five waves of ballistic missile strikes between March 5 at 4:00 PM ET and March 6 at 4:00 PM ET.[62] This is a decrease in missile attacks as compared to the eight missile waves Iran launched from March 4 at 4:00 PM ET and March 5 at 4:00 PM ET.[63] Iran has launched at least six waves of ballistic missile attacks per day in the previous six days.[64] The lower number of missile attacks further demonstrates the joint forces' success in degrading Iran's number of missile launchers. CTP-ISW assessed on March 5 that the joint force advanced to the next phase of its campaign, which will focus on targeting Iranian defense industrial assets, especially missile production facilities.[65]

Iran launched missiles and drones at Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Qatar, and Iraq since March 5.[66] CTP-ISW recorded no impacts of projectiles in Qatar, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, or the UAE. The Saudi Defense Ministry announced it had intercepted four Iranian missiles and 10 drones on March 5 and 6, which is an increase in Iranian attacks on Saudi Arabia compared to previous days.[67] Iran continues to launch the highest number of attacks against the UAE.[68] CTP observed Iran launch a total of 112 drones and 9 ballistic missiles at the UAE since March 5.[69] The Bahraini Defense Ministry announced on March 5 that two Iranian drones struck two residential buildings and a hotel in Manama, causing material damage.[70] Geolocated imagery also shows damage to a radar for a US THAAD system at Muwaffaq Salti Airbase. An Iranian missile attack struck the airbase on January 28.[71]



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Axis of Resistance Response

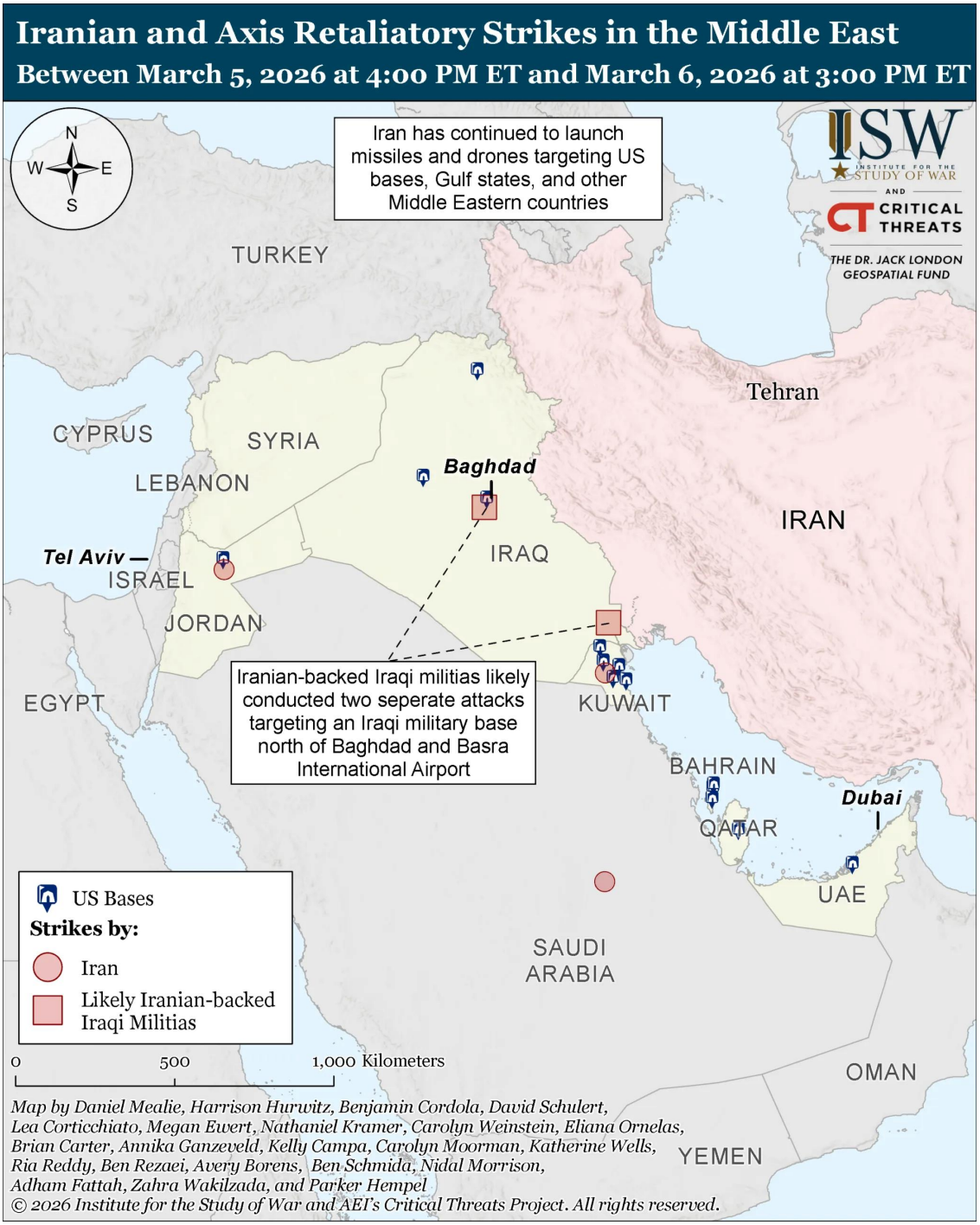
The United States and Israel continue to conduct attacks targeting Iranian-backed Iraqi militia positions in Iraq in order to deter the militias from retaliating against the United States and Israel. A security source in Ninewa Province told Iraqi media on March 6 that a fighter jet struck a Kataib al Imam Ali headquarters south of Mosul.[72] The combined force also reportedly struck an additional Iranian-backed Popular Mobilization Forces site in Ninewa Province on March 6.[73]



Iranian-backed Iraqi militias continue to attack US forces. The Islamic Resistance in Iraq, which is a coalition of Iranian-backed Iraqi militias, claimed on March 6 that it had conducted 27 drone and missile operations against “enemy bases” in Iraq and the region “in the past 24 hours.”[74] The Islamic Resistance in Iraq has claimed a similar number of attacks every day since February 28, but ISW-CTP

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remains unable to verify whether these attacks are occurring in reality. Likely militia rocket and drone attacks separately targeted Basra International Airport, an oil field in Basra Province, the former US Victory Base at Baghdad International Airport, the Camp Taji Iraqi military base, and the headquarters of a US oil company in Basra Province on March 5 and 6.[75] Iraqi air defenses intercepted the attacks at Baghdad International Airport and the US oil company headquarters.[76]



Iranian-backed Iraqi militias may be using front groups in an attempt to avoid US and Israeli strikes on militia positions and obfuscate culpability. Two Iraqi militias, which appear to be front organizations for other Iranian-backed Iraqi militias, Saraya Awliya al Dam and Rijal Albas Alshadid, claimed attacks targeting Jordan's Muwaffaq al Salti Airbase, the US Rumalyn Landing Zone, and an unspecified "vital target" in Jordan, as well as an unspecified "vital target" in Duhok, Iraqi Kurdistan.[77] A Middle East analyst reported that a joint force strike struck a headquarters of Kataib Sayyid al Shuhada, a member of the Islamic Resistance in Iraq, in Mosul, Ninewa Province, on March 6 after Kataib Sayyid al

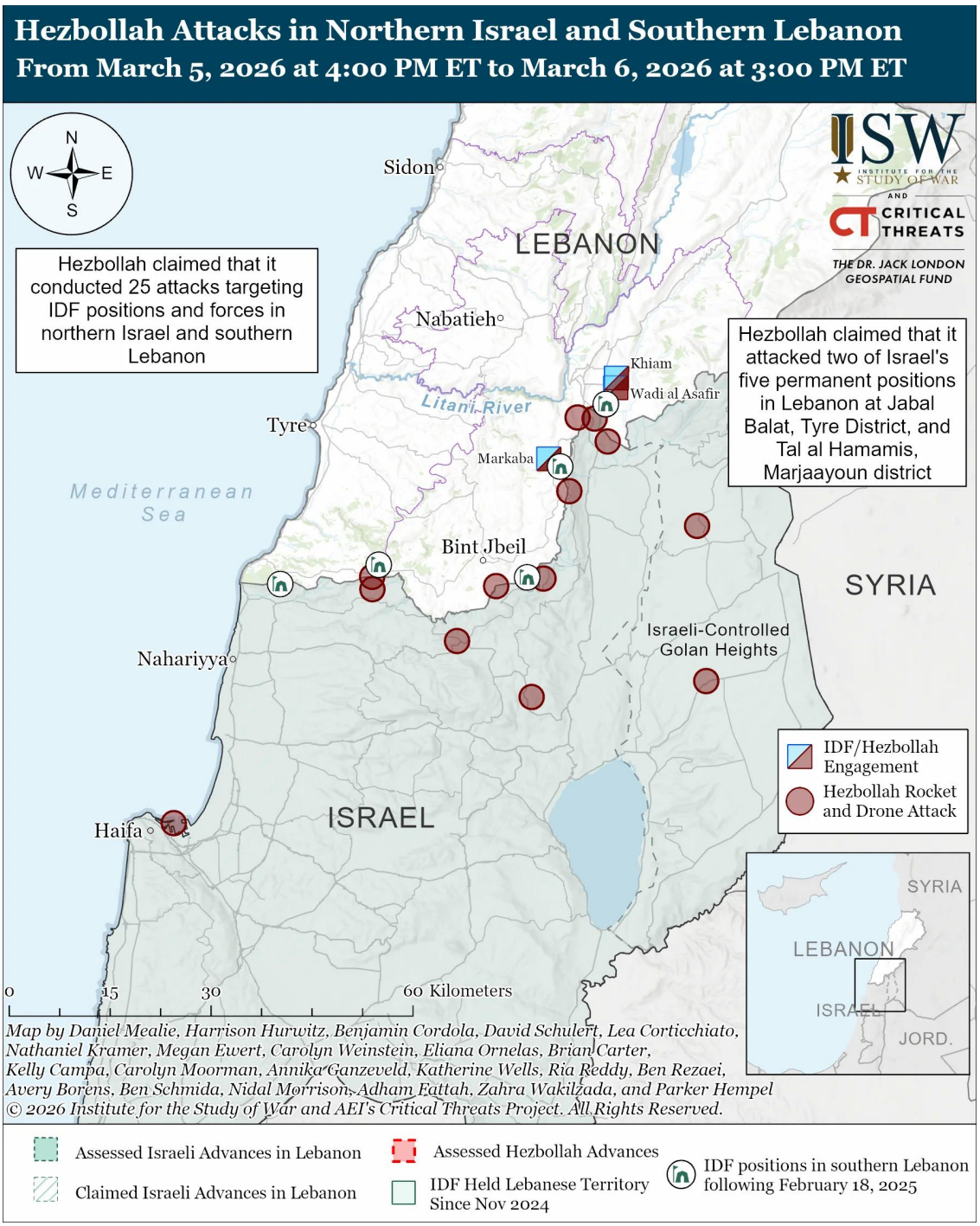
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Shuhada's failed attempts to conduct attacks under Saraya Awliya al Dam's name.[78] Saraya Awliya al Dam also claimed on March 6 an attack on the former US Victory Base at Baghdad International Airport.[79] Kataib Sarqhat al Quds, formerly known as Ashabl al Kahf and long considered a front group, announced on March 5 that it operates under Harakat Hezbollah al Nujaba's instructions.[80]

Hezbollah claimed that it conducted seven attacks targeting IDF positions and forces in northern Israel and southern Lebanon since CTP-ISW's last data cutoff at 8:00 AM ET on March 6.[81] Hezbollah claimed that it launched a guided missile, rockets, and drones targeting IDF forces in Jabal Balat, Tyre District, and Markaba and Tal al Hamamis, both in Marjaayoun District, respectively.[82] Two of Israel's five permanent positions in southern Lebanon that it has occupied since February 2025 are located at Tal al Hamamis and Jabal Balat.[83] Hezbollah also claimed that it launched rocket and drone attacks targeting three Israeli military sites and one town, all in northern Israel.[84] Hezbollah previously targeted all four locations during the October 7 War.[85]

