Iran Update, November 8, 2026

Bailey Pasternak, Nidal Morrison, Ria Reddy, Annika Ganzeveld

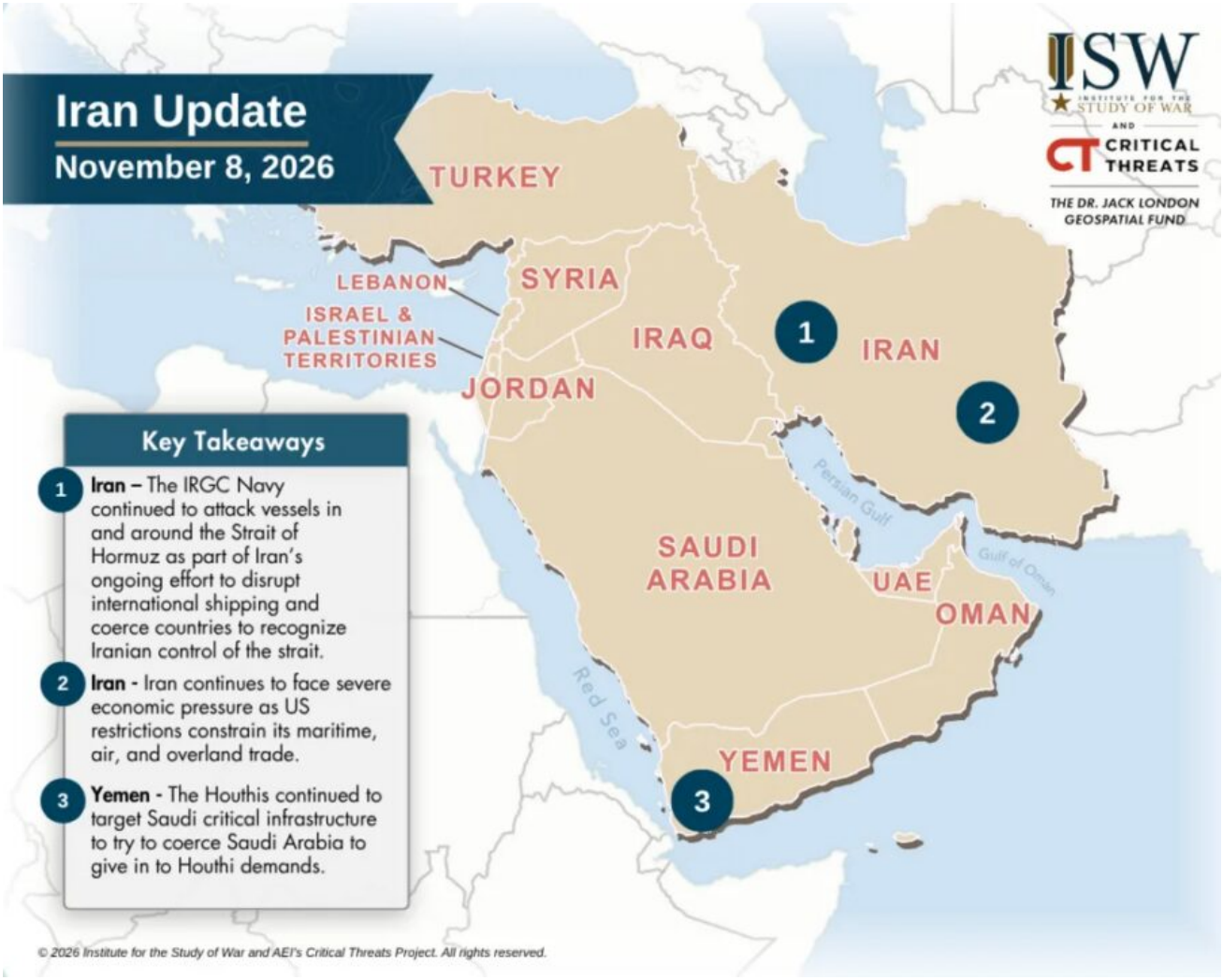
Analyst Notes: Data Cutoff: 2:00 PM ET

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Key Takeaways

1. The Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps Navy continued to attack vessels in and around the Strait of Hormuz as part of Iran's ongoing effort to disrupt international shipping and coerce countries to recognize Iranian control of the strait.
2. The United States continued to enforce its blockade on Iranian ports as part of its economic pressure campaign against Iran. Iran continues to face severe economic pressure as US restrictions constrain its maritime, air, and overland trade.
3. The Houthis continued to target Saudi critical infrastructure to try to coerce Saudi Arabia to give in to Houthi demands. Geolocated footage from November 8 shows damage to an Aramco office building in Riyadh's financial district. The Houthi decision to target a building in the center of King Abdullah Financial District, which houses residential units and other businesses, may reflect a Houthi effort to target civilian sites to put greater pressure on Saudi Arabia.

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Toplines

See "US and Partner Military Operations," "Iranian Strike Campaign," and "Arabian Peninsula" sections.

US and Partner Military Operations

The United States continued to enforce its blockade on Iranian ports as part of its economic pressure campaign against Iran. US forces disabled the St. Kitts-flagged oil tanker M/V *Huda* on November 7 after the vessel attempted to violate the US blockade after visiting an Iranian port.[1] Iran continues to face severe economic pressure as US restrictions constrain its maritime, air, and overland trade.[2]

Iranian Strike Campaign

Assessed Iranian War Aims:

- *Secure international recognition of Iranian control over the Strait of Hormuz*
- *Degrade the US ability and willingness to continue the war*
- *Restore deterrence vis-à -vis the United States and its regional partners*

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- *Divide the United States and Israel from the Arab states*

The Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) Navy continued to attack vessels in and around the Strait of Hormuz on November 7 as part of Iran's ongoing effort to disrupt international shipping and coerce countries to recognize Iranian control of the strait. United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO) reported on November 8 that an unknown projectile struck a vessel leaving the strait on November 7.[3] UKMTO separately reported a tanker on fire eight nautical miles northwest of Khasab, Oman, on November 7, likely due to an Iranian attack.[4] The IRGC Navy claimed on November 7 that two unspecified vessels in the strait caught on fire after they struck naval mines while transiting "unauthorized routes."[5] ISW-CTP has repeatedly assessed that Iran's claims of ships hitting mines likely seek to create an informational effect to increase shipping companies' risk perceptions of transiting the strait without Iranian permission.[6]

US-Iran Negotiations

Nothing significant to report.

Iranian Domestic Affairs

Nothing significant to report.

Lebanon

Nothing significant to report.

Iraq

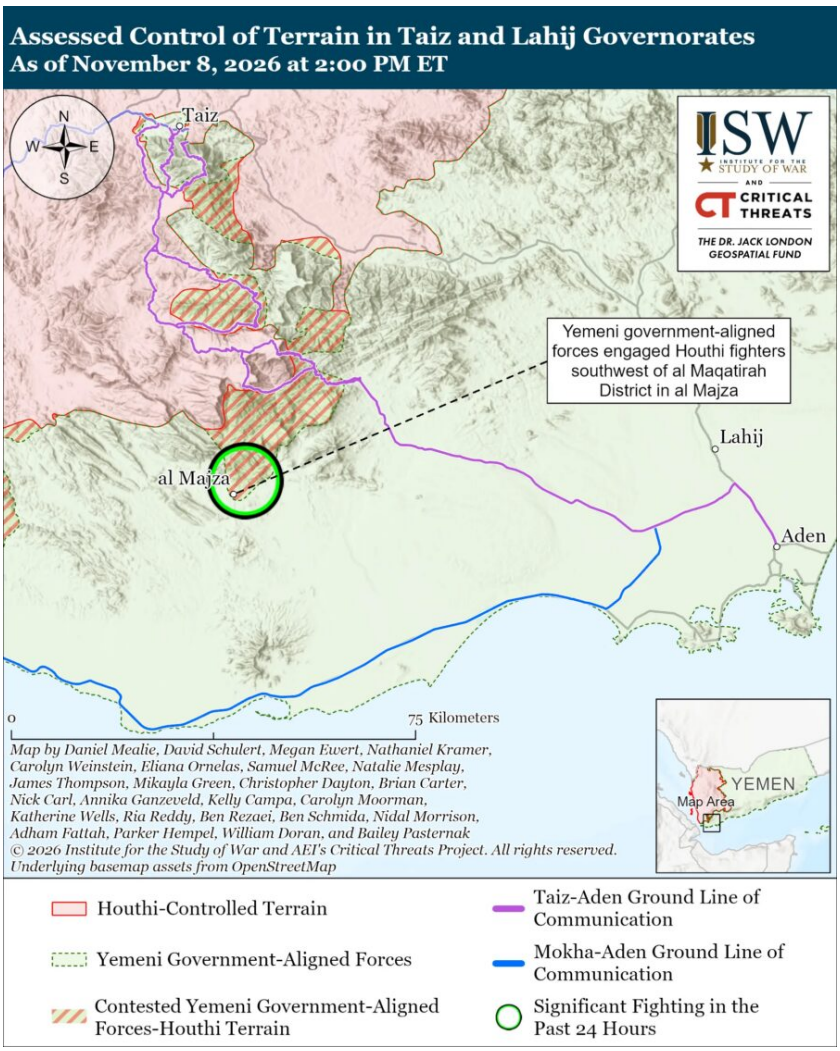
Nothing significant to report.

Arabian Peninsula

Yemeni government-aligned forces continued to engage Houthi fighters in northeastern Lahij Governorate. An independent Yemeni journalist reported that Yemeni government-aligned forces engaged Houthi fighters in al Majza on November 8 after Houthi forces advanced to the town on November 3.[7] The Houthis' advance to al Majza suggests that the Houthis may be trying to approach the Mokha-Aden ground line of communication (GLOC), which is approximately 40 kilometers southwest of al Majza.[8] The Houthis could attempt to outflank and isolate government-aligned forces on the Red Sea coastal front by advancing toward the Mokha-Aden GLOC, which supplies government forces operating on that front.

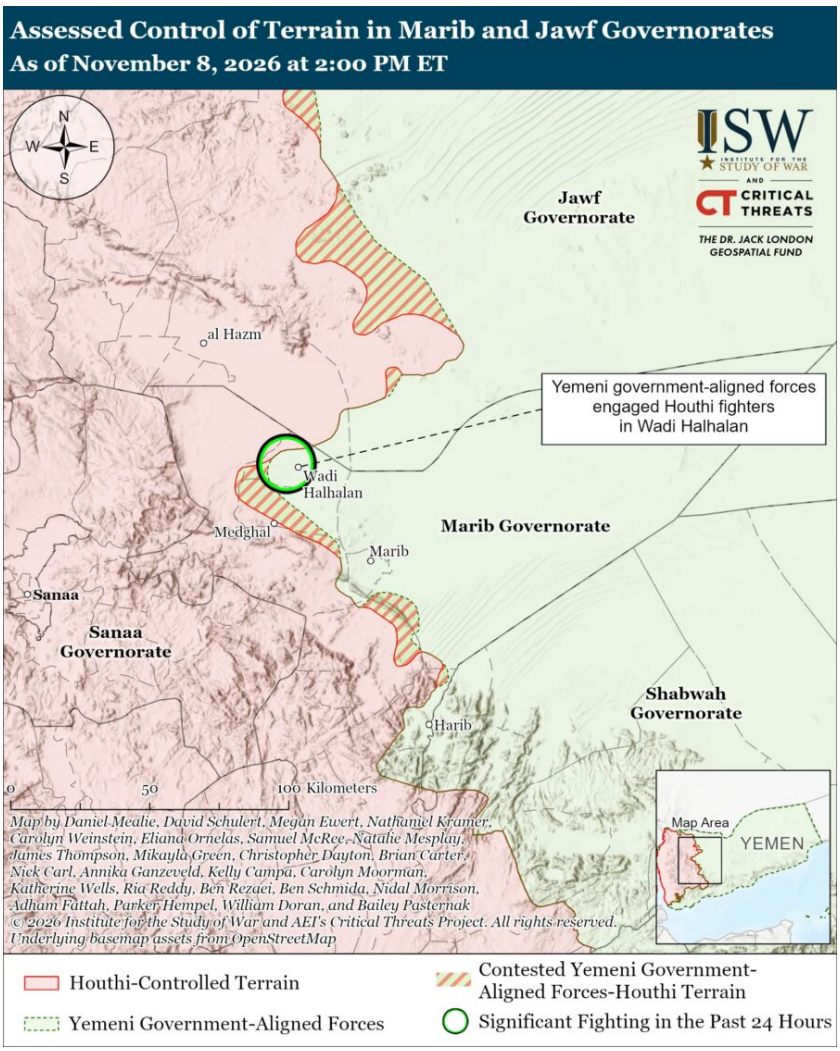
Saudi Arabia likely conducted airstrikes targeting Houthi positions in mountainous terrain on Jabal Munif and Jabal Irf in al Maqatirah District, Lahij Governorate, on November 8.[9] Yemeni government-aligned forces reportedly recaptured Jabal Irf on November 3, which overlooks the last government-controlled sections of the Taiz-Aden GLOC.[10] Ongoing airstrikes in the area suggest that Jabal Irf remains contested, however.