Hezbollah is likely attempting to displace northern Israeli residents from their homes to place political pressure on the Israeli government to curtail its war effort. Hezbollah also released a statement in Hebrew on March 6 calling for northern Israeli residents to evacuate their homes and move five kilometers south of the Israel-Lebanon border.[86] Hezbollah's attacks after the October 7 War imposed political challenges on the Netanyahu government by forcing the evacuations of northern Israeli residents.[87] Hezbollah's efforts during the October 7 War were ultimately unsuccessful and led to the Israeli campaign that degraded Hezbollah and returned Israelis to their homes.[88] Israeli Defense Minister Israel Katz said on March 6 that no northern Israeli residents should have to leave their homes or communities.[89] Katz also said that the IDF has reinforced its units operating in Lebanon and has "significantly expanded to additional positions" in Lebanon.[90] Israeli Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Eyal Zamir met with IDF Northern Command commanders on March 6 and discussed reinforcing Israel's northern border units. Zamir said that the IDF will "not give up on disarming Hezbollah" in order to protect Israel's northern communities.[91]

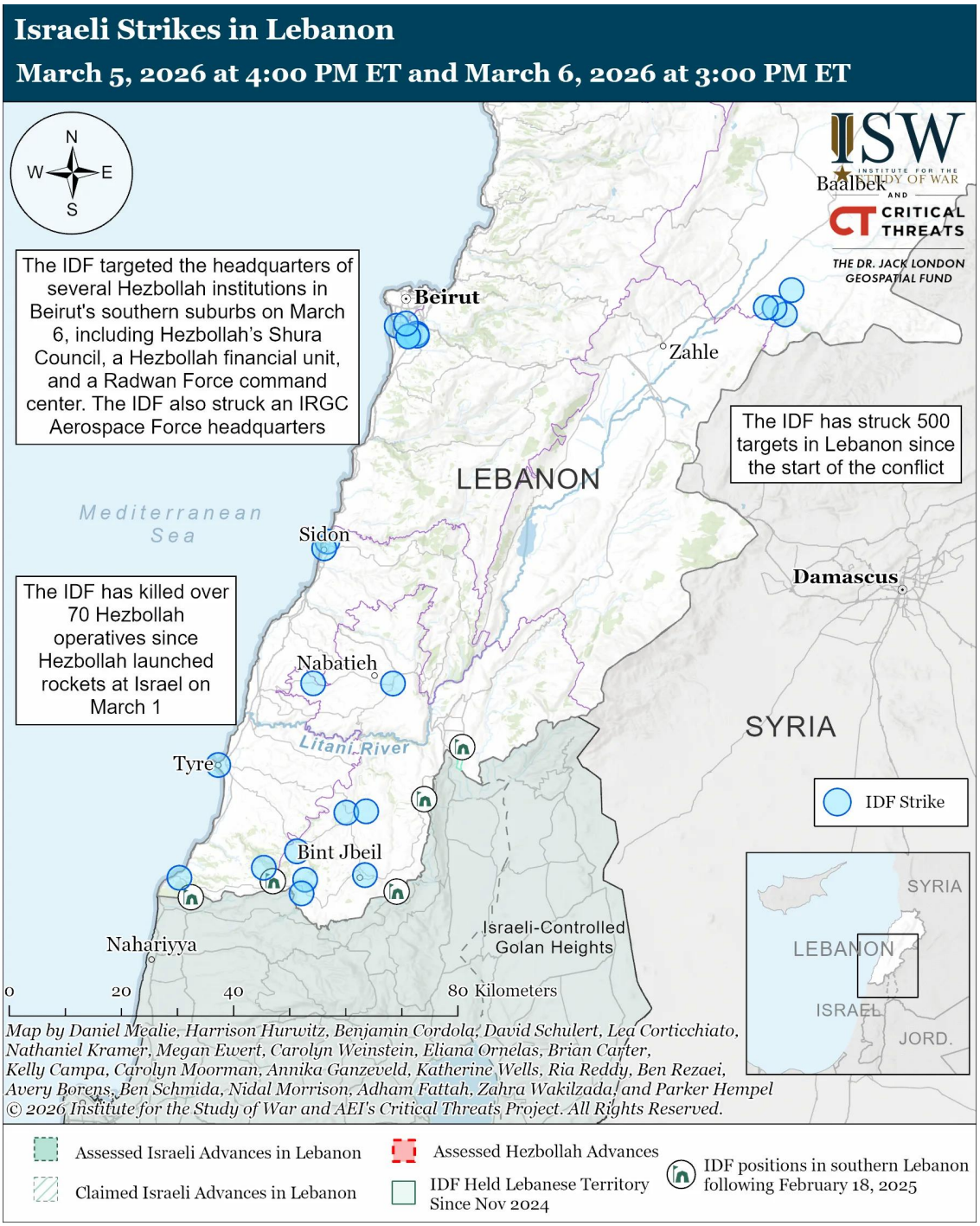
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The IDF has continued to conduct airstrikes targeting Hezbollah military sites in Lebanon to degrade Hezbollah's ability to conduct retaliatory attacks against Israel. IDF reported that it has struck 500 targets in Lebanon since February 28.[92] IDF Spokesperson Brigadier General Effie Defrin said that the IDF has killed over 70 Hezbollah operatives since Hezbollah launched rockets at Israel on March 1.[93] The IDF targeted multiple Hezbollah and IRGC headquarters and military infrastructure in Beirut's southern suburbs on March 6.[94] The IDF reported that it struck an IRGC Aerospace Force Headquarters and Hezbollah's Shura Council Headquarters, Unit 7900 Headquarters, a Hezbollah financial unit headquarters, a Radwan Force command center, and a drone storage warehouse.[95] The Shura Council is Hezbollah's supreme decision-making authority.[96] Unit 7900 is Hezbollah's naval unit, which is tasked with conducting sea-based attacks against Israel and Israeli targets.[97] The Radwan Force is Hezbollah's elite special operations unit that Hezbollah, with Iranian support, built to conduct major ground attacks into Israel in the event of war.[98] Hezbollah reportedly ordered its Radwan Force

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to deploy to southern Lebanon to block Israeli tank advances shortly after Hezbollah launched its first attack against Israel on March 2.[99] International media reported on March 6 that Israeli airstrikes landed near the Iranian Embassy in Beirut.[100] The IDF has not confirmed that it targeted the Iranian embassy at the time of this writing. The IDF also targeted the office of Hamas' fundraising head, Issam Hashan, in southern Lebanon on March 6, with Shin Bet support.[101] The IDF said that Hashan and Hamas' fundraising operations have raised " hundreds of millions of dollars" for Hamas.[102] It is unclear if the IDF killed Hashan in the strike.



IRGC members have reportedly begun to "flee" Lebanon amid recent Israeli and Lebanese pressure.[103] Two senior Israeli defense officials and another source with knowledge of the situation told Axios on March 5 that "several dozen" IRGC officers have fled Beirut in the last 48 hours.[104] One Israeli defense official said that Israel expects IRGC members, who are primarily associated with the IRGC Quds Force, to continue to flee Lebanon over the "next several days."[105] The Israeli defense officials

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said that a “small contingent” will remain in Lebanon to liaise between Iran and Hezbollah.[106] CTP-ISW cannot confirm the accuracy of this report. If IRGC members are leaving Lebanon, this report could indicate that Iran does not believe Hezbollah is willing or able to effectively respond to the US and Israeli campaign.

Both Israel and Lebanon have increased pressure on the IRGC in Lebanon in recent days.[107] Israel has targeted both IRGC personnel and facilities in Lebanon since the start of the campaign.[108] The IDF killed Chief of Staff of the IRGC Quds Force Lebanon Corps Reza Khazai, who also served as Hezbollah’s chief of reconstitution, on March 3, for example.[109] The Lebanese government has also recently increased pressure on the IRGC in Lebanon. The Lebanese government announced on March 5 that it will ban any IRGC activity in Lebanon and seeks to deport IRGC members from Lebanon.[110] No previous Lebanese government has taken such direct steps against Hezbollah or the IRGC.

Three UNIFIL peacekeepers were injured in a missile attack from an unspecified actor in southern Lebanon.[111] UNIFIL reported that three UN peacekeepers were severely wounded in a strike by an unspecified actor on a UNIFIL base in Qouzah, southern Lebanon.[112] The Ghanian Armed Forces reported that two of the casualties were Ghanian peacekeepers.[113] UNIFIL said that it had begun an investigation into the incident.[114]

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Endnotes

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Iran Update Morning Special Report, March 7, 2026

Benjamin Schmida, Kelly Campa, Ria Reddy, Brian Carter

Analyst Notes: Data Cutoff: 8:00 AM ET.

The Institute for the Study of War (ISW) and the Critical Threats Project (CTP) at the American Enterprise Institute are publishing two updates daily to provide analysis on the war with Iran. The morning update will focus on US and Israeli strikes on Iran and Iran and the Axis of Resistance's response to the strikes. The evening update will be more comprehensive, covering events over the past 24-hour period and refining items discussed in the morning update.

Key Takeaways

1. Iran continued drone and ballistic missile attacks on Gulf states despite President Masoud Pezeshkian's order to suspend strikes unless attacks on Iran originated from their territory.
2. The combined force has continued to target Basij bases in Tehran to degrade the regime's ability to maintain domestic control. The Basij is a paramilitary force that is responsible for civil defense and social control. Commercially available satellite imagery shows that the combined force has targeted at least nine of the 23 Basij regional bases in Tehran as of March 6.
3. The combined force struck two Artesh airbases in Esfahan Province on March 7 to suppress and destroy Iranian air defenses over the province and extend air dominance into central Iran. The combined force has established air superiority over Tehran and has likely done so over parts of western Iran.
4. The combined force struck an unidentified vehicle at the Mount Kolang Gaz La facility, south of the Natanz Enrichment Complex, on March 6. The Institute for Science and International Security reported that US-Israeli strikes targeted and destroyed a vehicle at the Mount Kolang Gaz La facility, citing March 6 satellite imagery. The Institute assessed that the vehicle may be related to air defense, but ISW-CTP could not come to an independent conclusion based on the available evidence.

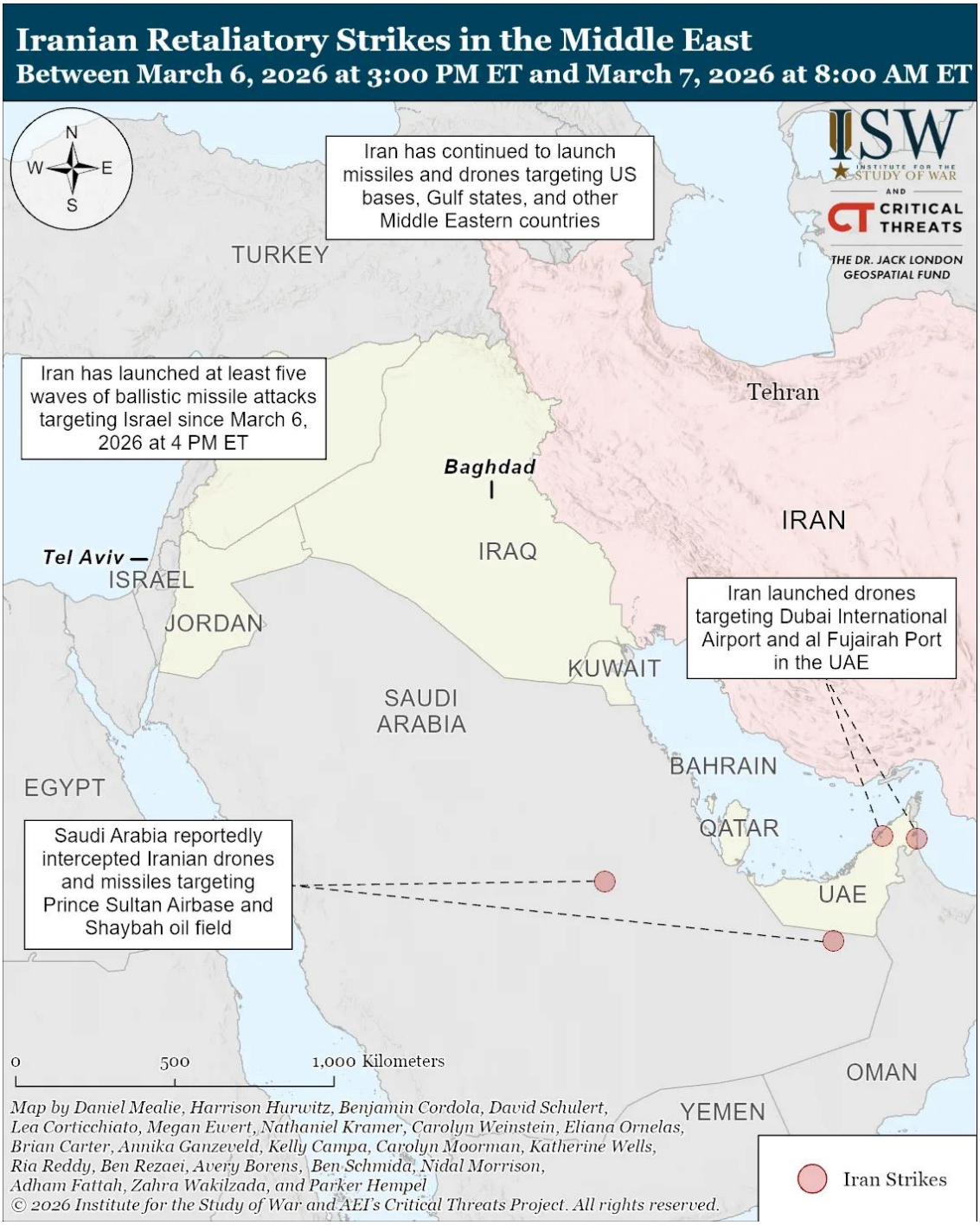
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Iran continued drone and ballistic missile attacks on Gulf states despite President Masoud Pezeshkian's order to suspend strikes unless attacks on Iran originated from their territory.[1] Two Iranian drones struck United Arab Emirates (UAE) territory between March 6 at 3:00 PM ET and March 7 at 8:00 AM ET, including a strike on the Dubai International Airport.[2] Iranian drone and ballistic missile strikes from March 6 to March 7 also targeted US bases in Saudi Arabia, Saudi energy

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infrastructure, and civilian infrastructure. The Saudi Defense Ministry said it intercepted eight Iranian drones and one ballistic missile.[3] A separate missile that targeted US forces at Prince Sultan Airbase fell in an uninhabited area.[4]

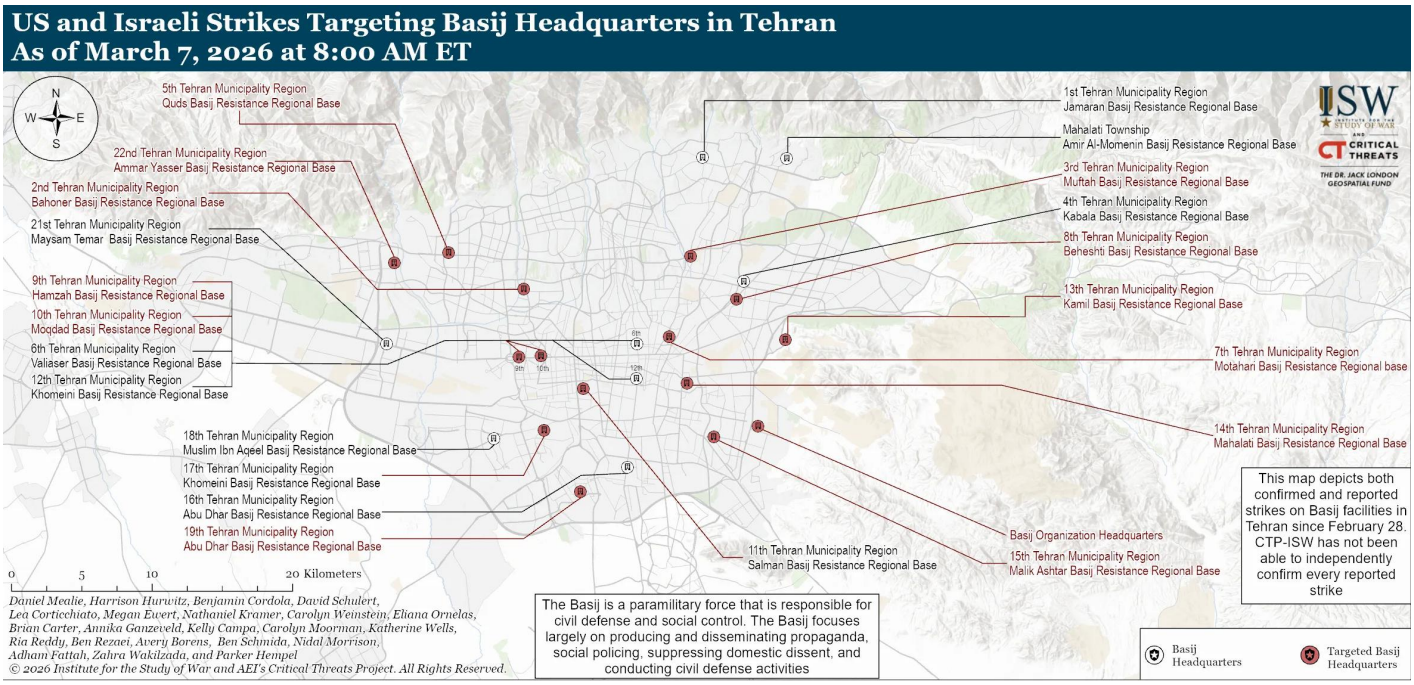
Iran has continued to launch ballistic missile barrages at Israel since ISW-CTP's last data cutoff on March 6. Iran conducted at least six ballistic missile barrages targeting Israel between March 6 at 3:00 PM ET and March 7 at 8:00 AM ET.[5] ISW-CTP has not observed any missile impacts at the time of this writing.



The combined force has continued to target Basij bases in Tehran to degrade the regime's ability to maintain domestic control. The Basij is a paramilitary force that is responsible for civil defense and social control. The IDF struck the 27th Mohammad Rasoul Ollah Provincial Unit's headquarters in southeastern Tehran on March 4.[6] Commercially available satellite imagery captured

on March 6 showed damage to several buildings on the unit's compound. The 27th Mohammad Rasoul Ollah Provincial Unit is the IRGC Ground Forces' provincial unit for Tehran City and the IRGC's main unit in the city.[7] The 27th Mohammad Rasoul Ollah Provincial Unit oversees the 23 Basij regional bases throughout Tehran City.[8]

Commercially available satellite imagery shows that the combined force has targeted at least nine of the 23 Basij regional bases in Tehran as of March 6.[9] These Basij security units are trained and equipped to suppress urban protests and conduct anti-riot operations and intimidate and arrest protesters under IRGC direction.[10] Commercially available satellite imagery from March 6 showed moderate damage to the western and southwestern sections of the 13th Tehran Municipality Region's Kamil Basij Resistance Regional Base. Iranian sources noted strikes at three additional facilities on March 7. These sources reported on March 7 that the combined force struck the 9th Tehran Municipality Region's Hamzah Basij Resistance Regional Base, the 10th Tehran Municipality Region's Moqdad Basij Resistance Regional Base, and the 11th Tehran Municipality Region's Salman Basij Resistance Regional Base.[11] The 9th Regional Base and 10th Regional Base are located approximately one kilometer from each other on the same street, and it is possible that Iranian sources describing strikes on both bases are referring to one strike on one or the other.

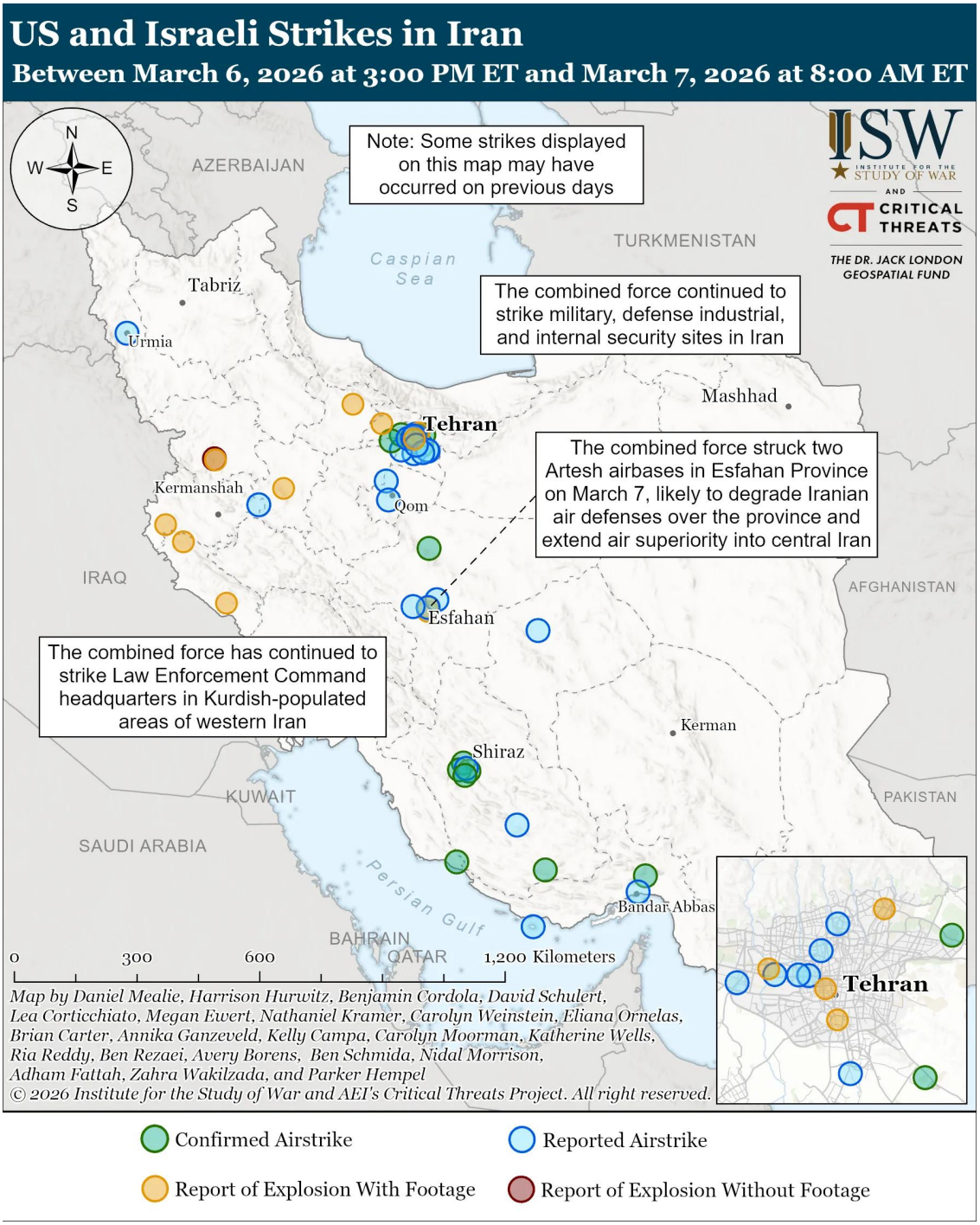


The combined force has continued to strike Law Enforcement Command (LEC) headquarters or stations in Kurdish-populated areas of western Iran. The LEC is the premier Iranian internal security and law enforcement service, and its chief mission is to conduct ordinary police activities and ensure regime stability.[12] Commercially available satellite imagery captured on March 7 showed damage to several buildings at the LEC headquarters for Kermanshah Province. The combined force has previously also struck the provincial LEC headquarters for West Azerbaijan, Kurdistan, and possibly Ilam provinces.[13] Commercially available satellite imagery captured on March 7 showed damage to buildings in the southern part of the Kurdistan Province LEC Special Unit complex in Sanandaj. Iranian sources also circulated photos on March 7 showing damage from a purported combined force strike to Kangavar District's LEC headquarters in Kermanshah Province.[14]

The combined force struck two Artesh airbases in Esfahan Province on March 7 to suppress and destroy Iranian air defenses over the province and extend air dominance into central Iran. The combined force struck the 4th Artesh Ground Forces Aviation Base in Esfahan City on March 7,