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Yemeni government-aligned forces continued to engage Houthi fighters in northwestern Marib Governorate. An independent Yemeni journalist reported that Yemeni government-aligned forces engaged Houthi fighters in Wadi Halhalan in Raghwan District on November 8.[11] Yemeni government-aligned forces reportedly advanced to Wadi Halhalan on November 6 and have repeatedly repelled attempted Houthi advances in the area.[12] The Houthis separately claimed that they launched ballistic missiles and drones at Yemeni government-aligned troop concentrations southeast of Wadi Halhalan in Medghal District on November 8.[13]

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The Houthis continued to target Saudi critical infrastructure on November 8 to try to coerce Saudi Arabia to give in to Houthi demands. The Houthis claimed that they attacked King Khalid International Airport and Aramco storage tanks in Riyadh as well as an unspecified Aramco facility in Abqaiq in eastern Saudi Arabia with drones and missiles on November 8.[14] The Houthis previously claimed an attack on the world's largest crude oil processing plant in Abqaiq on October 29.[15] ISW-CTP cannot verify the Houthis' claims at the time of this writing. The Saudi Joint Forces Command announced that its forces intercepted at least three missiles over Riyadh Province and one missile over Eastern Province on November 7 and 8.[16] Saudi Civil Defense also issued early warning alerts for Abqaiq and Riyadh City on November 8.[17] The Houthis have repeatedly targeted Saudi critical infrastructure as part of their ongoing strike campaign to compel Saudi Arabia to end military operations in Yemen and accept Houthi demands, which include lifting Saudi controls on Houthi-controlled ports and airports and granting the Houthis control over Yemen's oil and gas resources.[18]

The Houthis separately attacked a "financial center" in Riyadh on November 8.[19] Geolocated footage from November 8 shows damage to an Aramco office building in Riyadh's financial district.[20] Regional officials told the *Wall Street Journal* on November 8 that the building, which was empty at the time of the attack, also houses several residential units.[21] The Saudi Energy Ministry confirmed on November 8 that falling shrapnel damaged the building but caused no casualties.[22] The Houthis have repeatedly targeted Aramco infrastructure as part of their campaign against Saudi critical infrastructure.[23] The Houthis claimed that the attack was in response to a Saudi attack on civilians in Bani Hashish.[24] The Houthi decision to target a building in the center of King Abdullah Financial District, which houses residential units and other businesses, may reflect a Houthi effort to target civilian sites to put greater

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pressure on Saudi Arabia.



Endnotes

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[5] https://t.me/defapress_ir/71703
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[22] https://x.com/MoEnergy_Saudi/status/2119351889150308847
[23] https://understandingwar.org/research/middle-east/iran-update-november-7-2026/ ;
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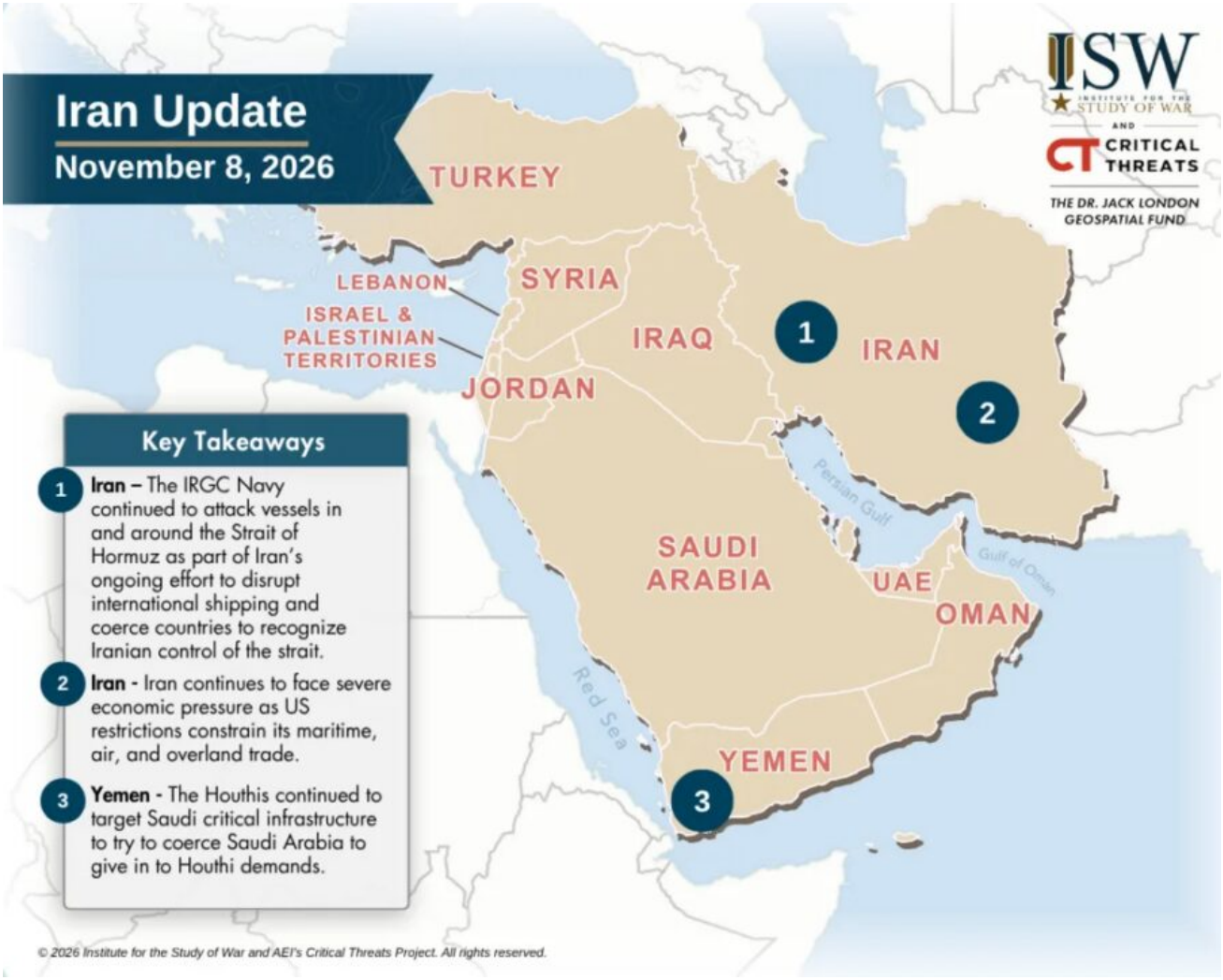
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Toplines

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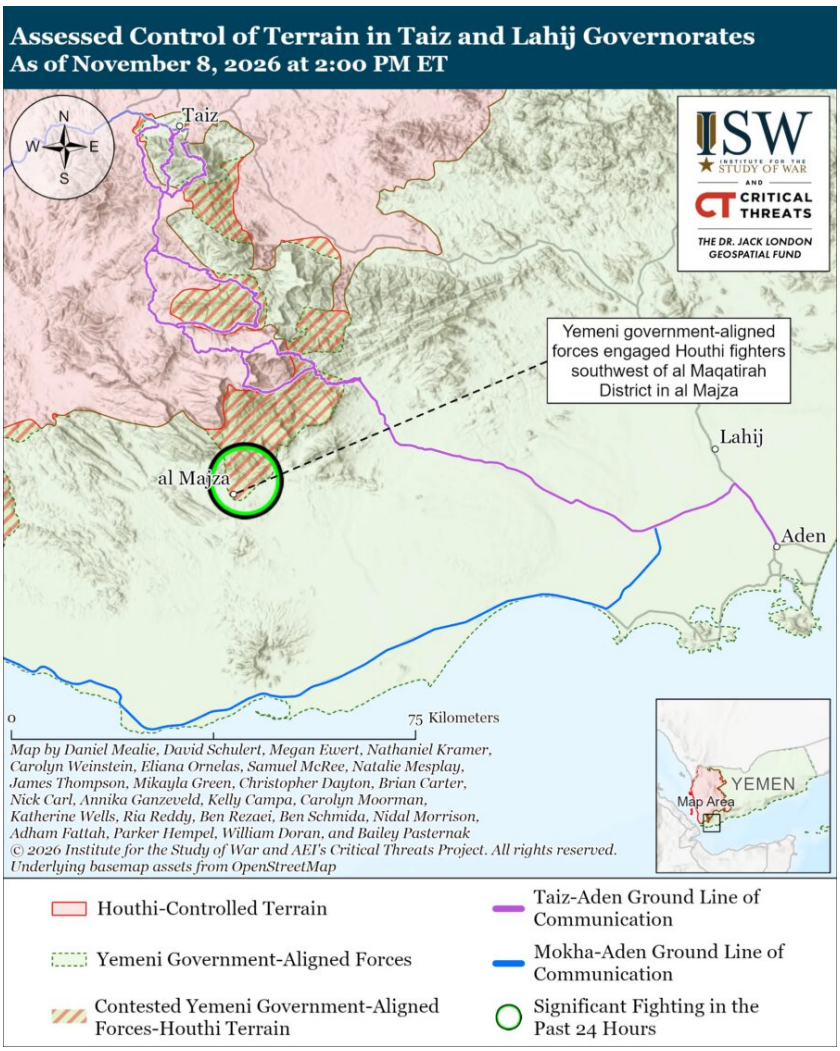
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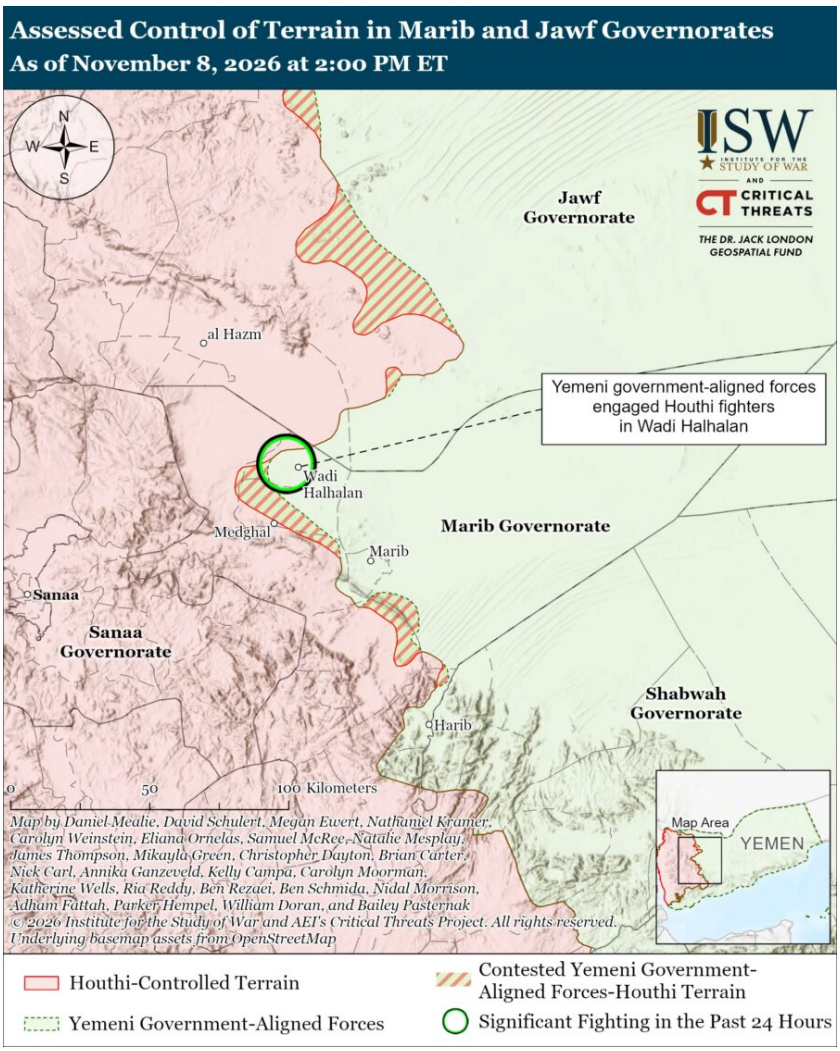
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Iran Update, November 10, 2026

Katherine Wells, Carolyn Moorman, Ria Reddy, Adham Fattah, Nidal Morrison, Bailey Pasternak, Kinser Rafert, Ben Rezaei, Brian Carter

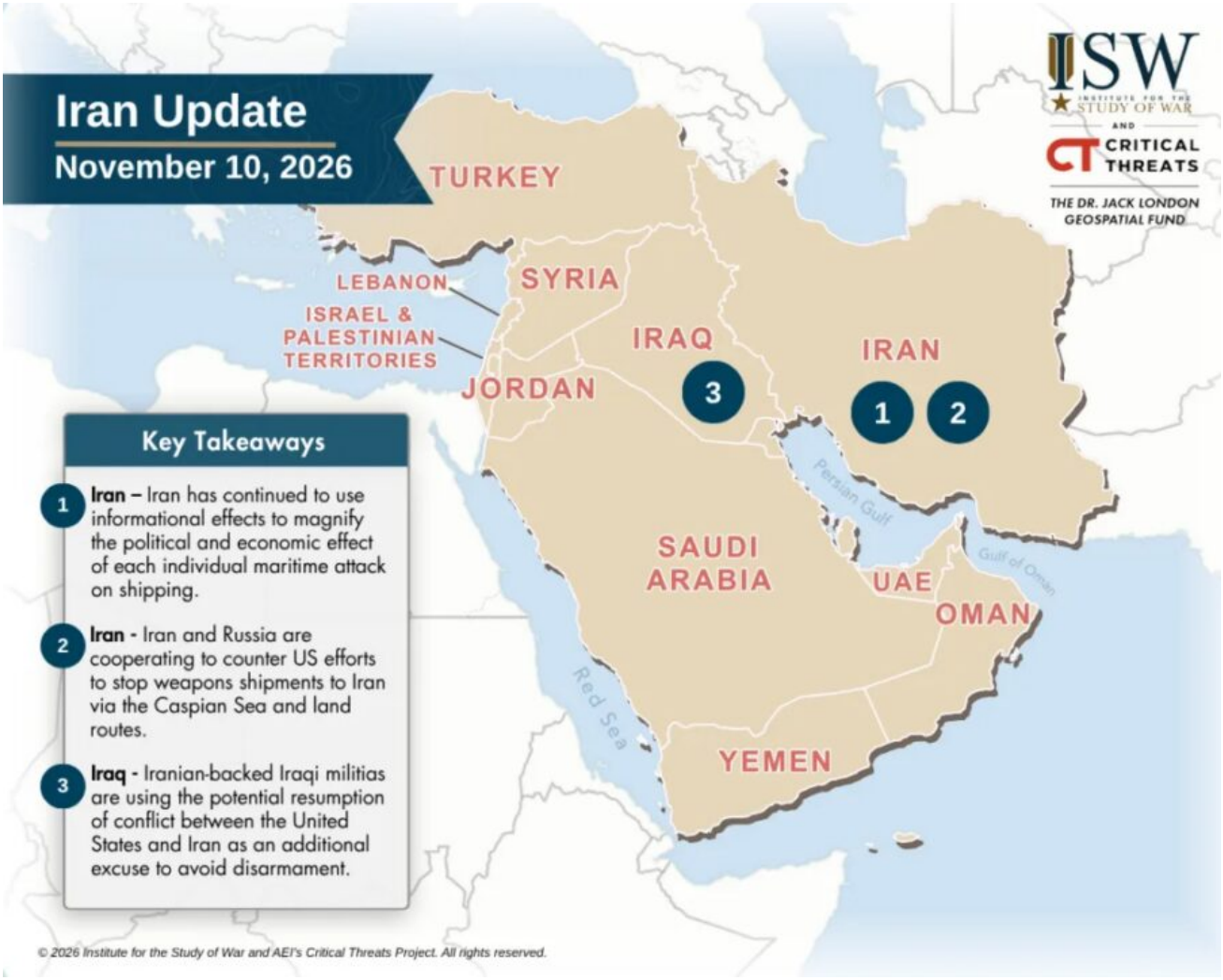
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Key Takeaways

1. Iran has continued to use informational effects to magnify the political and economic effect of each individual maritime attack on shipping.
2. Iran and Russia are cooperating to counter US efforts to stop weapons shipments to Iran via the Caspian Sea and land routes. Iran has used its Caspian Sea trade routes with Russia to import Russian arms before and during the 2026 US-Israel-Iran War, which prompted Ukraine to strike a shipment in July 2026.
3. Iranian-backed Iraqi militias are using the potential resumption of conflict between the United States and Iran as an additional excuse to avoid disarmament. ISW-CTP continues to assess that the Iraqi militias are likely to participate in renewed conflict between the United States and Iran.
4. Iraqi militias have already circumvented the Iraqi federal government's attempts to disarm them in recent months. The framework continues to obstruct Iraqi Prime Minister Ali al Zaydi's efforts to constrain the Iraqi militias. Zaydi may have instead decided to pursue the reform independently due to disagreements with the framework over his preferred amendments and anticipated challenges in securing parliamentary approval for the law.
5. Iran has formally abandoned its self-imposed 2,000-kilometer missile range limit, which codifies the regime's longstanding efforts to develop longer-range missile capabilities. Iran has claimed for several years to have voluntarily capped its missile range at 2,000 kilometers, but the regime has long demonstrated both the intent and the technical capacity to pursue longer-range systems.

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Toplines

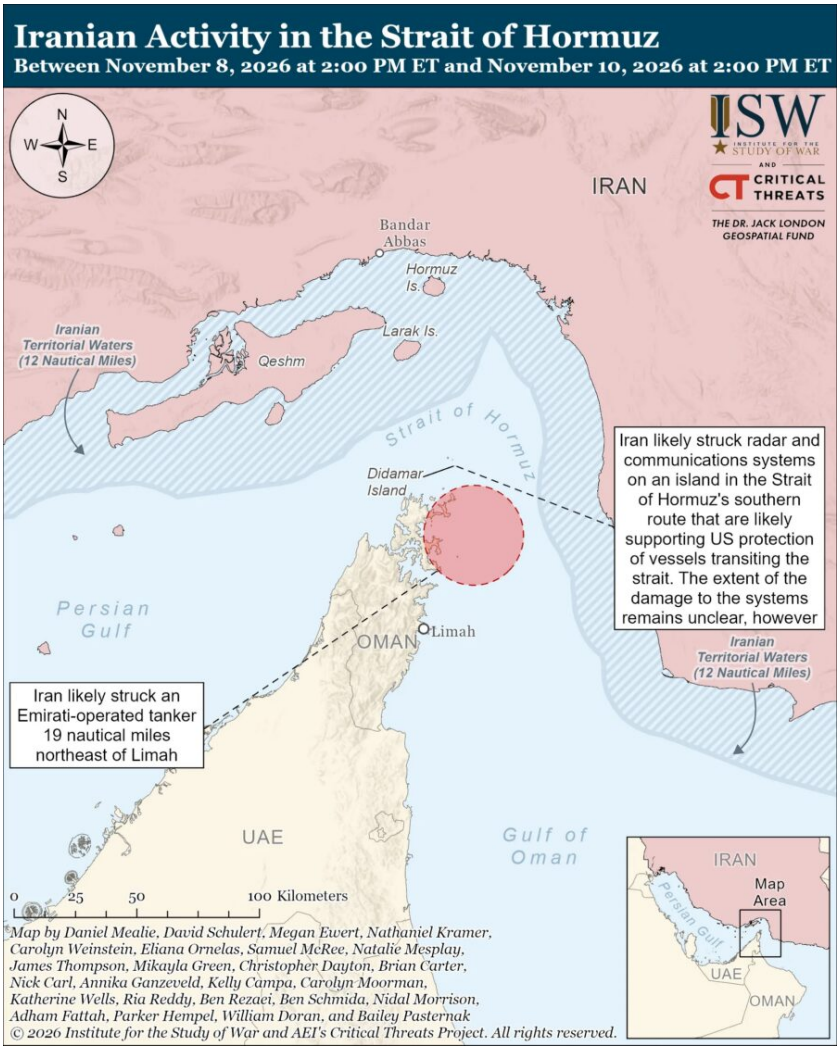
Iran has continued to use informational effects to magnify the political and economic effect of each individual maritime attack on shipping. Informational effects, which include a host of tools ranging from strategic communications to economic, diplomatic, and military actions, can magnify a target entity's perception of any individual strike. Iran is conducting a relatively limited number of attacks daily and using suboptimal means to do so, but the informational effect that these attacks generate far outweighs the physical effect of any individual strike. Ship operators have frequently reported projectile strikes to the United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO) that are likely Iranian attacks on commercial shipping, including a strike on an Emirati-operated tanker on November 10.[1] These kinetic actions have their own informational effects. For example, increases in attacks drive increases in oil prices.[2] The Iranian regime often combines these strikes with threats and statements claiming that Iran has deployed naval mines and boasting about anti-ship missile capabilities.[3] These threats and statements aim to further magnify the threat Iran poses to shipping beyond their immediate tactical effects on the shipping industry and energy markets.

An Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) official also overstated the impact of Iran's November 8 attack on fixed radar and communications infrastructure on Didamar Island.[4] The official claimed that the attack completely halted traffic through the southern route.[5] The island lies along the southern route through the Strait of Hormuz. The extent of the damage to these systems and the systems struck remains unclear at the time of this writing, but vessels continue to transit the strait's southern route.[6] Iran's attack on Didamar Island notably follows recent US airstrikes on Iranian radars, missile launchers,

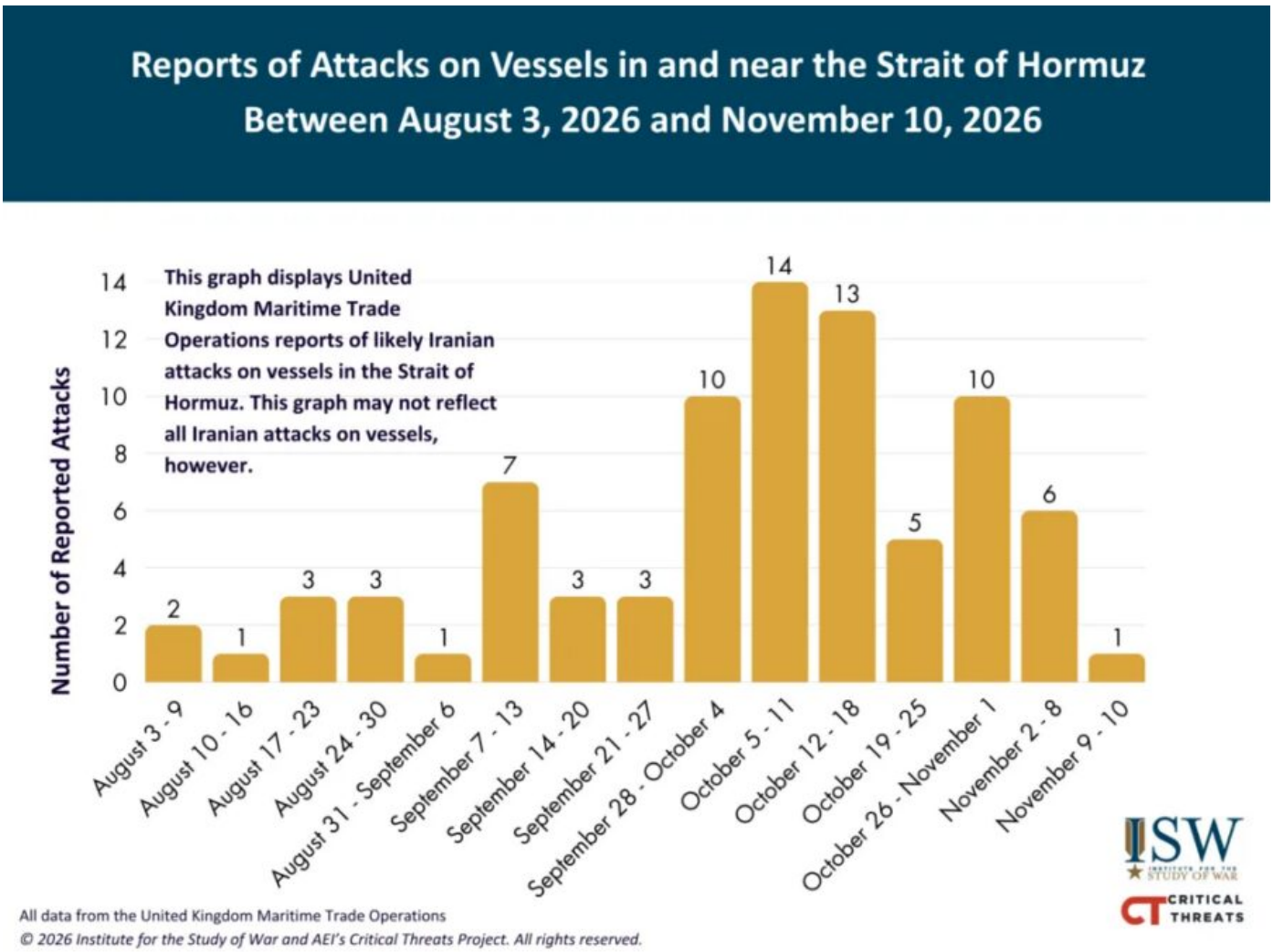
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and other equipment on Qeshm Island in the strait that Iran uses to attack shipping in the strait.[7]