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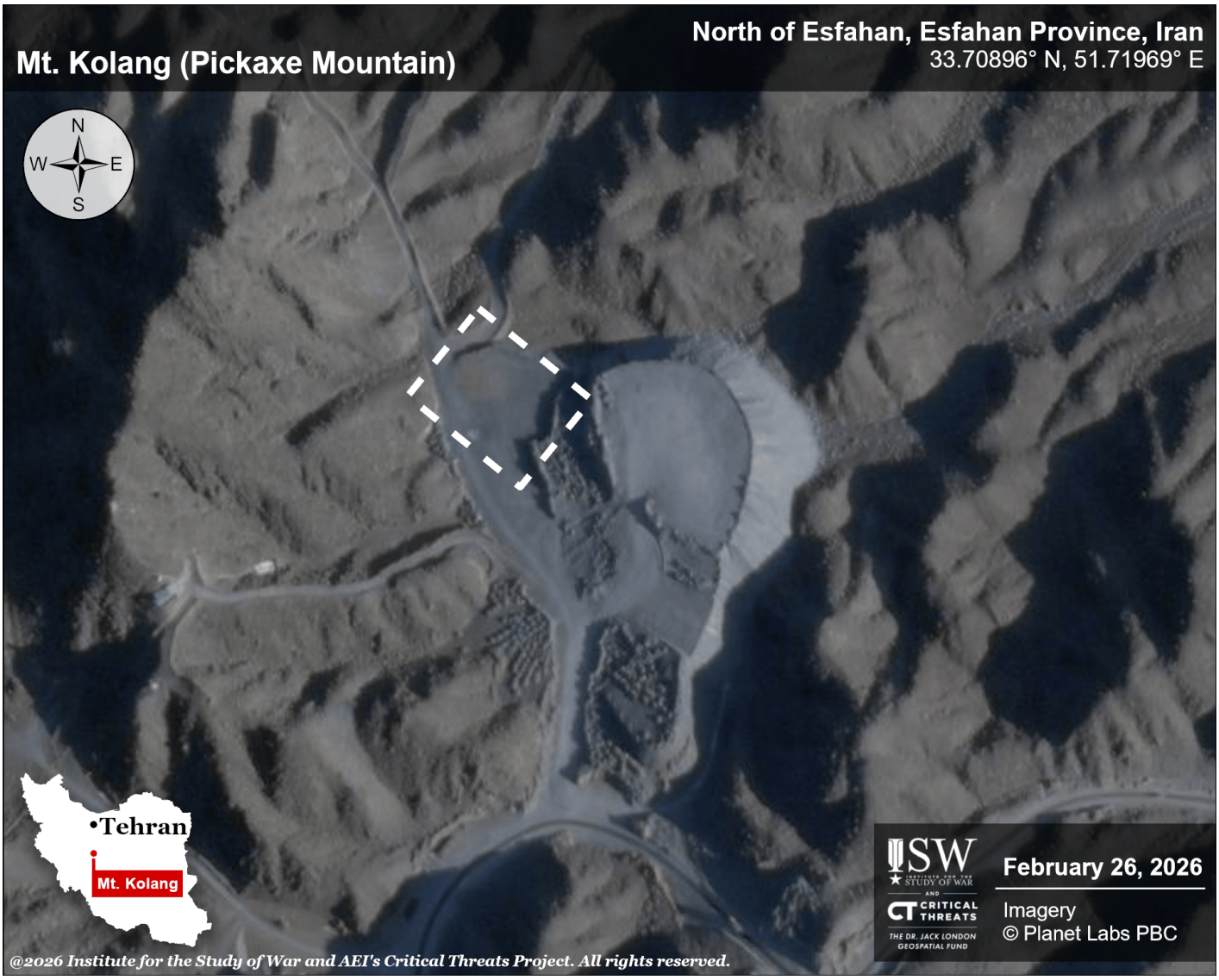
according to Iranian and OSINT sources.[15] Iranian opposition media reported that the combined force struck the 8th Tactical Air Force Base northwest of Esfahan City on March 7.[16] The combined force has established air superiority over Tehran and has likely done so over parts of western Iran.[17] The combined force may have also struck either of these bases on March 2, given that Israeli Army Radio reported explosions near an unspecified air base in Esfahan on March 2.[18]



The combined force struck an unidentified vehicle at the Mount Kolang Gaz La facility, south of the Natanz Enrichment Complex, on March 6.[19] The Institute for Science and International Security reported that US-Israeli strikes targeted and destroyed a vehicle at the Mount Kolang Gaz La facility, citing March 6 satellite imagery.[20] The Institute assessed that the vehicle may be related to air defense, but ISW-CTP could not come to an independent conclusion based on the available evidence.[21] This is the first strike on the Mount Kolang Gaz La facility since the war began on February 28. Iran has been conducting construction at the facility and likely hardened infrastructure at the site in recent weeks

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in preparation for potential strikes.[22] The combined force struck Natanz on March 2 and destroyed at least three buildings, including two personnel entrances to the underground enrichment plant.[23]



The combined force struck at least six defense industrial sites on March 7 to further degrade Iran's ability to develop its ballistic missile, air defense, and drone program.[24] Three of the sites that the combined force struck are under US sanctions. These include the Defense Industries Organization, which develops Iran's nuclear and missile programs, and the Shiraz Electronics Industries, which produces air defense technology.[25] The strikes also targeted Jahan Electric Industrial Park for its involvement in Iran's nuclear program.[26]

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Iran Update Evening Special Report, March 7, 2026

Ria Reddy, Carolyn Moorman, Ben Rezaei, Benjamin Schmida, Parker Hempel, Kelly Campa, Brian Carter

Analyst Notes: Data Cutoff: 4:00 PM ET.

The Institute for the Study of War (ISW) and the Critical Threats Project (CTP) at the American Enterprise Instituteare publishing two updates daily to provide analysis on the war with Iran. The morning update will focus on US and Israeli strikes on Iran and Iran and the Axis of Resistance's response to the strikes. The evening update will be more comprehensive, covering events over the past 24-hour period and refining items discussed in the morning update.

Key Takeaways

1. Senior Iranian hardline officials are upset over Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian's March 7 statement about Iranian attacks on regional countries. Pezeshkian's comments reiterated a long-standing regime policy rather than signal a policy shift, yet still drew criticism from hardliners, which highlights the extent of divisions within Iran's leadership.
2. The combined force expanded its airstrike campaign to include Iranian oil production and storage facilities for the first time on March 7. The IDF struck two oil refineries and two oil storage facilities in Iran. Disruptions to Iran's energy sector will likely worsen the country's ongoing energy crisis and lead to more widespread and frequent electricity shortages and outages.
3. An Israeli journalist reported on March 7 that Israel estimates that Iran has about 120 missile launchers remaining. US Central Command (CENTCOM) Commander Admiral Brad Cooper stated on March 5 that ballistic missile attacks from Iran have declined by roughly 90 percent since the strikes began.
4. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky discussed the Iranian drone threat with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman al Saud on March 7. Iranian drone strikes targeting Saudi territory have damaged civilian infrastructure and forced the closure of Saudi Arabia's largest domestic oil refinery and export terminal. Zelensky said that Ukraine is "ready to help" Saudi Arabia address the threat posed by Shahed drones.
5. The combined force struck the IRGC Aerospace Force infrastructure in Tehran on March 7, likely to degrade Iranian air defense capabilities and command and control. The IRGC Aerospace Force is the principal operator of the Iranian missile and drone arsenals.

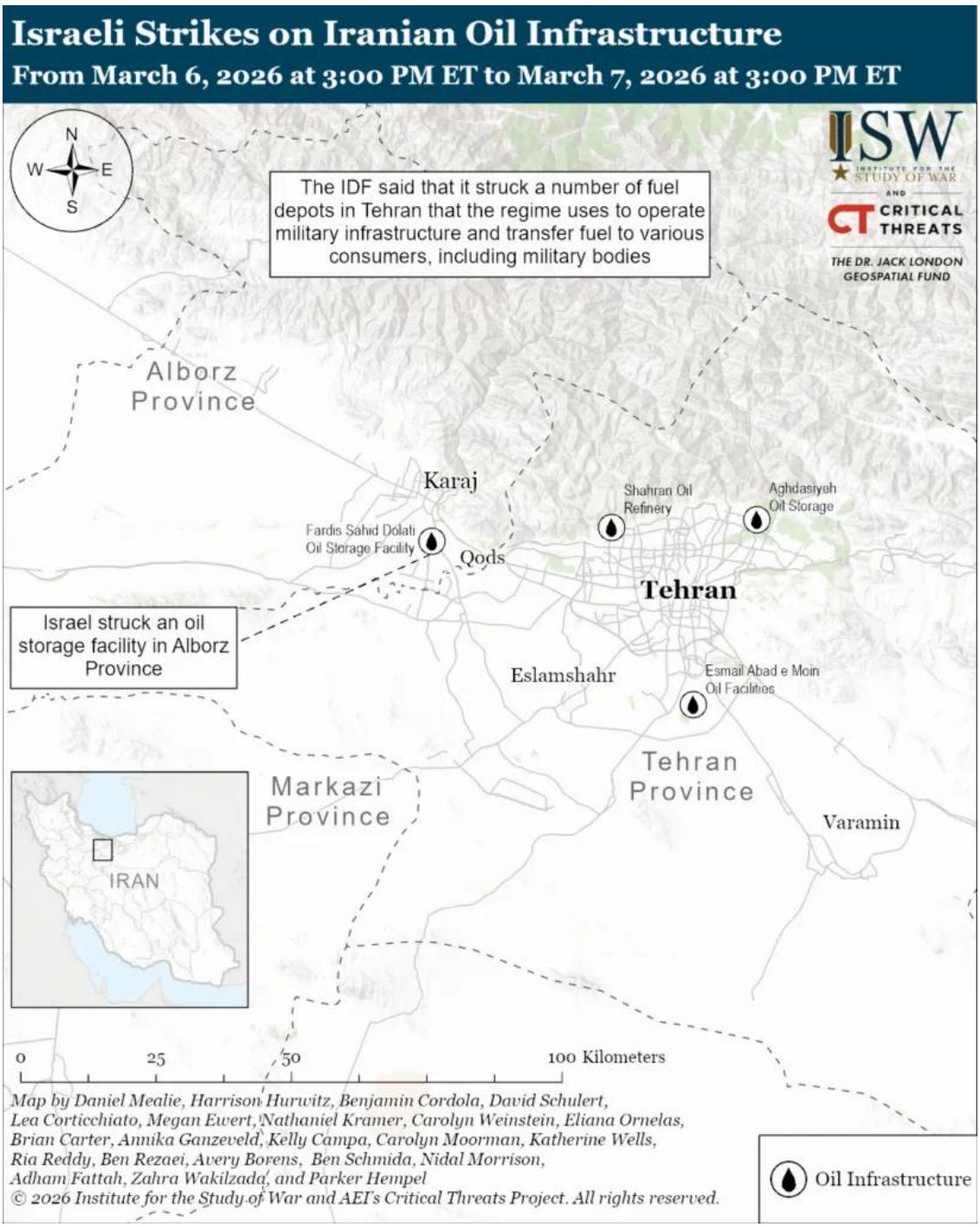
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Toplines

Senior Iranian hardline officials are upset over Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian's March 7 statement about Iranian attacks on regional countries. Pezeshkian's comments reiterated a long-standing regime policy rather than signal a policy shift, yet still drew criticism from hardliners, which highlights the extent of divisions within Iran's leadership.[1]Pezeshkian apologized on March 7 to regional countries that Iran has attacked since the start of the conflict and said that the Leadership Council, which assumed the duties of the supreme leader after his death, ordered the Armed Forces not to attack any country unless that country attacks Iran.[2] Pezeshkian clarified in a post on X that Iranian attacks on regional countries exclusively target US facilities rather than host countries themselves.[3] This claim is false. Iran has struck sites in Middle Eastern countries that are not US bases, including a drone strike on the Hayat Palace Hotel in Bahrain on March 3.[4] Pezeshkian's statement echoes the regime's long-standing position on regional attacks. The regime has historically threatened or used military force to pressure Gulf countries to sever ties with the United States and to deter US action against Iran.[5] Iran and Iran-backed actors have previously cited the presence of US assets in Middle Eastern countries to justify indiscriminate attacks on those countries.[6] Hardline parliamentarian Hamid Rasaei dismissed Pezeshkian's statement as "weak, unprofessional, and unacceptable" and urged the Assembly of Experts to select a new supreme leader soon so it can dissolve the Leadership Council.[7] An unspecified hardliner close to the office of former Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei told Reuters that several senior commanders in the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) were also upset with Pezeshkian's statement.[8] Pezeshkian's office released a readout of the speech after the backlash that once again reiterated the regime's position but notably omitted Pezeshkian's apology to regional countries, which was almost certainly a response to the criticism.[9]