A recent decline in oil prices and continued diplomatic deadlock with the United States may also incentivize Iran to amplify the threat it poses to shipping in the strait both through attacks and threats. Oil prices fell to below $90 US dollars per barrel after US President Donald Trump stated on November 9 that renewed US strikes on Iran are “quite unlikely” because the Iran “militarily is effectively over.”[8] The decline undermines Iran’s effort to use maritime disruption to impose economic costs and shape US decision-making. Both Iran and the United States appear to maintain their redlines in negotiations.[9]



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Iran and Russia are cooperating to counter US efforts to stop weapons shipments to Iran via the Caspian Sea and land routes. Iranian Deputy Foreign Affairs Minister for Legal and International Affairs Kazem Gharibabadi explicitly announced on X on November 10 that he met with the Russian Ambassador to Iran to discuss efforts to counter US Central Command (CENTCOM)'s Task Force Iron Gate.[10] CENTCOM announced the formation of the task force on November 7 to prevent Iran from importing advanced weapons and "other materials" via the Caspian Sea and land routes.[11] Iran has used its Caspian Sea trade routes with Russia to import Russian arms before and during the 2026 US-Israel-Iran War, which prompted Ukraine to strike a shipment in July 2026.[12]

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Iranian-backed Iraqi militias are using the potential resumption of conflict between the United States and Iran as an additional excuse to avoid disarmament. Informed sources told Iraqi media on November 9 that Kataib Sayyid al Shuhada head Abu Alaa al Walai and Asaib Ahl al Haq head Qais al Khazali separately told Iraqi Prime Minister Ali al Zaydi during disarmament negotiations that their willingness to disarm their militias depends on whether conflict between the United States and Iran resumes.[13] Asaib Ahl al Haq announced its willingness to disarm on June 2 and has taken some steps toward disarmament, although reports suggest that some members have formed a splinter group.[14] Kataib Sayyid al Shuhada announced its commitment to an unspecified Shia Coordination Framework disarmament agreement on October 1, but the militia has continued to negotiate the details of the agreement with Baghdad.[15] ISW-CTP continues to assess that the Iraqi militias are likely to participate in renewed conflict between the United States and Iran.[16]

Iraqi militias have already circumvented the Iraqi federal government's attempts to disarm them in recent months.[17] Some of the most kinetically active militias, specifically Kataib Hezbollah and Harakat Hezbollah al Nujaba, continue to refuse to disarm. Informed sources told Iraqi media on November 9 that militias that have said they would disarm are attempting to set conditions that make the handover of their weapons a "superficial reshuffling."[18] These militias reportedly obstruct the government's attempts to take inventory of their weapons as they rearrange their military stockpiles, temporarily store their weapons with other militias who have refused to disarm, and register their weapons with multiple militias.[19] Iraqi media reported on November 10 that Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) members attempted to transport rockets that Iraqi authorities seized on November 6 from an area south of Baghdad to a weapons warehouse in a Kataib Hezbollah stronghold to avoid the federal

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government's oversight, for example.[20] Unidentified sources added to Iraqi media on November 9 that unspecified militias are willing to transfer weapons to Iran or another militia if they are "intended to deter any external aggression" but would not hand over weapons that "serve as internal political guarantees."[21] The militias have weapons that could serve both purposes. The militias' reported desire to maintain their weapons for internal political purposes indicates their continued willingness to undermine the state when it benefits the militias.

The framework continues to obstruct Zaydi's efforts to constrain the Iraqi militias. Framework leader and Islamic Council of Iraq headHumamHamoudi reportedly told Zaydi that both the government and framework would collapse if Zaydi arrested militia members.[22] Zaydi threatened on November 9 to arrest militia members if they intervene in a potential US-Iran conflict on Iran's behalf.[23] Zaydi also reportedly granted Iraqi Army commanders permission to pursue militia "violations" without waiting for his approval, according to an Iraqi official who spoke to Saudi-owned media on November 6.[24] Hamoudi's comments suggest that he is concerned about the militias confronting the government in an unspecified manner if Zaydi takes certain actions against them. Some framework members also reportedly believe that other militias may side with Kataib Hezbollah in solidarity and derail disarmament negotiations if Zaydi continues his efforts against the militias.[25] This concern over the fate of disarmament negotiations is notable given that Kataib Sayyid al Shuhada and Harakat Ansar Allah al Awfiya reportedly decided to negotiate directly with Zaydi and the framework because they believe that framework leaders were using the negotiations to pursue internal competition.[26] Framework leaders often compete for power and resources, but this competition has undermined Zaydi's efforts to negotiate with the militias and disarm them. Zaydi has reportedly sidelined the framework's negotiation efforts with the militias in recent months, due in part, to the ties between the members on the negotiation committee and the militias.[27]

Zaydi may move forward with his plan to restructure the PMF without a law passed in parliament despite reports that he had planned to pursue this reform via legislation. An informed source told Iraqi media on November 10 that multiple factors, including the regional distribution of militia-controlled PMF brigades and the organizational relationships between fighters and leaders, are "posing difficulties" for efforts to transfer brigades to other areas or merge them into different formations.[28] Iraqi media also reported that PMF restructuring will use an electronic system to help merge brigades, redistribute fighters, and place army officers into PMF leadership positions, among other reforms.[29] These reports suggest that Zaydi has already begun, or is planning to soon begin, to conduct PMF reform. Zaydi has reportedly sought to implement such reforms, which ISW-CTP has assessed are part of his efforts to both increase his personal power as prime minister and meet US demands surrounding militia disarmament.[30] Previous reporting has suggested that Zaydi planned to conduct these PMF reforms through an amended PMF law.[31] Zaydi may have instead decided to pursue the reform independently due to disagreements with the framework over his preferred amendments and anticipated challenges in securing parliamentary approval for the law.[32]

Iran has formally abandoned its self-imposed 2,000-kilometer missile range limit, which codifies the regime's longstanding efforts to develop longer-range missile capabilities. Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) Spokesperson Brigadier General Hossein Mohebbi told Iranian media on November 7 that the Iranian Armed Forces had lifted the regime's self-imposed missile range restriction in accordance with Supreme Leader Mojtaba Khamenei's recent directive.[33] Mojtaba ordered the Iranian Armed Forces on October 30 to achieve "maximum deterrence" and respond immediately and effectively to all threats "without geographical limitations."[34] Iran has claimed for several years to have voluntarily capped its missile range at 2,000 kilometers, but the regime has long demonstrated both the intent and the technical capacity to pursue longer-range systems. Iran's farthest-ever attempted missile strike targeted the US-UK base at Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean, approximately 3,800 km from Iran's

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southern border, in March 2026.[35] The missiles' actual travel distances remain unclear because one failed in flight, while the other was intercepted at an unspecified location, but the attempt nonetheless demonstrated that Iran was prepared to use missiles at ranges well beyond 2,000 kilometers.[36] Iran can use its missiles at longer ranges without building new systems by adjusting warhead weight and other parameters. Iran likely made such modifications to conduct the Diego Garcia attack, according to a Dutch missile expert.[37]

Iran has also pursued technological capabilities that could support the eventual development of intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) in recent years.[38] ISW-CTP assessed in July 2025 that Iran's efforts to advance its space program could support ICBM development.[39] Iranian officials have also signaled interest in such capabilities.[40]

The formal lifting of the self-imposed limit comes as Iranian officials have repeatedly threatened to expand any future conflict with the United States beyond the Middle East, which is very likely part of an Iranian effort to deter US strikes. Mojtaba's directive has prompted senior Iranian officials to echo his threat to respond to any attack "without geographical limitations" and repeatedly threaten US bases in Europe.[41] ISW-CTP previously assessed that Iran likely seeks to prevent the resumption of US or Israeli strikes by increasing the anticipated costs of Iran's retaliation on the United States and US regional partners with threats of retaliation beyond the location or actors involved in an initial attack.[42] These threats likely serve a deterrent purpose primarily, but Iran possesses some capabilities to carry them out. Several US bases in Europe lie within the range of Iran's existing missiles, and Iran could further extend their range if it reduced their payload mass (see map below).

US and Partner Military Operations

Nothing significant to report.

Iranian Strike Campaign

Assessed Iranian War Aims:

- *Secure international recognition of Iranian control over the Strait of Hormuz*
- *Degrade the US ability and willingness to continue the war*
- *Restore deterrence vis-*à *-vis the United States and its regional partners*
- *Divide the United States and Israel from the Arab states*

Iran has continued to threaten US bases in Europe in order to deter US allies from supporting potential US operations against Iran. The *Wall Street Journal* reported on November 10 that US forces relocated multiple tankers from the Royal Air Force (RAF) Mildenhall Base to Germany and other countries due to an imminent threat from Iran, citing people familiar with the matter.[43] A US official familiar with the matter added that the United States raised the security level at RAF Mildenhall and RAF Lakenheath to Force Protection Condition Charlie, which officials implement when intelligence suggests that "a form of terrorist action is likely."[44] Both bases serve as critical hubs for US Air Force refueling and operational support. The relocation follows the US withdrawal of B-1 bombers from RAF Fairford Base on September 27 after intelligence uncovered a complex Iranian-backed plot that involved drones and targeted attacks on US pilots.[45] Iran has repeatedly threatened to attack bases that either support US operations against Iran or host US forces or equipment.[46]

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US-Iran Negotiations

Nothing significant to report.

Iranian Domestic Affairs

The Iranian regime announced plans to use its mass mobilization campaign in order to curb excessive domestic energy consumption. The Iranian regime launched a mass recruitment campaign in March –Janfada ("Those Who Sacrifice Their Lives")– in order to mobilize Iranian civilians to support the regime's objectives, including efforts to suppress anti-regime activity.[47] Basij Commander Hossein Taeb announced on November 8 that 150,000 Basij members completed specialized training as "energy helpers" to promote the reform of energy overconsumption and eliminate resource waste in the "public arena."[48] These efforts come amid severe natural gas shortages and electrical grid instability. Grid instability and gas shortages are historically worse during the winter due to higher energy demands for heating systems.[49] Energy shortages and power outages have fueled public discontent and triggered anti-regime protests in the past.[50]

Lebanon

Nothing significant to report.

Iraq

Unspecified Iraqi government sources leaked a "top-secret" Iraqi Ministry of Interior intelligence report to US-funded regional media on November 9 that reveals Iranian-backed Iraqi militia Kataib Hezbollah's involvement in oil smuggling operations in Jurf al Sakhr, Babil Province.[51] The report, which is from October 2025, reveals how Kataib Hezbollah has engaged in oil smuggling in Jurf al Sakhr since 2021 and has generated millions of dollars in illicit revenue.[52] The leaked documents also include satellite imagery, which suggests that the Iraqi government has been monitoring activities in Jurf al Sakhr for years.[53] Kataib Hezbollah has controlled Jurf al Sakhr since 2014 and has denied the Iraqi government access to the area for over a decade.[54] The leak comes as Iraqi Prime Minister Ali al Zaydi has taken steps to disrupt Iranian-backed Iraqi militias' illicit revenue sources.[55]

The Iraqi federal government's recent decision to close one Iran-Iraq border crossing and reopen another is likely an attempt to balance between the United States and Iranian-backed Iraqi actors. Iraqi state media reported on November 9 that Iraq will close the Mandali border crossing between Iraq's Diyala Province and Iran's Kermanshah Province on November 13 to complete unspecified "technical requirements."[56] The Iraqi Border Ports Authority separately announced the reopening of the al Sheeb border crossing between Iraq's Maysan Province and Iran's Khuzestan Province on November 10.[57] These decisions come after Iraqi Foreign Minister Fuad Hussein recently claimed in a November 8 interview with Qatari media that the United States wants Iraq to close all but two Iran-Iraq border crossings to support US efforts to isolate Iran economically.[58] Iraq closed the al Sheeb crossing in late October, likely in response to US pressure on the Iraqi government to restrict trade with Iran.[59] Iranian-backed Iraqi actors have demanded the reopening of al Sheeb since its closure.[60] The reopening of the al Sheeb border crossing, in conjunction with the expected closure of the Mandali border

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crossing, thus probably reflects the Iraqi government's efforts to balanceUS pressure and demands from Iranian-backed Iraqi actors.