The combined force expanded its airstrike campaign to include Iranian oil production and storage facilities for the first time on March 7. The IDF struck two oil refineries and two oil storage facilities in Iran on March 7.[10] This included the Tondgouyan Oil Refinery in Shahr Rey, Tehran Province, and the Shahran Oil Refinery in Tehran City.[11] The Tondgouyan Oil Refinery is one of Iran's largest oil refineries, and the IDF previously struck it during the 12-Day War.[12] The Shahran Oil Refinery previously had the capacity to store three days' worth of fuel for Tehran across at least 11 storage tanks.[13] The IDF also struck this facility during the 12-Day War.[14] Israeli forces also struck oil storage facilities in Karaj, Alborz Province, and a separate facility in Tehran City on March 7, marking the first recorded strikes on these facilities.[15] The IDF said that it struck oil production and storage facilities that directly supported Iran's military industrial complex.[16] Disruptions to Iran's energy sector will likely worsen the country's ongoing energy crisis and lead to more widespread and frequent electricity shortages and outages. Iranians have reported daily blackouts due to the energy crisis since February 2025.[17]

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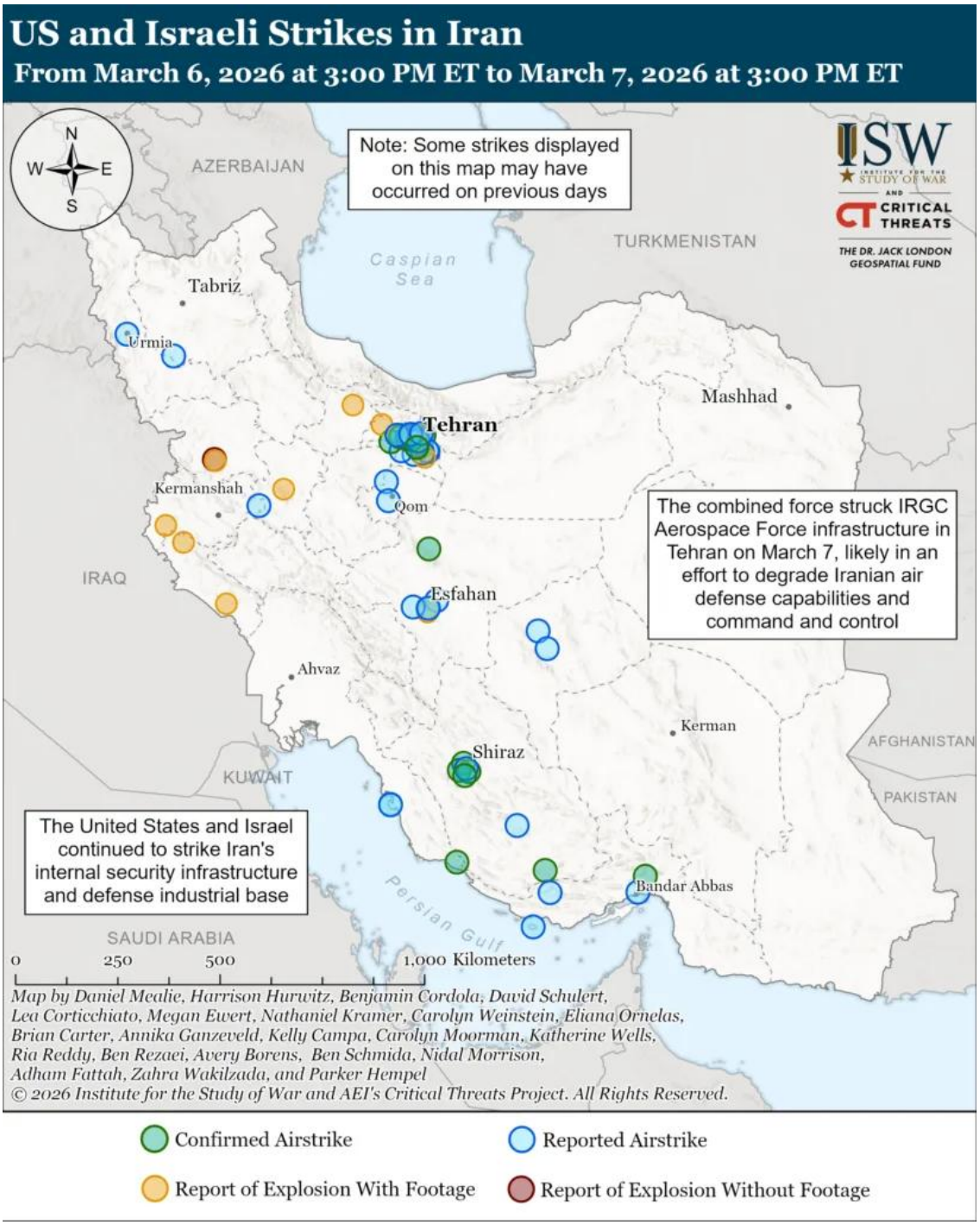
An Israeli journalist reported on March 7 that Israel estimates that Iran has about 120 missile launchers remaining.[18] The journalist's report is consistent with the IDF's estimate on March 6 that Iran has around 100 to 200 missile launchers remaining.[19] US Central Command (CENTCOM) Commander Admiral Brad Cooper stated on March 5 that ballistic missile attacks from Iran have declined by roughly 90 percent since the strikes began.[20]

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky discussed the Iranian drone threat with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman al Saud on March 7.[21] Iranian drone strikes targeting Saudi territory have damaged civilian infrastructure and forced the closure of Saudi Arabia's largest domestic oil refinery and export terminal.[22] Zelensky said that Ukraine is "ready to help" Saudi Arabia address the threat posed by Shahed drones.[23] Ukraine has years of experience defending against almost nightly large-scale Russian drone and missile strike packages, which have included Iranian-origin strike drones much like those the United States and its allies currently face in the Middle East.[24] Ukraine has

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a reported 90 percent interception rate of such drones.[25] Reuters reported on March 5, citing a source familiar with the matter, that US and Qatari officials are in talks with Ukraine to purchase Ukrainian interceptor drones to intercept Iranian Shahed drones.[26]

USS *George H. W. Bush* Carrier Strike Group is reportedly expected to deploy soon, potentially to the Middle East.[27] The US Navy announced that USS *George H. W. Bush* Carrier Strike Group (CSG) completed Composite Training Unit Exercise on March 6.[28] CSG Commander Rear Admiral Alexis Walker said that the completion of the training exercise means that the CSG is "ready for major combat operations around the world."[29] The US Naval Institute News said that the USS *George H W Bush* CSG is the "next expected [CSG] to deploy from the United States."[30] The United States currently has two CSGs within the US Central Command area of responsibility in the Red Sea and Persian Gulf.[31]



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US and Israeli Air Campaign

The combined US-Israeli force struck Iranian military assets and headquarters, internal security forces, defense industrial sites, and oil infrastructure across western, southwestern, and central Iran on March 7. US Central Command (CENTCOM) reported on March 6 that it has struck over 3,000 targets in Iran since the beginning of the campaign on February 28.[32] The IDF announced on March 7 that it struck over 300 targets in Iran over the past two days.[33]

The IDF struck the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) General Command headquarters and other internal security forces in southeastern Tehran on March 4.[34] Commercially available satellite imagery captured on March 6 showed damage to several IRGC-affiliated headquarters, compounds, storage facilities, and possible training facilities. The imagery showed extensive damage to four buildings within the IRGC General Command Headquarters.[35] The IRGC is the primary body responsible for controlling the Iranian missile and drone arsenals and managing and supporting the so-called “Axis of Resistance.”[36]

The IRGC General Command Headquarters presumably also oversees IRGC units that function primarily as an internal security force. The 27th Mohammad Rasoul Ollah Operational Division, for example, is the IRGC Ground Forces’ provincial unit for Tehran City.[37] The IDF also struck the Mohammad Rasoul Ollah Operational Division on March 4.[38] Satellite imagery from March 6 showed extensive damage to at least six buildings or structures on the operational division’s compound. The IDF also struck a facility about three kilometers west of the Mohammad Rasoul Ollah Operational Division that the IDF identified in a graphic as the headquarters for the ”Internal Security unit responsible for suppressing protests.[39] The IDF also assigned an IRGC logo to the facility in the graphic, which suggests that it is an IRGC-affiliated entity with an internal security mission. At least several of the buildings in the compound appear to have housed IRGC military police as of 2012.[40]

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The combined force struck the IRGC Aerospace Force infrastructure in Tehran on March 7, likely to degrade Iranian air defense capabilities and command and control. The IRGC Aerospace Force is the principal operator of the Iranian missile and drone arsenals.[41] The IDF struck the Aerospace Force air defense command center west of Tehran on March 7.[42] The Aerospace Force has some air defense platforms and aircraft that it uses in collaboration with the Artesh Air Defense Force to defend Iranian airspace.[43] The IDF reported that it also hit air defense systems, headquarters, logistical warehouses, and other buildings surrounding the air defense center.[44] Iranian sources posted footage of a purported airstrike on the Aerospace Force's headquarters in Kuhak neighborhood, Tehran, on March 7.[45] The facility in Kuhak is the Aerospace Force's service headquarters.

The combined force has continued to target Iranian ballistic missile manufacturing sites as part of an effort to degrade Iran's ballistic missile program. Iranian media posted footage of explosions at Parchin Military Complex on March 5, and the IDF announced on March 7 that it had struck a ballistic missile production site at the complex.[46] It is unclear if the combined force conducted two separate strikes on March 5 and then a later date, or if the IDF was confirming the March 5 strike on March 7. Iran has used the Parchin complex to develop and manufacture advanced munitions, including drones and missiles.[47] The Institute for Science and International Security assessed that airstrikes targeting Parchin on March 5 destroyed two to three solid propellant production facilities.[48] The IDF previously destroyed these facilities in October 2024 and in June 2025, but Iran subsequently acquired new equipment.[49] The combined force has also struck Parchin's underground facility.[50]

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The IDF also announced on March 7 that it struck the IRGC Shahroud Missile Facility in Semnan Province within the past week.[51] The IRGC uses the facility to develop, test, and launch solid-propellant missiles.[52] The IDF identified two complexes at the facility for mixing and casting missile engines and warheads, in addition to a launch area.[53] The IDF previously struck the facility during its October 2024 airstrikes on Iran and during the June 2025 12-Day War.[54] The IDF targeted planetary mixers and missile engine manufacturing equipment during the June strikes.[55]

The combined force struck at least two buildings at the Khojir Missile Production Complex in Hajarabad, Tehran Province, likely on March 3.[56] The Khojir complex is a research, development, and manufacturing facility for solid fuel missiles.[57] An analyst from the James Martin Center for Non-Proliferation Studies assessed that the strikes damaged several buildings that host planetary mixers and casting facilities.[58] The Iranian regime expanded the Khojir complex in August 2023 in order to increase missile production capacity.[59]

The combined force continued to strike Iran's defense industrial base to degrade its ballistic missile, air defense, nuclear, and drone programs. Satellite imagery published on March 6 showed that the combined force struck the Shiraz Electronics Industries (SEI) Zone in Fars Province at least 13 times.[60] SEI produces military electronics for the Iranian armed forces, including radars, avionics, and missile guidance components, and is under US sanctions.[61] Repeated combined forces strikes on SEI, including a previous strike on March 3, likely aim to disrupt production that supports Iran's air defense and drone industries.[62]

Satellite imagery from March 6 also showed strikes on the Raja Shimi Industries plant in Tehran Province, located adjacent to the Imam Sajjad Missile Base.[63] The facility is likely involved in Iranian missile production, given its proximity to the missile base and a report that it produced rocket propellants.[64] The combined force previously struck the site on March 4, and the IDF reported three unexplained explosions at the facility in 2015, which further suggests the facility's involvement in missile production.[65]

An Iranian OSINT account reported that the combined force likely struck the Esteghlal Industrial Zone in Tehran Province again, after previously targeting the facility on March 6.[66] The industrial zone includes companies tied to Iran's defense industry, including Azmoon Pajohan Hesgar LLC, which the United States sanctioned in 2024 for links to Iran's Ministry of Defense and Armed Forces Logistics (MODAFL).[67] The IDF previously issued an evacuation order for the Esteghlal Industrial Zone on March 3.[68]

Geolocated video from March 6 also indicates that the combined force struck the Defense Industries Organization (DIO) facility in Tehran at least three times.[69] The DIO, a subsidiary of Iran's Ministry of Defense and Armed Forces Logistics (MODAFL), oversees key segments of Iran's military industrial base and supports the country's missile and nuclear programs.[70] The United States, the United Nations, and several Western countries have sanctioned the DIO.[71] The combined force likely struck the facility previously on March 2.[72]

An Iranian OSINT account also reported that combined force airstrikes may have targeted ballistic missile launchers at the Jahan Electric Industrial Park in Meybod, Yazd Province, on March 7.[73] The Jahan Electric Industrial Park procured carbon fiber for Iran's nuclear program, which Iran used to manufacture advanced centrifuge rotors and ballistic missile components.[74] The Jahan Electric Industrial Park is sanctioned by the United States.[75]

The IDF destroyed IRGC Quds Force-affiliated aircraft and several facilities at Mehrabad Airport on March 6 that allegedly facilitated Iranian weapons transfers to the Axis of Resistance, including Lebanese Hezbollah.[76] The IDF struck Mehrabad Airport on March 6,

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according to the IDF and Iranian media.[77] Commercially available satellite imagery captured on March 7 showed extensive damage to buildings and support facilities at the airport. The imagery also showed that strikes destroyed at least seven cargo aircraft. The IDF stated that it struck 16 Quds Force-affiliated aircraft that had transported weapons to Hezbollah in Lebanon in the past.[78] These statements could refer to aircraft owned and operated by Mahan Air. Mahan Air is a US-sanctioned Iranian airline that has frequently transported Quds Force funds, weapons, and operatives in support of Iranian proxy activities abroad and to support Hezbollah directly.[79] Lebanese airport security forces searched an Iranian Mahan Air flight in Beirut on suspicion of transporting funds to Hezbollah in January 2025, for example.[80]

The IDF also struck a number of Iranian fighter jets at Mehrabad Airport.[81] The Artesh Air Force 1st Tactical Airbase is co-located at Mehrabad Airport.[82]



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The US-Israeli combined force continued to target internal security infrastructure across Iran, likely to degrade the regime's ability to maintain domestic control and counter militant activity. Satellite imagery from March 6 showed extensive damage to a base in Tehran City that the IDF identified as the IRGC Intelligence Organization's headquarters. The imagery shows several destroyed buildings in the western and southeastern sections of the compound. The IRGC created the Intelligence Organization in response to the Green Movement protests in 2009.[83] The Intelligence Organization has thus focused primarily on domestic surveillance, social control, and counterinsurgency operations, while also conducting limited operations abroad. The Intelligence Organization's headquarters is close to the Imam Hassan Security Unit and the 13th Tehran Municipality Region's Komeil Basij Resistance Regional Base.

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The IDF also struck the headquarters of the Greater Tehran Relief Unit Command, which is the LEC's rapid response force. Satellite imagery from March 6 shows damage to the facility. The Greater Tehran Relief Unit serves an internal security function in the capital region by deploying rapidly across the Tehran area to respond to emerging threats. LEC rapid response forces participated in suppressing the Mahsa Amini protests.[84]

Commercially available satellite imagery captured on March 6 showed that the IDF struck several warehouses at the IRGC Ground Forces Saberin Special Forces Brigade headquarters in southeastern Tehran. The Saberin unit is an elite special forces unit that has previously played a role in protest suppression and expeditionary operations in Syria.[85] The combined force also struck several likely warehouses or hangars at the 33rd Al Mehdi Airborne Brigade in Jahrom, Fars Province, according to satellite imagery captured on March 6.[86] The brigade operates under the IRGC Madinah ol Munawarah Operational Base, which is responsible for supporting LEC and Basij's internal security operations in Bushehr, Fars, and Hormozgan provinces by providing rapidly deployable support to suppress internal unrest and protect the regime from insurgent activity.[87] Southeastern Iran, where this operational base is based, is a hotspot for anti-regime activity.

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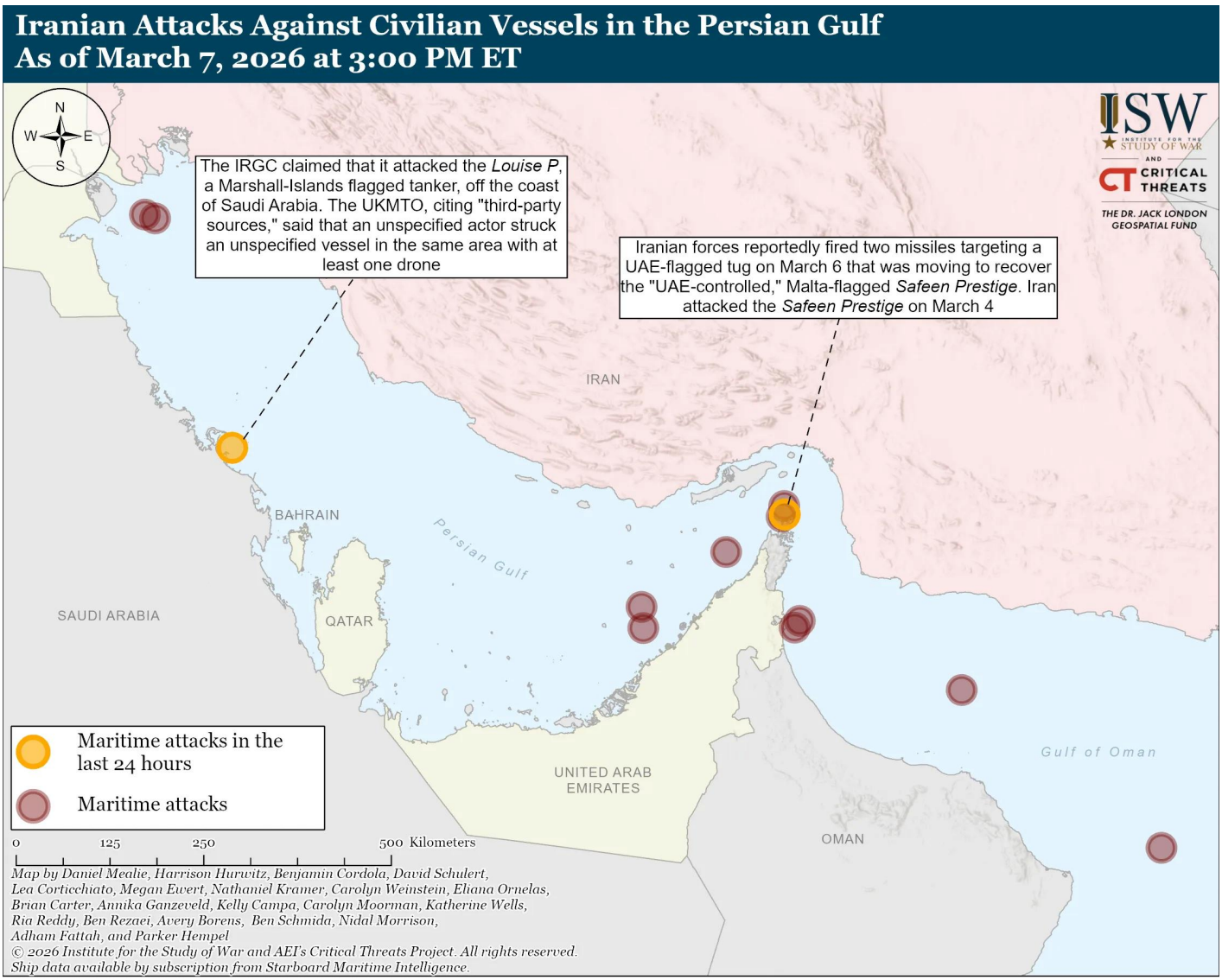


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Iran is continuing to target commercial vessels in the Persian Gulf and Strait of Hormuz as part of its effort to disrupt maritime traffic and threaten freedom of navigation. Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC)-affiliated media reported that the IRGC conducted a drone attack on the Malta-flagged vessel *Prima* in the Strait of Hormuz on March 7.[88] The IRGC claimed that the vessel ignored warnings from the IRGC Navy not to transit the waterway.[89] CTP-ISW could not confirm whether this strike successfully struck the *Prima.* IRGC-affiliated media also reported that the IRGC conducted another drone attack on the Marshall Islands–flagged oil tanker *Louise P* in the Persian Gulf on March 7.[90] The IRGC claimed that the tanker was a US asset and that the strike was part of Iran's campaign against US and Israeli interests in the region.[91] The United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO) reported a "possible" drone attack on a vessel approximately 10 nautical miles north of Jubayl, Saudi Arabia, on March 7.[92] Starboard Maritime Intelligence data showed the *Louise P* off the coast of Jubayl at the time of the attack reported by UKMTO. The Joint Maritime Information Center (JMIC) separately warned on March 7 that the regional maritime risk level remains "critical."[93] Senior Iranian officials have repeatedly warned that Iran will attack vessels attempting to transit the Strait of Hormuz.[94]

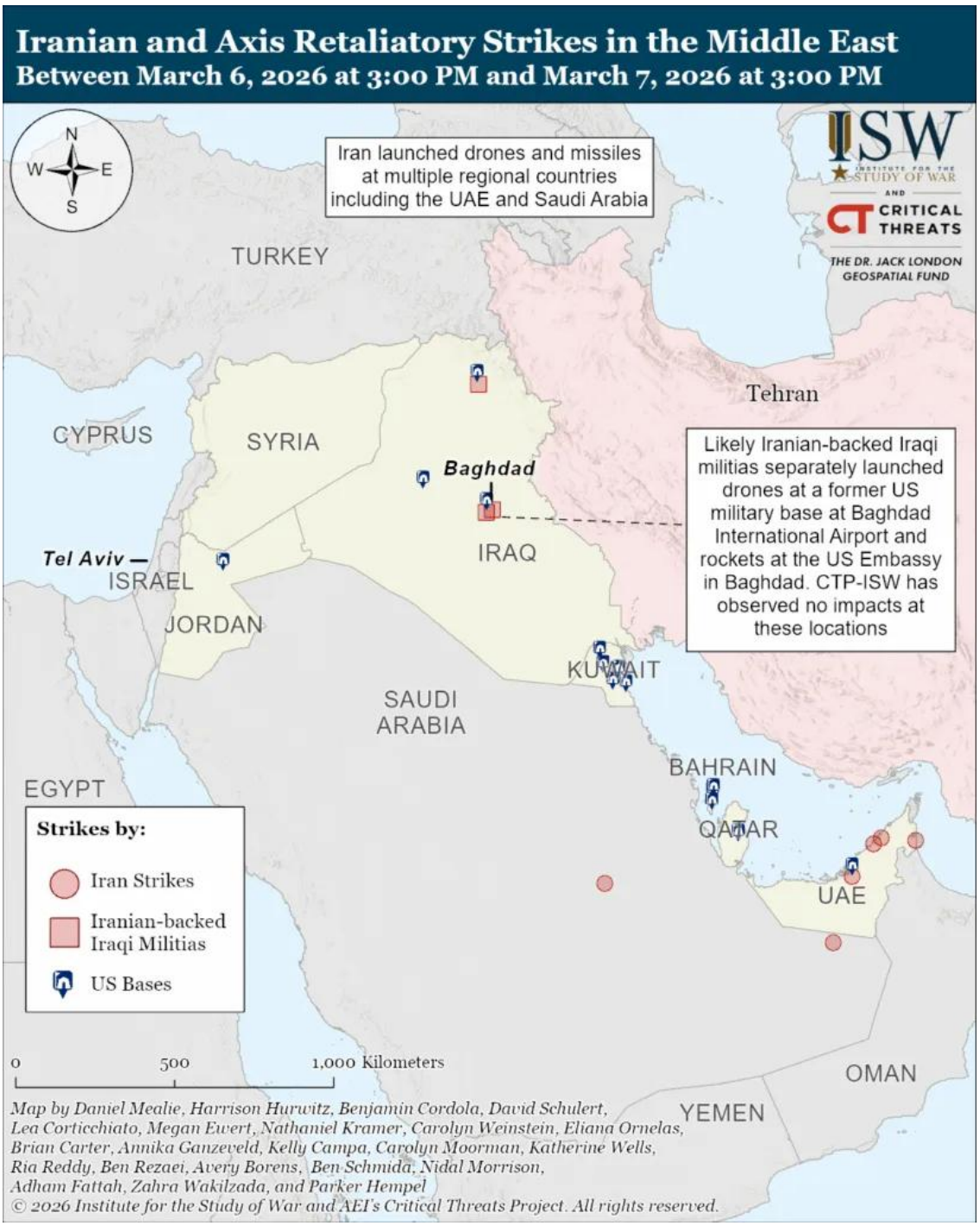
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Iranian Retaliation