Arabian Peninsula

Saudi Arabia struck the Houthi-controlled Yemen Petroleum Company (YPC) headquarters in Sanaa City on November 10.[61] Saudi Arabia likely targeted the YPC building in response to the Houthis' strike on an Aramco office building in Riyadh on November 8.[62] Houthi media separately reported that Saudi Arabia struck a fuel station in Sanaa City on November 10.[63] Saudi Arabia may have also targeted the YPC building and fuel station in Sanaa City in order to constrain the Houthis' ability to sustain their military forces.[64] Saudi attacks on fuel facilities could also exacerbate ongoing fuel shortages in Houthi-controlled territory and force the Houthis to raise fuel prices, which could impose further constraints on the group's military and political efforts.[65] Saudi Arabia previously conducted airstrikes on several Houthi oil and fuel facilities in Sanaa, Dhamar, and Hudaydah governorates on October 13.[66]

Yemeni government-aligned forces continued to engage Houthi fighters in northeastern Lahij Governorate. An independent Yemeni journalist reported that Yemeni government-aligned forces engaged Houthi fighters in Mabaq, a town along the Taiz-Aden ground line of communication (GLOC) in al Maqatirah District, on November 10.[67] The Houthis have attempted to advance southeast through al Maqatirah District along the GLOC in recent days, but Yemeni government-aligned forces appear to have prevented further Houthi advances.[68] Yemeni government-aligned forces previously repelled Houthi fighters who attemptedto advancetowardthe town of Gharib, approximately two kilometers east of Mabaq along the GLOC.[69] The Houthis are likely attempting to advance southeast through al Maqatirah District in order to seize sections of the GLOC to help set conditions for the Houthis to besiege or capture Aden City in the future.[70]

The Houthi movement claimed that it struck King Khalid International Airport and Saudi financial and energy infrastructure on November 10.[71] Houthi Spokesperson Yahya Sarea claimed on November 10 that the Houthis struck an unspecified **"**financial hub**"** in Riyadh, multiple East-West Pipeline pumping stations in Riyadh Province, and an Aramco facility in Abqaiq.[72] The Houthis previously claimed attacks on the world's largest crude oil processing plant in Abqaiq on October 29 and November 8.[73] The Houthis also previously claimed to strike a "financial center" in Riyadh on November 8, which was later identified by international media as an Aramco office building in Riyadh's financial district.[74] ISW-CTP cannot verify the Houthis' claims at the time of this writing. Saudi Joint Forces Command Spokesperson Major General Turki al Maliki separately announced that Saudi air defenses intercepted two Houthi ballistic and cruise missiles near Riyadh, one Houthi ballistic missile in the Eastern Province, and one Houthi drone in southern Saudi Arabia.[75] The Houthis have repeatedly targeted Saudi critical infrastructure as part of an ongoing strike campaign to compel Saudi Arabia to end military operations in Yemen and accept Houthi demands, which include lifting Saudi controls on Houthi-controlled ports and airports and granting the Houthis control over Yemen's oil and gas resources.[76]

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Endnotes

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Iran Update, November 11, 2026

Ben Rezaei, Carolyn Moorman, Bailey Pasternak, Katherine Wells, Benjamin Schmida, Kelly Campa

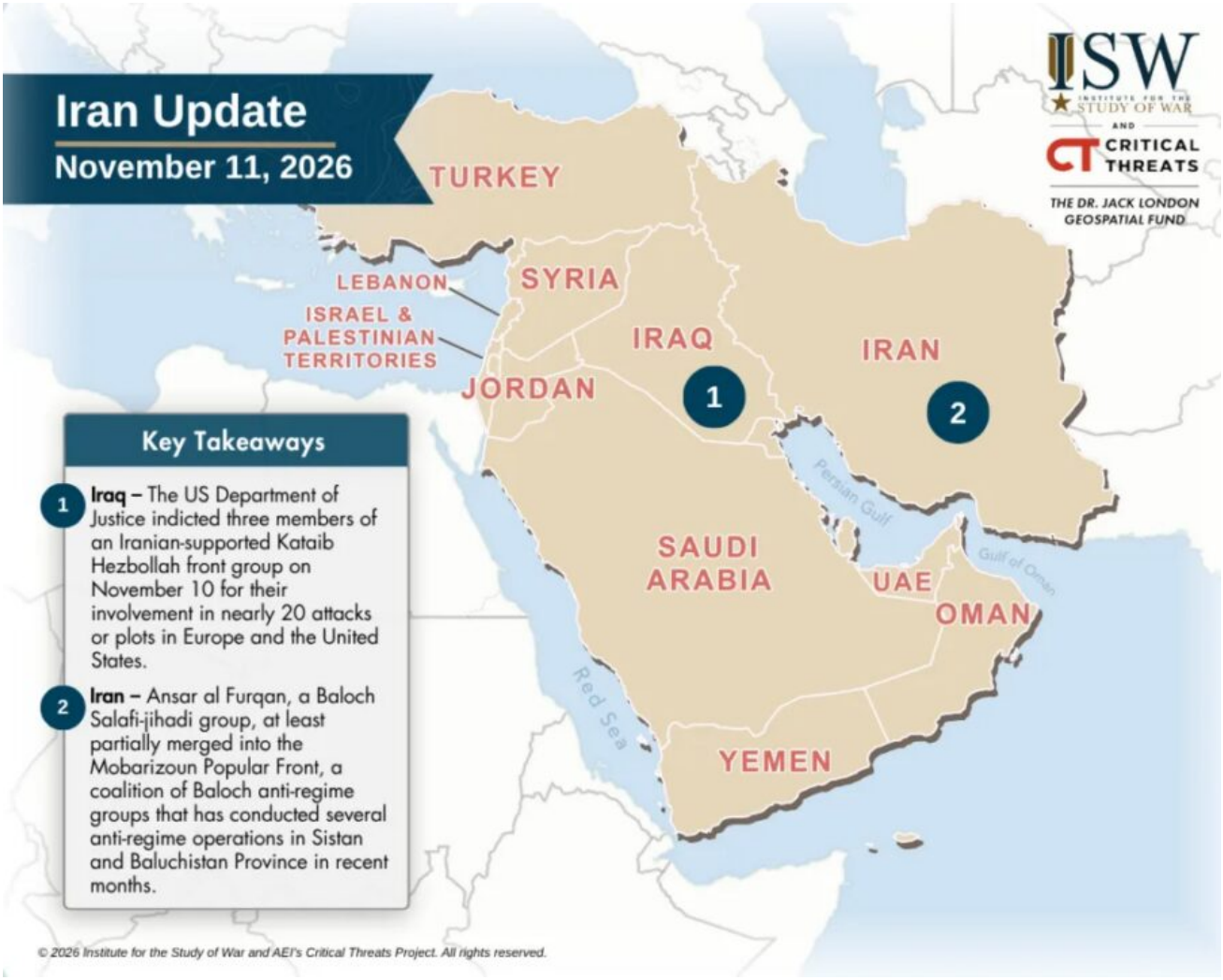
Analyst Notes: Data Cutoff: 2:00 PM ET

The Institute for the Study of War (ISW) and The Critical Threats Project (CTP) at the American Enterprise Institute are publishing updates Monday through Friday to provide analysis on the war with Iran and the broader Middle East. Weekday updates cover events from the past 24-hour period, whereas weekend updates are abbreviated and cover the Houthi-Saudi conflict and major breaking developments related to the war with Iran.

Key Takeaways

1. The US Department of Justice indicted three members of an Iranian-supported Kataib Hezbollah front group on November 10 for their involvement in nearly 20 attacks or plots in Europe and the United States, including an attempted attack on the Royal Air Force (RAF) base in Fairford in September 2026.
2. The front group's pattern of activity suggests that its operations are part of an Iranian effort to compel Israel and the United States to halt attacks on Iran.
3. Ansar al Furqan, a Baloch Salafi-jihadi group, at least partially merged into the Mobarizoun Popular Front (MPF), a coalition of Baloch anti-regime groups that has conducted several anti-regime operations in Sistan and Baluchistan Province in recent months. The MPF claimed that the merger would unite Baloch armed groups and increase the effectiveness of anti-regime operations.

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Toplines

The US Department of Justice indicted three members of an Iranian-supported Kataib Hezbollah front group on November 10 for their involvement in nearly 20 attacks or plots in Europe and the United States, including an attempted attack on the Royal Air Force (RAF) base in Fairford in September 2026.[1] The three individuals conducted numerous attacks in Europe between March and May 2026 as part of the group known as Harakat Ashab al Yamin al Islamiya.[2] The Justice Department described Harakat Ashab al Yamin al Islamiya as a front group for Kataib Hezbollah and the IRGC.[3] Both Iran and the Iraqi militias have historically used front groups to provide plausible deniability and obfuscate their involvement in attacks and other activity.[4] The Justice Department indicted senior Kataib Hezbollah commander Mohammad Baqer Saad Dawoud al Saadi in May 2026 for his direction of Harakat Ashab al Yamin al Islamiya's attacks.[5] Saadi more recently organized the plot targeting RAF Fairford from prison in New York.[6] UK authorities thwarted a plot to attack US bombers stationed at the base with small explosive drones on September 27, which led the United States to relocate the bombers from the base.[7]

The front group's pattern of activity suggests that its operations are part of an Iranian effort to compel Israel and the United States to halt attacks on Iran. The front group targeted and attempted to target numerous Jewish sites in Europe and the United States in March and April 2026, including synagogues.[8] The attacks likely aimed to retaliate against US-Israeli strikes in Iran by spreading terror and fear among US and European Jewish communities, thereby increasing the pressure

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on both countries to end the strike campaign. Such a strategy may reflect Iran's recognition that previous direct Iranian attacks on Israeli soil failed to compel Israeli decisionmakers to avoid taking action against Iran.[9]

Limited US strikes on Iran in August and September, as well as reports that the United States was considering renewed strikes on Iran, may have motivated the cell's shift from Jewish-affiliated targets to US military targets.[10] The group paused attacks on any targets after Saadi was sentenced in the United States in May 2026. The Justice Department noted that the three men began to plan the RAF Fairford attack in August.[11] UK Prime Minister Andy Burnham told the House of Commons in mid-October that the IRGC "almost certainly" directed the plot.[12] Attacks on US bases that support US operations, such as RAF Fairford, are likely intended to deter future US attacks on Iran. Iranian officials have increasingly issued threats against US bases in Europe amid expectations that the United States could imminently strike Iran again. Supreme National Security Council Secretary Mohsen Rezaei warned Arabic-language media on November 11 that Iran would target distant US bases in the event of any new attack, for example.[13] It is not clear if Rezaei is threatening to conduct direct missile or drone attacks against such bases or referring to sabotage. Several US bases in Europe lie within the range of Iran's existing missiles.[14] The *Wall Street Journal* reported on November 10 that US forces relocated multiple tankers from the RAF Mildenhall Base to Germany and other countries due to an imminent threat from Iran, citing people familiar with the matter.[15]

Ansar al Furqan, a Baloch Salafi-jihadi group, has at least partially merged into the Mobarizoun Popular Front (MPF), a coalition of Baloch anti-regime groups that has conducted several operations in Sistan and Baluchistan Province in recent months.[16] The MPF claimed that the merger would unite Baloch armed groups and increase the effectiveness of anti-regime operations.[17] Jaish al Adl and several other Baloch militant groups formed the MPF in December 2025 to fight against the regime and increase coordination among anti-regime groups in southeastern Iran.[18] Ansar al Furqan did not publicly join the MPF when the coalition formed and continued to operate independently. MPF Spokesperson Mahmoud Baloch announced on November 11 that Ansar al Furqan had merged into the MPF after unspecified Baloch figures mediated between the groups.[19] It is unclear at this time how fully Ansar al Furqan has merged into the MPF. An anti-regime Baloch media outlet subsequently reported that Ansar al Furqan spokesperson Molavi Nasrollah Baloch confirmed the full merger.[20] An alleged direct statement from Ansar al Furqan alternatively suggested that only a small number of its fighters chose to join the MPF on their own initiative and that Ansar al Furqan's foundational structure and principal divisions remain intact.[21] The discrepancies in reporting about Ansar al Furqan's decision to join the MPF may reflect internal splits within the group, although available reporting does not identify the defectors or explain why they joined the MPF. This merger comes amid an uptick in anti-regime militant activity in southeastern Iran in recent months.[22]

Ansar al Furqan and the MPF share the common objective to overthrow the Iranian regime, which may explain in part Ansar al Furqan's decision to join the MPF at this time. Ansar al Furqan called the MPF fighters its "brothers" and expressed support for their anti-regime struggle, which indicates that the groups share a common enemy despite their ideological differences.[23] The MPF's charter identifies "deep political change" in Iran as its central objective and frames its struggle around the regime's oppression of Baloch citizens and other Iranians.[24] The MPF has explicitly called for the overthrow of the Velayat-e Faqih [the Guardianship of the Islamic Jurist] system, but the coalition has not advocated for Baloch independence or autonomy.[25] The MPF contains Salafi-jihadi groups, such as Jaish al Adl, but the coalition itself has not expressed Salafi-jihadi views. Ansar al Furqan also seeks the regime's collapse but frames its campaign as jihad and emphasizes the role of religious scholars in its leadership.[26] Ansar al Furqan has used sectarian terms to refer to the Iranian regime and Shia groups, whereas the MPF promotes cooperation among Iranians across ideological divisions.[27] Shared objectives to collapse the

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regime may have encouraged some fighters to join the MPF, while strict ideological adherence may have compelled other Ansar al Furqan fighters to remain independent. Ideological differences between Ansar al Furqan and the MPF could lead to disagreements over rhetoric, recruitment, or ideology that could limit the feasibility of the partnership.

The Ansar al Furqan fighters who joined the MPF may increase the coalition's capabilities through additional manpower and combat experience. It is unclear how many Ansar al Furqan fighters have joined the MPF, however. Ansar al Furqan has conducted some tactically sophisticated attacks, including a large-scale attack against a Law Enforcement Command (LEC) checkpoint in Fahraj, Kerman Province, in December 2025.[28] The MPF has already demonstrated the ability to conduct complex operations across southeastern Iran, including a nine-hour engagement in Saravan in September and a combined improvised explosive device (IED) and small-arms attack in Jalgh in October.[29] The impacts of Ansar al Furqan's merger on the MPF's capabilities will also depend on the extent to which the MPF incorporates these fighters into the MPF's command structures.

US and Partner Military Operations

Nothing significant to report.

Iranian Strike Campaign

Assessed Iranian War Aims:

- *Secure international recognition of Iranian control over the Strait of Hormuz*
- *Degrade the US ability and willingness to continue the war*
- *Restore deterrence vis-à -vis the United States and its regional partners*
- *Divide the United States and Israel from the Arab states*

Nothing significant to report.

US-Iran Negotiations

Nothing significant to report.

Iranian Domestic Affairs

See topline section.

Lebanon

Nothing significant to report.

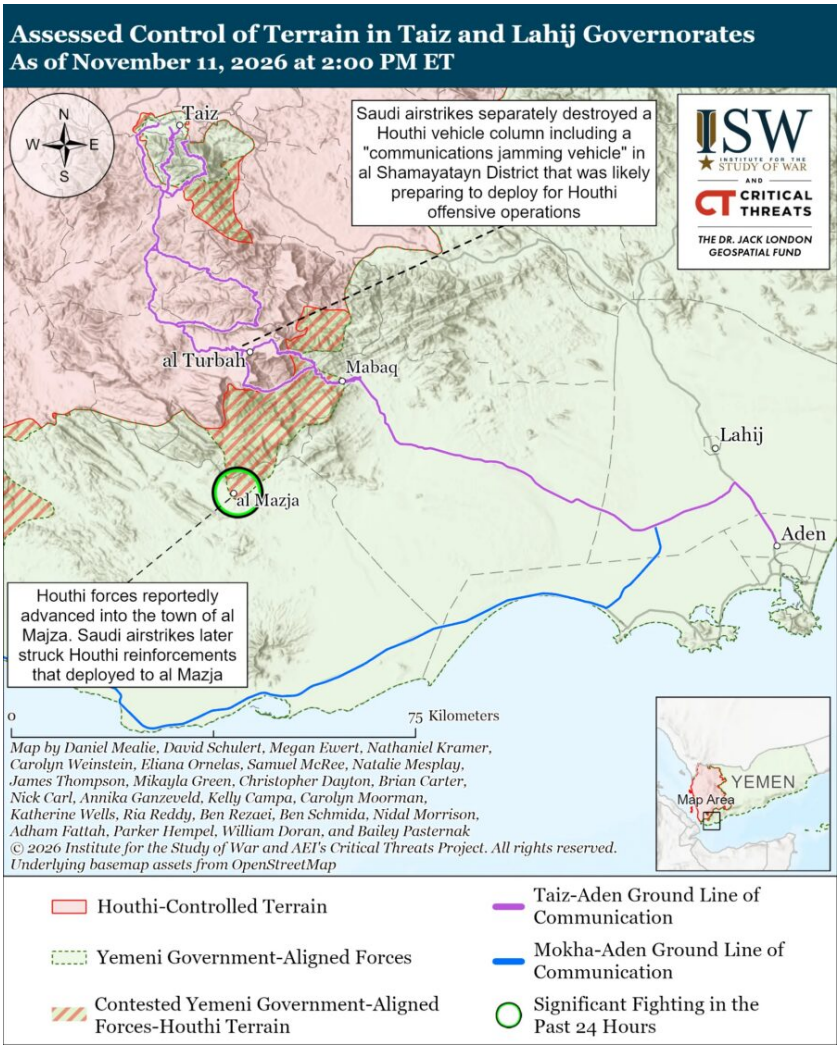
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Iraq

See topline section.

Arabian Peninsula

Yemeni government-aligned forces continued to engage Houthi fighters in northwestern Lahij Governorate. Houthi forces reportedly advanced into the town of al Majza, Lahij Governorate, on November 11, according to an independent Yemeni journalist.[30] Yemeni government-aligned media separately reported that Saudi airstrikes targeted Houthi reinforcements that deployed to al Majza on November 11.[31] Yemeni government-aligned forces previously recaptured al Majza from Houthi forces on November 8 after Houthi forces advanced to the town on November 3.[32] The Houthis' advance to al Majza suggests that Houthi forces may be trying to approach the Mokha-Aden ground line of communication (GLOC), which is approximately 40 kilometers southwest of al Majza.[33] The Houthis could attempt to outflank and isolate government-aligned forces on the Red Sea coastal front by advancing toward the Mokha-Aden GLOC, which supplies government forces operating on that front.



An editor at an anti-Houthi Aden-based media outlet reported on November 11 that government-aligned forces, including the Southern Giants Brigades, Homeland Shield Forces, National Resistance Forces, and Salafist and local units, outnumber and outmatch Houthi forces in Lahij Governorate but lack the coordination mechanisms needed to conduct effective defensive or offensive operations.[34] The absence

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of a unified command structure prevents these units from coordinating defensive operations or reinforcing isolated positions, which allows Houthi forces to concentrate attacks against fragmented government-aligned units and advance despite their material disadvantages, according to the editor.[35] These divisions reflect broader rivalries among Saudi-backed and formerly UAE-backed military formations, whose competing political objectives and independent command structures have prevented the Yemeni government from establishing a unified military command across Yemen.[36]

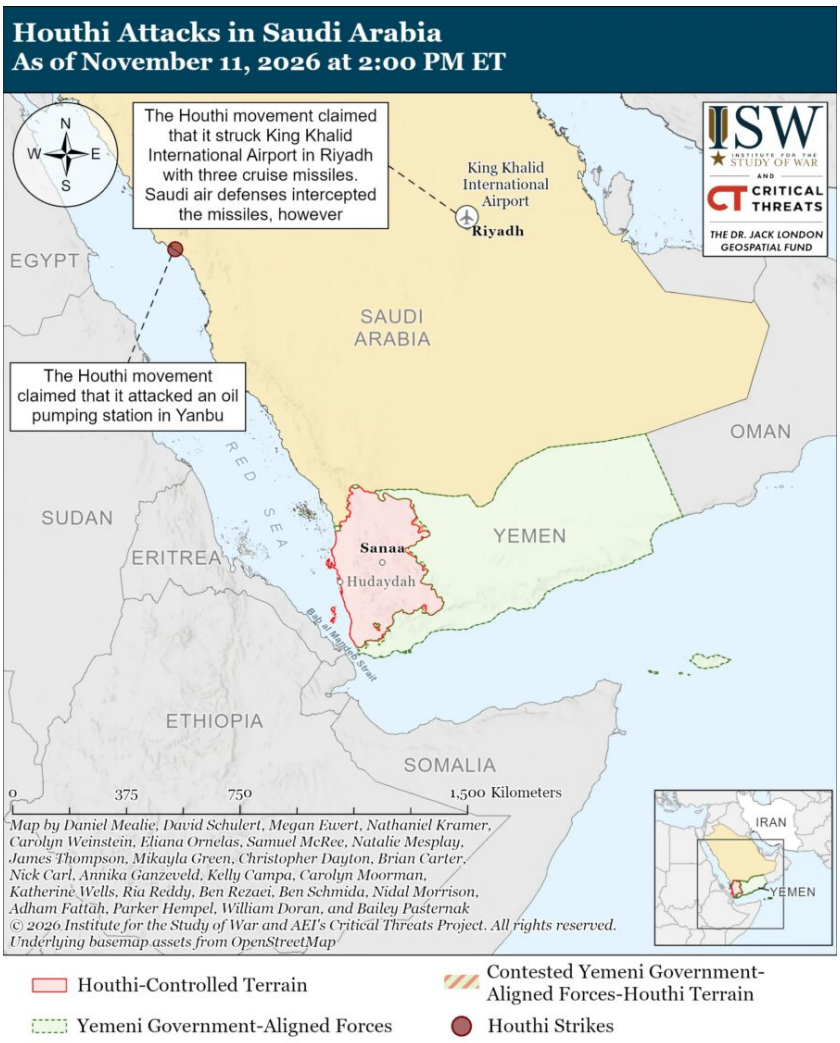
Saudi airstrikes separately targeted a Houthi vehicle convoy that was likely preparing to deploy in preparation for a Houthi offensive operation in Lahij Governorate.[37] An independent Yemeni journalist reported on November 11 that likely Saudi airstrikes destroyed a Houthi vehicle column, including a "communications jamming vehicle," in al Shamayatayn District, Taiz Governorate, which is located directly to the northwest of Houthi-Yemeni government frontlines in Lahij Governorate.[38] The Houthis likely planned to deploy the electronic warfare system to aid ongoing offensive operations against Yemeni government-aligned forces in Lahij Governorate. The Houthis previously employed electronic warfare systems during the Houthi offensive on the Red Sea coastal plain in September in order to issue withdrawal orders to Yemeni government-aligned frontline units, which set conditions for the Houthi capture of the Red Sea coast.[39]

The Houthis fired three ballistic missiles at Marib City on November 10, which may have targeted Yemeni government leadership visiting the city. Multiple Yemeni sources reported that three Houthi ballistic missiles struck Marib while senior government officials including two members of Yemen's Presidential Leadership Council (PLC) were visiting.[40] It is unclear if the Houthis were targeting these officials or other Yemeni military targets. The Houthis have previously attacked Marib City with ballistic missiles in order to degrade Yemeni government-aligned staging areas.[41]

Yemeni security forces separately disabled two roadside IEDs on the Marib-al Abr Road placed by unspecified actors.[42] Local and regional media reported that perpetrators were targeting the PLC members.[43] The Houthis have previously conducted IED attacks against Yemeni government-aligned forces across Yemen, but it remains unclear if the group was responsible for laying the IEDs in Marib.[44]

The Houthis claimed to attack King Khalid International Airport and Saudi energy infrastructure with cruise missiles and drones on November 11.[45] Houthi Spokesperson Yahya Sarea claimed on November 11 that the Houthis struck King Khalid International Airport in Riyadh and an oil pumping station in Yanbu on November 11.[46] Saudi Joint Forces Command Spokesperson Major General Turki al Maliki separately announced on November 11 that Saudi air defenses intercepted three Houthi cruise missiles near Riyadh, one Houthi drone over Mecca Province, and one Houthi drone over southern Saudi Arabia.[47] The Houthis denied that the group launched a drone over Mecca Province, however.[48] The Houthis have repeatedly targeted Saudi critical infrastructure as part of an ongoing strike campaign to compel Saudi Arabia to end military operations in Yemen and accept Houthi demands, which include lifting Saudi controls on Houthi-controlled ports and airports and granting the Houthis control over Yemen's oil and gas resources.[49]

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Iran Update, November 12, 2026

Benjamin Schmida, Parker Hempel, Ben Rezaei, Nidal Morrison, Katherine Wells, Kinser Rafert, Parth Mulay, Annika Ganzeveld