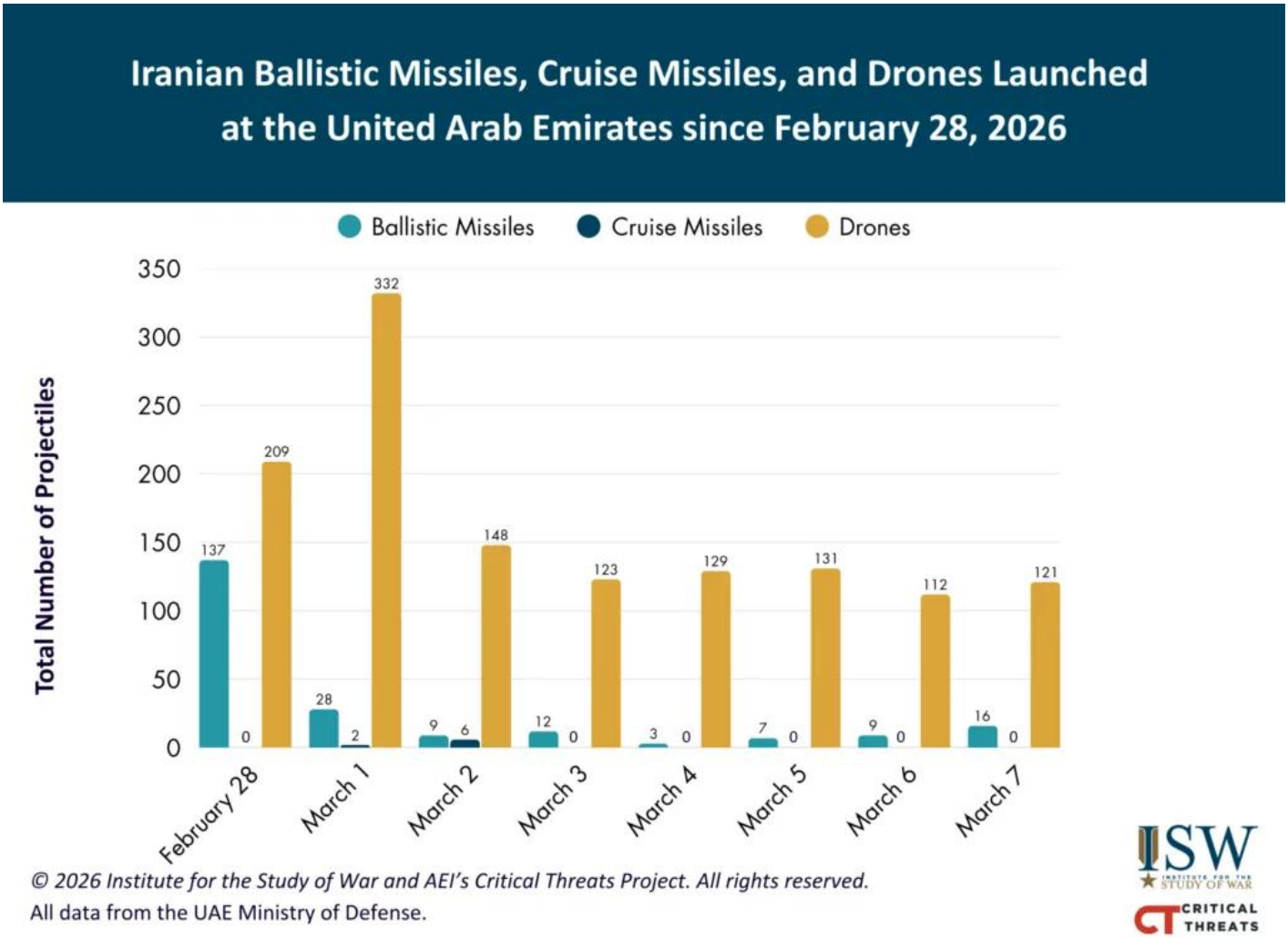
Iran launched ten missile attack waves at Israel between March 6 at 3:00 PM and March 7 at 3:00 PM.[95] Two Iranian missiles struck open areas in Israel during this period, one in northern Israel and one in central Israel.[96] Iran has launched at least six missile waves per day at Israel since March 2.[97] The IDF announced on March 7 that Israel had intercepted over 110 Iranian drones since the start of the conflict.[98]

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Iran continued to attack regional countries on March 7 after Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian's order to suspend strikes on Gulf states unless attacks originated from their countries. The Saudi Arabian Defense Ministry announced that an Iranian ballistic missile fell in an uninhabited area after Iran attempted to attack the Prince Sultan Airbase.[99] Unidentified Saudi officials also told the Wall Street Journal that a likely Iranian drone targeted the Saudi Aramco Berri oil field.[100] CTP-ISW assessed on March 2 that Iran is likely targeting energy infrastructure in Gulf countries to compel the United States and its partners to pursue a ceasefire before achieving their objective of collapsing the regime.[101] Saudi Arabia also intercepted one other Iranian ballistic missile attack, as well as eight drones, since March 6 at 3:00 PM ET.[102] Iran also continued to attack the United Arab Emirates (UAE), which has faced the most Iranian attacks since February 28.[103] The Emirati Defense Ministry announced that Iran has launched 121 drones and 16 ballistic missiles at the UAE since 3:00 PM on March 6.[104] Qatar also intercepted an Iranian ballistic missile attack on March 7.[105]

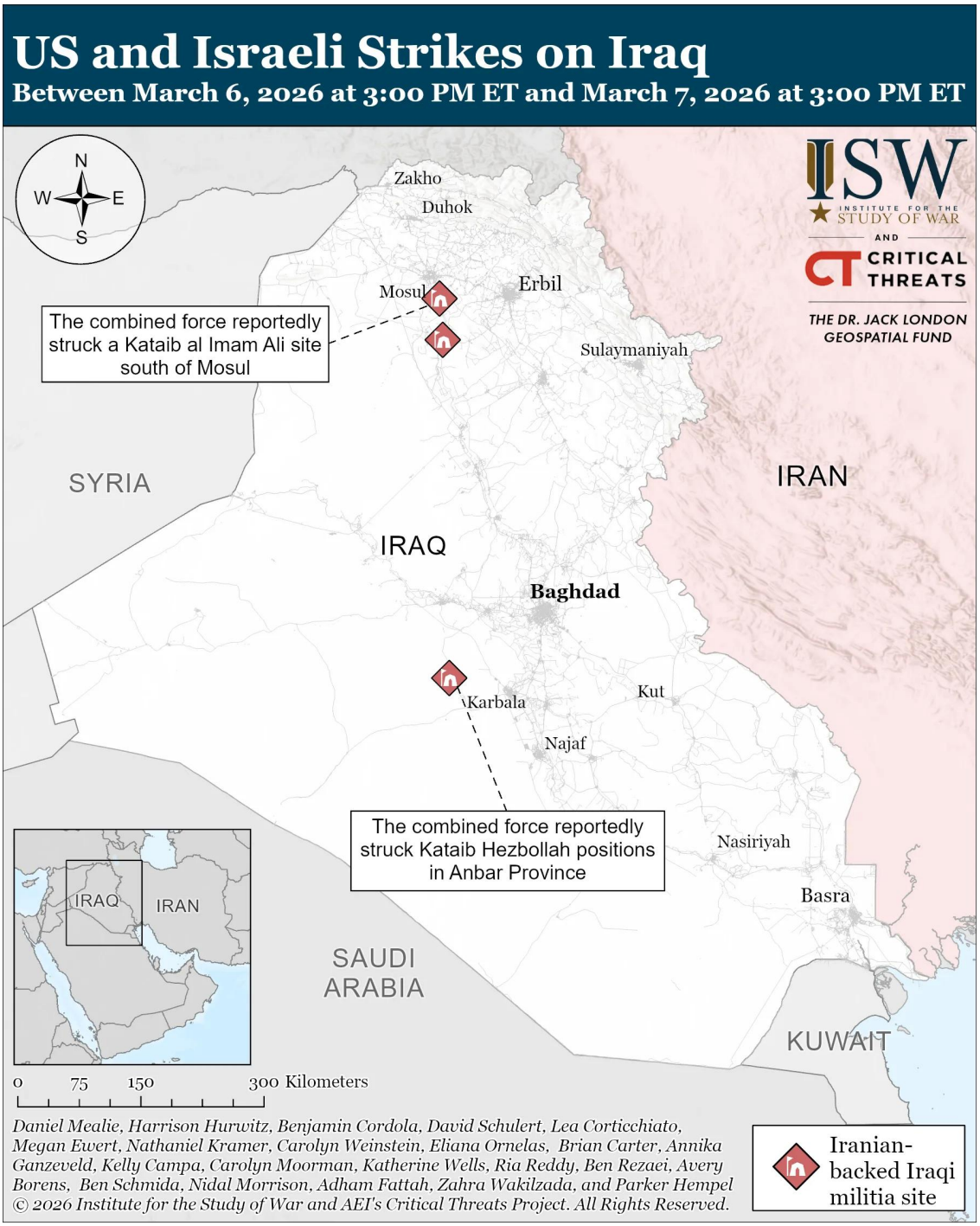
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Iranian-backed Iraqi militias continue to conduct attacks and claim attacks targeting US forces, including the first militia attack on the US Embassy in Baghdad since 2023. US air defenses intercepted a likely militia rocket attack targeting the US Embassy in Baghdad on March 7.[106] An OSINT account reported that the rockets were fired from eastern Baghdad.[107] CTP-ISW had assessed prior to the start of the conflict that Iranian-backed Iraqi militias would likely prioritize attacking US forces in Iraqi Kurdistan over the US Embassy in Baghdad due to the negative ramifications such an attack would likely have on militia financial holdings in Iraq by deterring investment in the country.[108] Iranian-backed Iraqi militias last attacked the US Embassy in Baghdad in 2023.[109] The Islamic Resistance in Iraq, which is a coalition of Iranian-backed Iraqi militias, claimed on March 6 that it had conducted 23 drone and missile operations targeting US and enemy bases in the region in the past 24 hours.[110] CTP-ISW has not yet observed any indications of Iraqi militias using missiles in their attacks as of this writing. Geolocated footage posted on X showed smoke rising from a hotel in Erbil after a drone attack on March 6.[111] Likely Iranian-backed Iraqi militia front group Rijal al Baas al Shadid claimed that it targeted US forces with unidentified projectiles at a hotel in Erbil on March 6.[112] CTP-ISW assessed on March 6 that Iranian-backed Iraqi militias may be using front groups in an attempt to avoid US and Israeli strikes on militia positions and obfuscate responsibility.[113]

The United States and Israel continue to conduct attacks targeting Iranian-backed Iraqi militia positions in Iraq in order to deter the militias from retaliating against the United States and Israel. A security source told Iraqi media on February 7 that aircraft struck unspecified sites in Jurf al Sakhr, which is a Kataib Hezbollah stronghold south of Baghdad.[114] The combined force has repeatedly struck Kataib Hezbollah positions in Jurf al Sakhr in recent days.[115] The combined force

reportedly struck a Kataib al Imam Ali headquarters south of Mosul on March 7.[116] The combined force also struck Kataib Hezbollah and Iranian-backed Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) positions in southeastern Anbar Province, according to Iraqi media.[117] Kataib Hezbollah and other Iranian-backed Iraqi militias control brigades within the PMF that answer to Iran instead of the Iraqi Prime Minister.[118] An airstrike targeting a PMF 33rd Brigade headquarters south of Mosul, which caused minor injuries and material damage.[119] The 33rd PMF Brigade is affiliated with the armed wing of an Iraqi party that broke away from Iraqi Shia nationalist cleric Muqtada al Sadr.[120]



Supreme Leader Succession

Assembly of Experts member Hossein Mozafari stated on March 7 that the Assembly of Experts will likely convene within the next 24 hours to deliberate and select the next