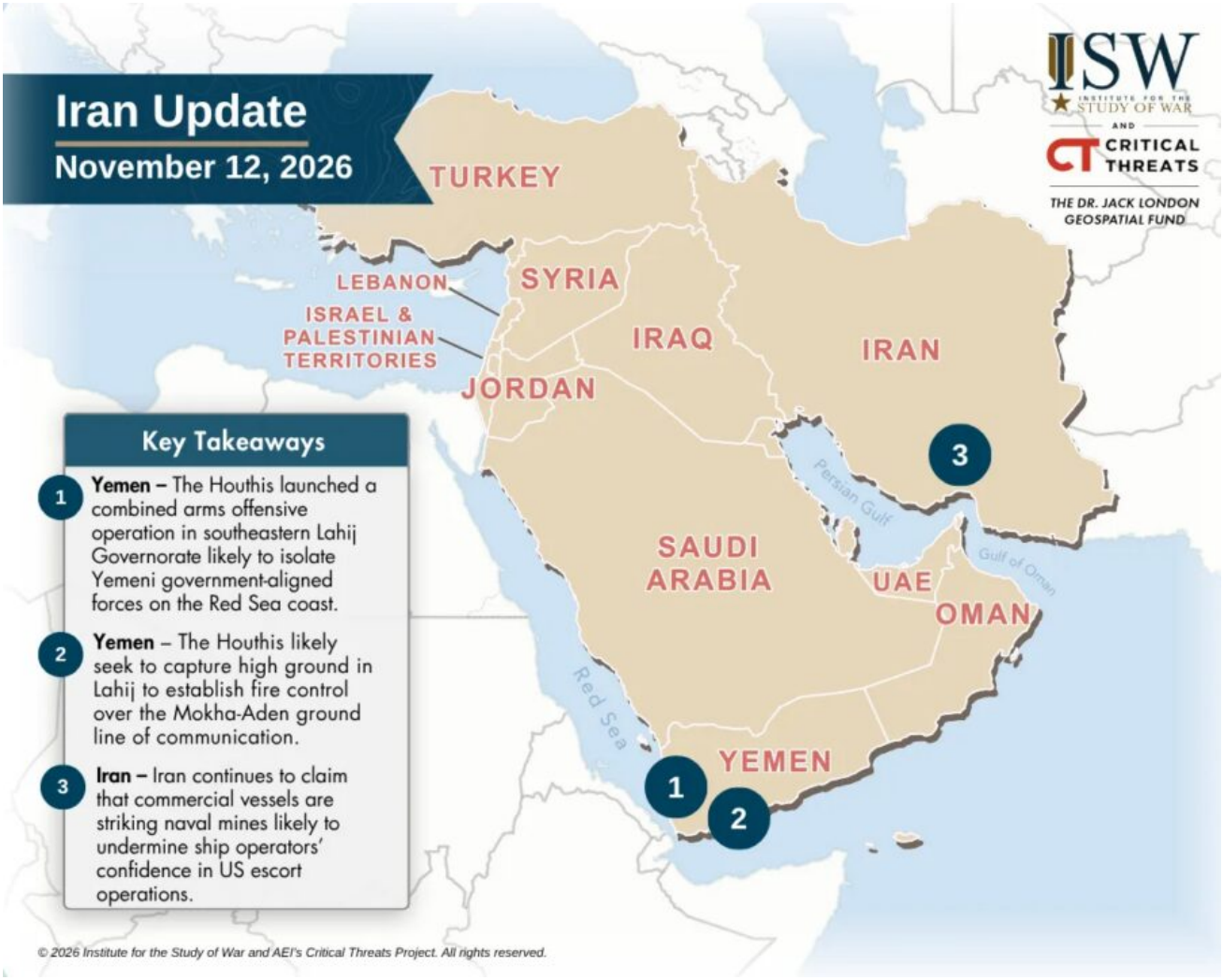
Analyst Notes: Data Cutoff: 2:00 PM ET

The Institute for the Study of War (ISW) and The Critical Threats Project (CTP) at the American Enterprise Institute are publishing updates Monday through Friday to provide analysis on the war with Iran and the broader Middle East. Weekday updates cover events from the past 24-hour period, whereas weekend updates are abbreviated and cover the Houthi-Saudi conflict and major breaking developments related to the war with Iran.

Key Takeaways

1. The Houthis launched a combined-arms offensive operation in southeastern Lahij Governorate on November 11 that likely aims to isolate Yemeni government-aligned forces on the Red Sea coast by severing the Mokha-Aden ground line of communication (GLOC).
2. The Houthi offensive on the Lahij front likely seeks to capture Yemeni government-controlled high ground at Jabal Kharaz, which lies south of al Shatt, in order to establish fire control over the Mokha-Aden GLOC. Houthi fire control over the Mokha-Aden GLOC would effectively isolate some Yemeni government-aligned forces on the Red Sea coastal plain, which would simultaneously set conditions for the Houthis to capture the remainder of the Red Sea coastal plain while depriving the Yemeni government of the units best able to defend Aden City.
3. The Houthis could also exploit their recent gains in Lahij Governorate to outflank Yemeni government-aligned forces west of al Shatt to divide Yemeni government-aligned forces' defensive efforts between protecting the Mokha-Taiz GLOC, defending the wider Red Sea front, and relieving potentially encircled units near Jabal Kahbub.
4. Iran continues to claim that commercial vessels are striking naval mines along the US-backed route in the southern part of the Strait of Hormuz, likely to undermine ship operators' confidence in US escort operations and compel vessels to transit through Iranian territorial waters.

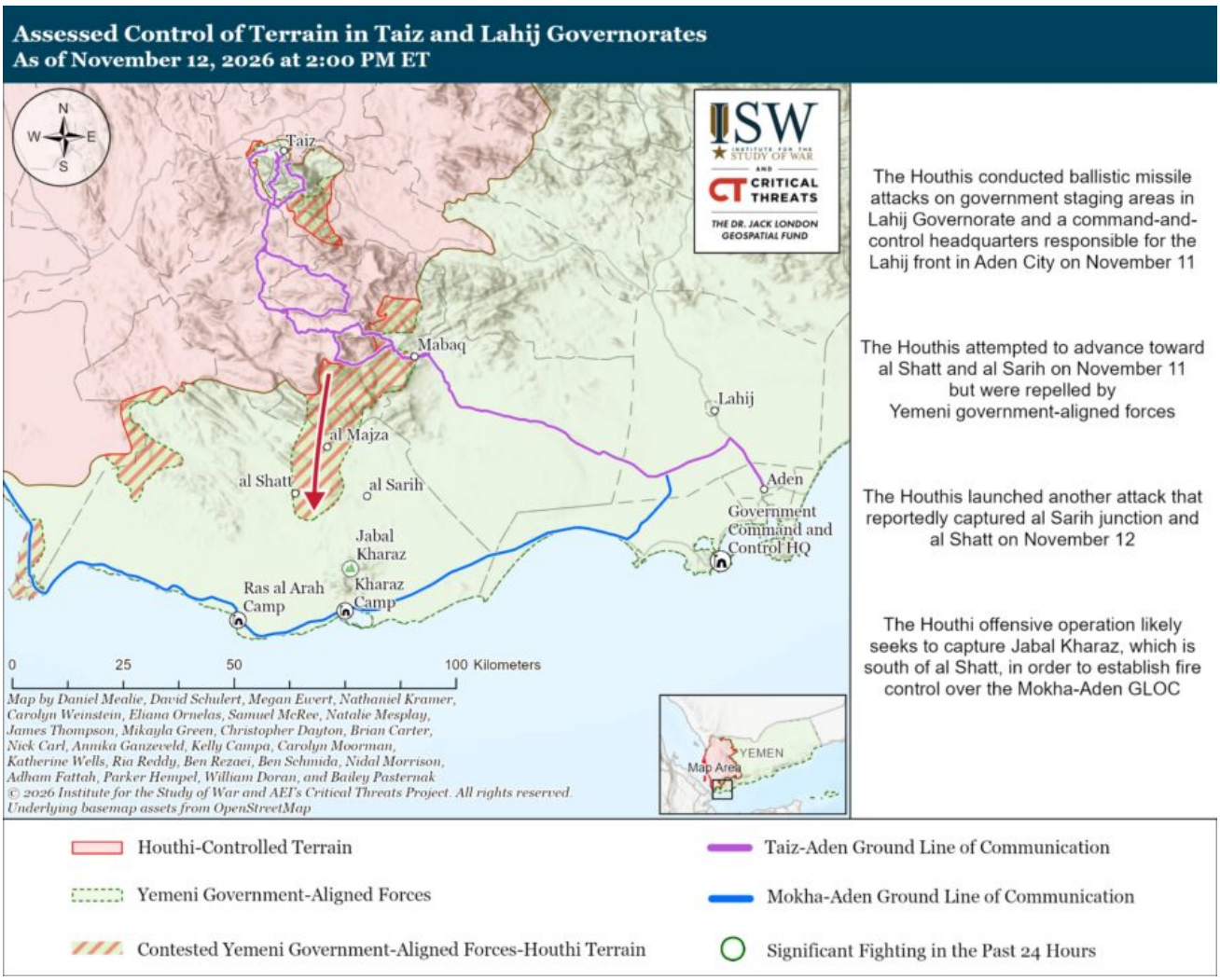
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Toplines

The Houthis launched a combined-arms offensive operation in southeastern Lahij Governorate on November 11 that likely aims to isolate Yemeni government-aligned forces on the Red Sea coast by severing the Mokha-Aden ground line of communication (GLOC). The Houthis began their offensive with ballistic missile salvos that targeted government staging areas in Ras al Arah and Kharaz, Lahij Governorate, likely intended to degrade government forces' ability to reinforce frontline positions.[1] The Houthis simultaneously conducted ballistic missile strikes on a government command-and-control headquarters in Aden City that is responsible for the Lahij front, likely to disrupt government forces' ability to coordinate a response to the imminent ground offensive.[2] Houthi mechanized units and infantry then attempted to advance southwest from al Majza, Lahij Governorate, toward al Shatt and al Sarih on November 11, but Yemeni government-aligned forces repelled them, according to multiple anti-Houthi sources.[3] Houthi forces later successfully captured al Shatt and al Sarih junction on November 12 after conducting additional strikes on Yemeni government staging areas.[4] Saudi-Yemeni government airstrikes on Houthi positions in al Shatt on November 12 indicate that the Houthis retain control over the town at this time.[5] The Houthi offensive in Lahij Governorate follows recent reports that the Houthis are exploiting Yemeni government-aligned forces' coordination issues on the southeast Lahij frontline.[6]

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The Houthi offensive on the Lahij front likely seeks to capture Yemeni government-controlled high ground at Jabal Kharaz, which lies south of al Shatt, in order to establish fire control over the Mokha-Aden GLOC. A Houthi military commentator told Houthi media on November 11 that Houthi forces seek to control Jabal Kharaz in order to target the Mokha-Aden GLOC.[7] The Houthis' capture of Jabal Kharaz — the highest southern position on the Red Sea coastal plain — would provide the Houthis with defensible overwatch positions and enable them to establish fire control over the Mokha-Aden GLOC. Houthi fire control over the Mokha-Aden GLOC would effectively isolate the Yemeni government's most capable and most mobile units, the Southern Giants Brigades and Homeland Shield Forces, which are currently deployed on the Red Sea coastal plain.[8] This isolation would simultaneously set conditions for the Houthis to capture the remainder of the Red Sea coastal plain while depriving the Yemeni government of the units best able to defend Aden City. This isolation would also protect the Houthis' rear flank if the Houthis attempt to advance southeastward from al Maqatirah District, via Tur al Baha District, toward Aden City. The Houthis would likely struggle to advance on this route toward Aden City given the district's much flatter terrain, which would leave advancing Houthi units vulnerable to Saudi airstrikes, however.

The Houthis could also exploit their recent gains in Lahij Governorate to outflank Yemeni government-aligned forces west of al Shatt. The Houthis could advance west from al Shatt to outflank and potentially encircle government units near Jabal Kahbub, even if government forces prevent the Houthis from capturing Jabal Kharaz. This maneuver would force Yemeni government-aligned forces to divide their defensive efforts between protecting the Mokha–Taiz GLOC, defending the wider Red Sea front, and relieving potentially encircled units near Jabal Kahbub.

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US and Partner Military Operations

Nothing significant to report.