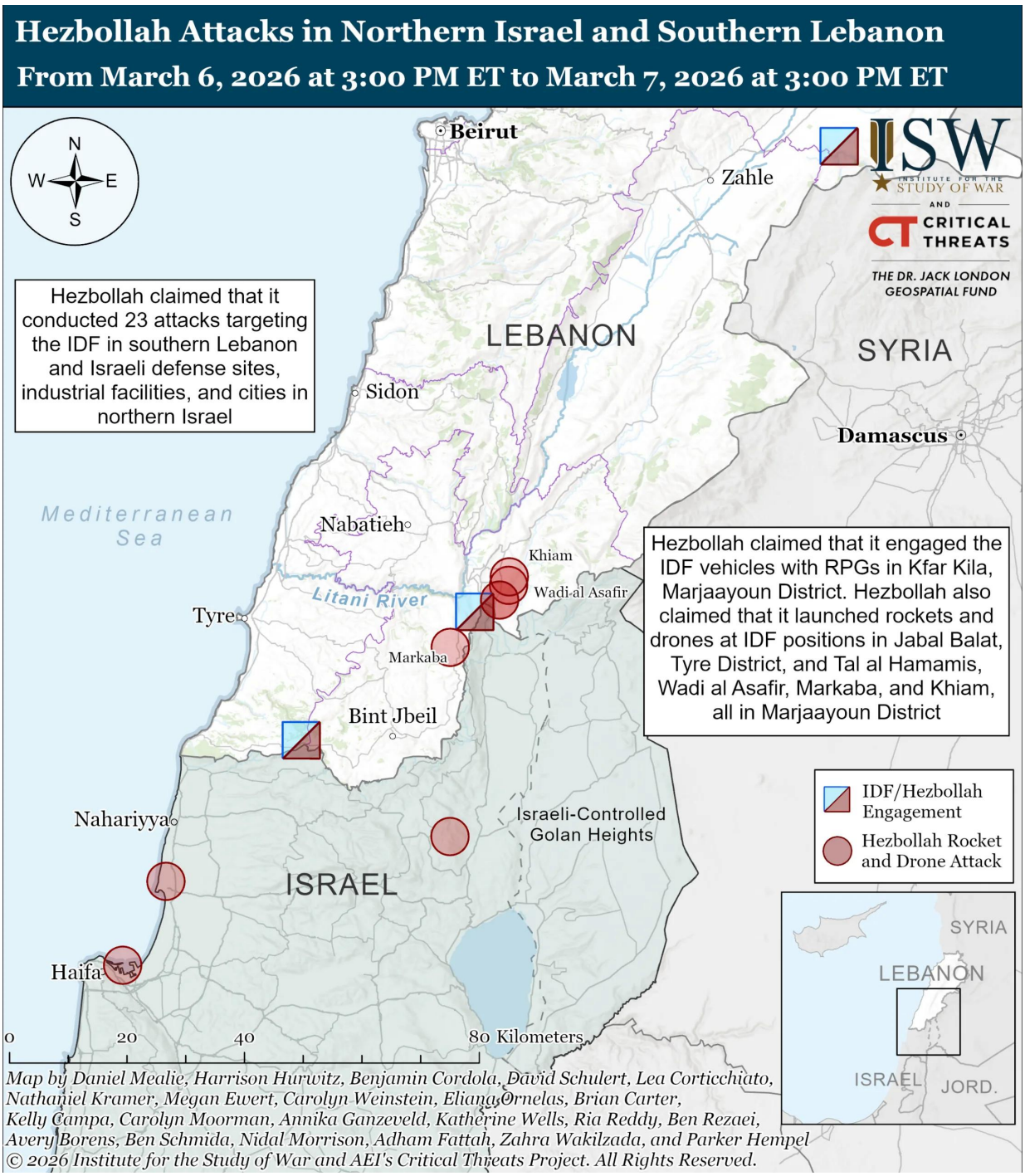
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supreme leader.[121] Supreme National Security Council Secretary Ali Larijani stated on March 7 that the Leadership Council has ordered security forces to prepare the necessary security measures to allow the Assembly of Experts to meet.[122] There are several unconfirmed reports that the Assembly of Experts will select Khamenei's son, Mojtaba Khamenei.[123] A Western security official told the *Washington Post* on March 6 that the IRGC has been pushing for Mojtaba but has faced resistance from other senior regime officials, including Larijani.[124]

Lebanon

Hezbollah claimed that it conducted 23 attacks targeting the IDF in southern Lebanon and Israeli defense sites, industrial facilities, and cities in northern Israel since CTP-ISW's data cutoff at 3:00 PM ET on March 6.[125] Hezbollah claimed that it engaged IDF vehicles with rocket-propelled grenades (RPGs) in Kfar Kila, Marjaayoun District.[126] The IDF reported that two 84th (Givati) Infantry Brigade (162nd Division) soldiers were injured by Hezbollah anti-tank fire in southern Lebanon, though it is unclear if this occurred during this engagement with Hezbollah.[127] Hezbollah also claimed that it launched rockets and drones at IDF positions in Jabal Balat, Tyre District, and Tal al Hamamis, Wadi al Asafir, Markaba, and Khiam, all in Marjaayoun[128].[129] Hezbollah has targeted all these locations repeatedly since the start of the conflict.[130] Two of Israel's five permanent positions in southern Lebanon that it has occupied since February 2025 are located at Tal al Hamamis and Jabal Balat.[131] Hezbollah also claimed that it launched rockets and drones targeting six IDF bases in northern Israel.[132] Hezbollah previously attacked many of these IDF bases during the October 7 War.[133] Hezbollah also claimed that it targeted multiple industrial sites near Haifa, including an oil refinery and a defense industrial site.[134] Hezbollah targeted two Kiryat Shmona and Nahariya, which are two northern Israeli towns, with rockets and drones.[135] Hezbollah issued statements in Hebrew calling on residents of both cities to evacuate prior to the group's claimed rocket and drone launches.[136] Israeli media reported on March 7 that one Hezbollah drone crashed in a medical center parking lot and Israeli civil defense shot down another.[137] There were no reported casualties or significant damage following these incidents. Hezbollah is likely continuing to attempt to displace northern Israeli residents from their homes to place political pressure on the Israeli government to curtail its war effort.[138]

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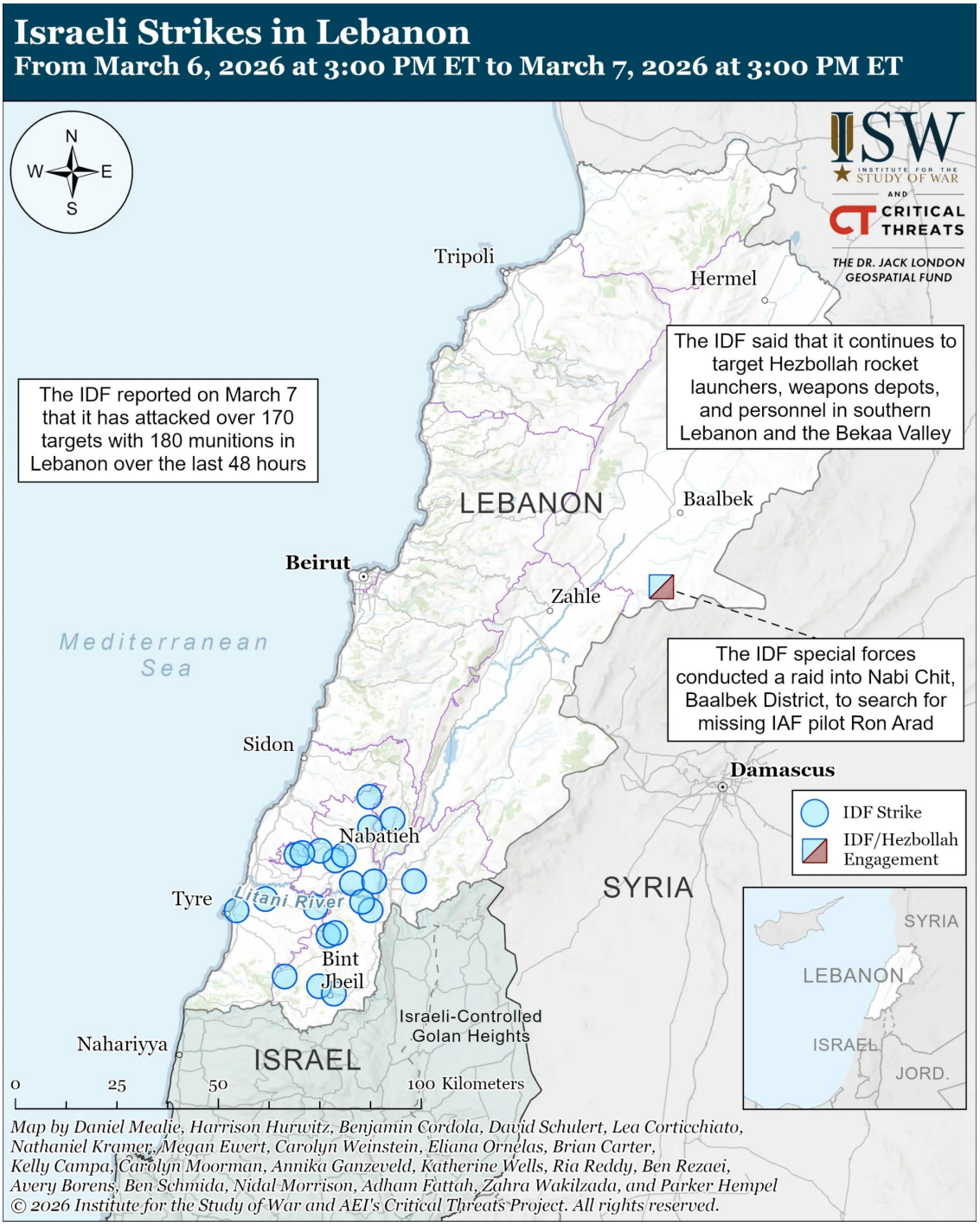


The IDF has continued to conduct airstrikes targeting Hezbollah military sites in Lebanon to degrade Hezbollah's ability to conduct retaliatory attacks against Israel. The IDF reported on March 7 that it had attacked over 170 targets in Lebanon over the last 48 hours.[139] The IDF said that it continues to target Hezbollah rocket launchers, weapons depots, and personnel in southern Lebanon and the Bekaa Valley.[140] The IDF also struck Radwan Force infrastructure and multiple commanders in Majdal Salam, Marjaayoun District. [141]The IDF issued evacuation orders for all residents south of the Litani River and in Beirut's southern suburbs.[142] The IDF previously issued evacuation orders for these areas on March 4 and March 5, prior to conducting airstrikes against Hezbollah targets.[143]

IDF special operations forces (SOF) conducted a raid into Nabi Chit, Baalbek District, to search for the remains of missing IAF pilot Ron Arad.[144] Arad was captured by Amal in 1986 after he was shot down over Lebanon.[145] The IDF SOF, acting on new intelligence, flew into the area on four helicopters and investigated a grave site in Nabi Chit.[146] As the IDF unit withdrew, Hezbollah and local residents

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engaged the Israeli forces with small arms and rocket fire.[147] The IDF reported that the special forces unit suffered no casualties during the mission.[148] The Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) reported that Israeli strikes killed three LAF soldiers and multiple civilians in the vicinity of Nabi Chit during the Israeli raid.[149] The IDF and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said that the raid did not yield any findings related to Arad.[150] Netanyahu said that the raid demonstrated his commitment to finding all Israeli missing persons and prisoners.[151]



Iranian diplomats have reportedly begun to leave Lebanon amid continued Israeli and Lebanese pressure. A senior Lebanese security source told Reuters that over 150 Iranian nationals, including non-essential diplomats, departed from Lebanon on March 7.[152] The source said another 20 left on March 6.[153] The source said that the Iranians were being flown to Russia on a Russian plane.[154] A source from the Iranian Embassy in Lebanon said that the non-essential Iranian diplomats were leaving due to Israeli threats and strikes near the Iranian Embassy on March 6.[155] IRGC Quds

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Force members have also reportedly begun to leave Lebanon in recent days.[156] The Lebanese government announced on March 5 that it will ban any IRGC activity in Lebanon and seeks to deport IRGC members from Lebanon.[157] The government also decided that Iranian civilians will no longer have visa-free entry into Lebanon.[158]

The Lebanese Government is reportedly considering legal action against Hezbollah Secretary General Naim Qassem.[159] A source close to Lebanese Justice Minister Adel Nassar told Lebanese media on March 7 that Nassar is considering taking legal action against Qassem.[160] The Lebanese Cabinet declared on March 2 that all Hezbollah military and security activity is illegal.[161] No previous Lebanese government has attempted or considered prosecuting a Hezbollah secretary-general.

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