Iranian Strike Campaign

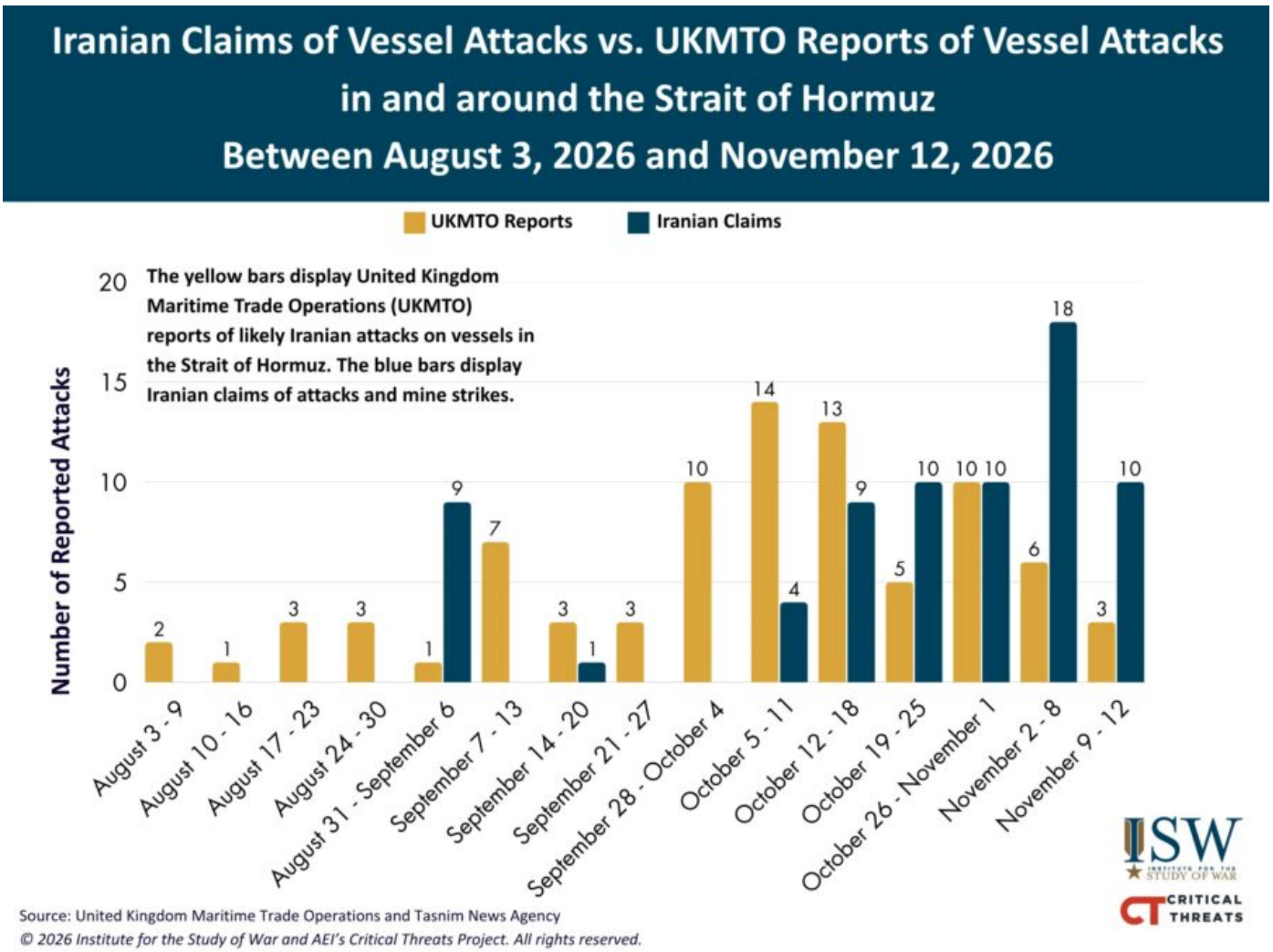
Assessed Iranian War Aims:

- *Secure international recognition of Iranian control over the Strait of Hormuz*
- *Degrade the US ability and willingness to continue the war*
- *Restore deterrence vis-*à *-vis the United States and its regional partners*
- *Divide the United States and Israel from the Arab states*

Iran continues to claim that commercial vessels are striking naval mines along the US-backed route in the southern part of the Strait of Hormuz, likely to undermine ship operators' confidence in US escort operations and compel vessels to transit through Iranian territorial waters. The Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) and Artesh have consistently claimed that vessels have struck mines following US Central Command's August 27 confirmation that US forces had completely demined the strait.[9] The start of these claims also coincided with US strikes on August 31 targeting rockets that Iran was reportedly attempting to use to re-mine the strait.[10] ISW-CTP assessed at the time that Iran may have been using the rockets because previous US strikes had degraded other, more effective Iranian strike-laying capabilities. ISW-CTP has not observed any indicators that Iran has successfully re-mined the strait. The IRGC and Artesh have recently started to note in their claims of vessels hitting mines that the vessels were allegedly under US escort, likely to try to reinforce Iran's information operation to discredit US escort operations.[11]

Iran continues to attack vessels with likely drones and missiles in and around the Strait of Hormuz. United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO) reported two projectile attacks against tankers in and near the Strait of Hormuz, including a strike on an engine room. This attack is consistent with a recent increase in Iranian attacks on vessel engine rooms.[12] ISW-CTP assessed on October 21 that Iran may be using more advanced weapons systems to conduct more precise attacks after at least five of 23 attacks in early October struck engine rooms.[13]

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US-Iran Negotiations

Nothing significant to report.

Iranian Domestic Affairs

Iranian security forces continue to counter infiltration attempts from Kurdish opposition fighters based in Iraqi Kurdistan as the regime raises military readiness along Iran's northwestern border. The IRGC Ground Forces Hamzeh Seyyed ol Shohada Operational Base announced on November 12 that its forces killed two Kurdistan Free Life Party (PJAK) militants attempting to infiltrate Iran's northwestern border from Iraq.[14] The IRGC claimed that the militants intended to conduct "sabotage and terrorist" attacks inside Iran and were carrying weapons, ammunition, and Starlink devices.[15] PJAK has not commented on the incident at the time of this writing. IRGC forces have killed Kurdish separatist fighters in northwestern Iran in recent months, including a Kurdish separatist fighter in Piranshahr, West Azerbaijan Province, on September 20 and four PJAK members near Mahabad and Piranshahr, West Azerbaijan Province, on June 30.[16] The recent incident comes after Iranian military commanders stated on October 31 that Iranian forces are increasing readiness along Iran's northwestern and southeastern borders, reflecting the regime's concerns about anti-regime militant activities.[17]

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Lebanon

Nothing significant to report.

Iraq

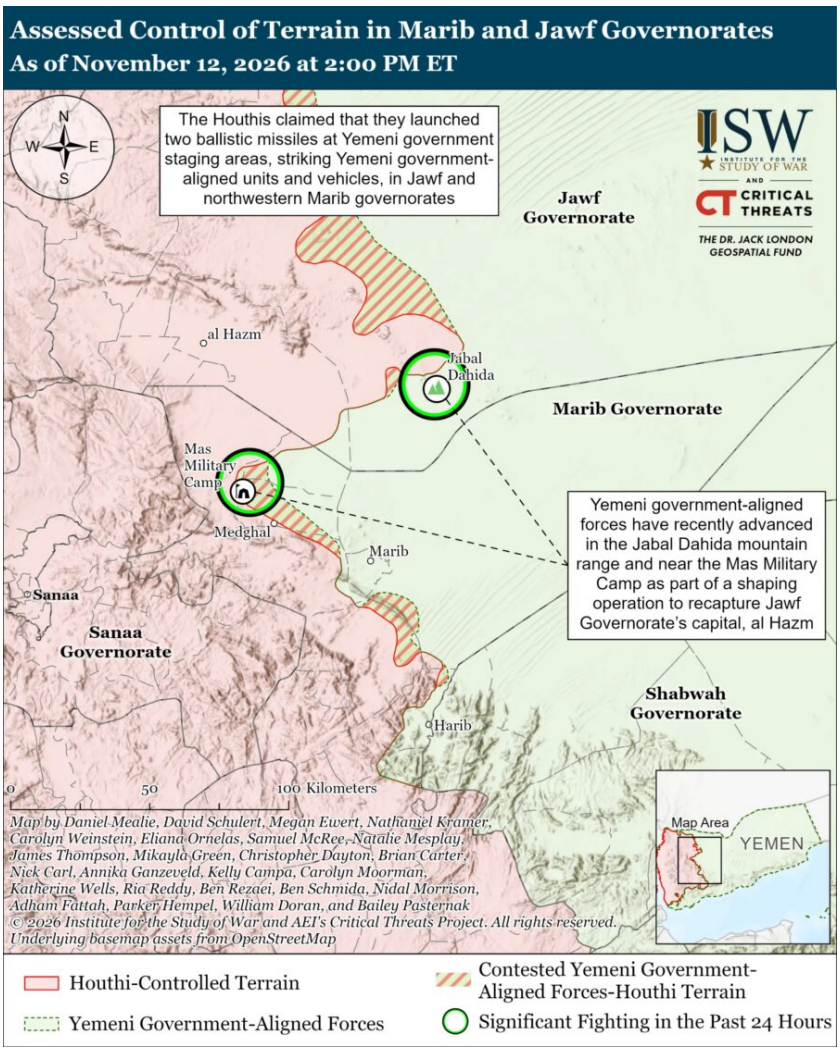
The Iraqi federal government likely suspended an operation to inspect Iranian-backed Iraqi militia Kataib Hezbollah's oil smuggling activities in Jurf al Sakhr, Babil Province, due to pressure from Iranian-backed Iraqi actors. Informed sources told Iraqi media on November 12 that Iraqi Army, Federal Police, and Counter Terrorism Service units mobilized to escort an Iraqi government investigative committee into Jurf al Sakhr to inspect smuggling-related oil storage sites, tankers, and transport routes.[18] The federal government ordered the formation of the investigative committee on November 11 after US-funded regional media published a leaked Iraqi intelligence report that Kataib Hezbollah has generated millions of dollars of revenue from oil theft and smuggling activities in Jurf al Sakhr since 2021.[19] Kataib Hezbollah has controlled Jurf al Sakhr since 2014 and has denied the Iraqi government access to the area for over a decade.[20] This operation to investigate oil smuggling in Jurf al Sakhr comes as Iraqi Prime Minister Ali al Zaydi has taken steps to disrupt Iranian-backed Iraqi militias' revenue sources.[21]

The Iraqi government suspended the operation to enter Jurf al Sakhr after Iranian-backed Badr Organization head Hadi al Ameri, State of Law Coalition leader Nouri al Maliki, and Interior Minister Yasser al Maliki intervened to mediate between Kataib Hezbollah and Iraqi government forces to prevent an "armed confrontation."[22] Kataib Hezbollah Secretary General Abu Hussein al Hamidawi had mobilized fighters in preparation to confront Iraqi government forces and threatened to fire on any Iraqi security forces that entered Jurf al Sakhr without the militia's approval, according to informed sources speaking to Iraqi media on November 12.[23] Iranian-backed Iraqi actors similarly pressured Zaydi into reversing his reported plans to enter Jurf al Sakhr in August 2026.[24]

Arabian Peninsula

The Houthis reportedly launched two ballistic missiles targeting Yemeni government-aligned forces' staging areas in Jawf and Marib governorates in eastern Yemen, likely in an effort to disrupt Yemeni government advances toward Jawf Governorate's capital city, al Hazm. The Houthi movement claimed that it launched two ballistic missiles at Yemeni government military staging areas, striking Yemeni government-aligned units and vehicles, in Jawf and northwestern Marib governorates on November 12.[25] These missile strikes come amid recent Yemeni government-aligned forces' advances in Jawf and northwestern Marib governorates, including in the Jabal Dahida mountain range and near the Mas Military Camp, which are 75 kilometers and 50 kilometers from al Hazm, respectively. These advances are part of a shaping operation to recapture al Hazm City.[26] The Houthis have repeatedly fired ballistic missiles at Yemeni government-aligned forces' staging areas in an effort to disrupt resources and reinforcements necessary to support counteroffensives in eastern Yemen.[27]

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The Houthi movement claimed that it struck a military cargo aircraft at a Saudi airport near the Saudi Arabia-Yemen border, likely to disrupt Saudi military aid to the Yemeni government. The Houthis claimed that a drone struck a military cargo plane at the Sharura Domestic Airport, which is located about 60 kilometers from the Saudi Arabia-Yemen border, on November 12.[28] ISW-CTP cannot verify the Houthis' claim at the time of this writing. The Houthis have consistently claimed to target and strike military cargo aircraft at Yemeni airports to degrade Saudi and international partner sustainment efforts to the Yemeni government throughout the recent conflict.[29] Sharura Domestic Airport is notably located on a well-maintained Saudi and Yemeni highway route that directly connects to Yemeni government-controlled Marib City, which is the largest staging ground for Yemeni government-aligned forces near frontlines in northwestern Marib and Jawf governorates.[30]

The Houthi movement claimed that it struck Saudi energy infrastructure on November 12 as part of its strike campaign to compel Saudi Arabia to end military operations in Yemen and accept Houthi demands. Houthi military spokesperson Yahya Saree claimed on November 12 that the Houthis struck an unspecified Aramco facility in Riyadh, the Yanbu Oil Refinery, and a pumping station on the East-West Pipeline with drones.[31] The Houthis have targeted and struck the East-West Pipeline on multiple occasions throughout the conflict.[32] A previous Houthi attack on the East-West Pipeline in September 2026 forced Saudi authorities to close the pipeline for approximately 11 days to conduct emergency repairs.[33] ISW-CTP cannot verify the Houthis' claims at the time of this writing. The Houthis seek to impose economic and political costs on Saudi Arabia to compel the kingdom to meet Houthi demands, such as lifting Saudi controls on Houthi-controlled ports and airports and granting the Houthis control over Yemen's oil and gas resources.[34]

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Saudi military and government entities separately announced that Saudi air defenses intercepted six Houthi projectiles, including a drone near Riyadh, a drone in the Eastern Province, two Houthi ballistic missiles in western Saudi Arabia, and two ballistic missiles near Mecca, on November 11.[35] Saudi air defenses have repeatedly intercepted Houthi missiles and drones in the vicinity of these cities. The Houthis have consistently denied targeting the Islamic holy cities of Mecca and Medina since the start of their strike campaign against Saudi Arabia.[36] The Houthis have repeatedly targeted Saudi critical infrastructure.[37]



Endnotes

[1] https://t.me/army21ye/4062 ;
[2] https://t.me/army21ye/4064
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Iran Update, November 13, 2026

Parker Hempel, Carolyn Moorman, Adham Fattah, Kinser Rafert, Kelly Campa

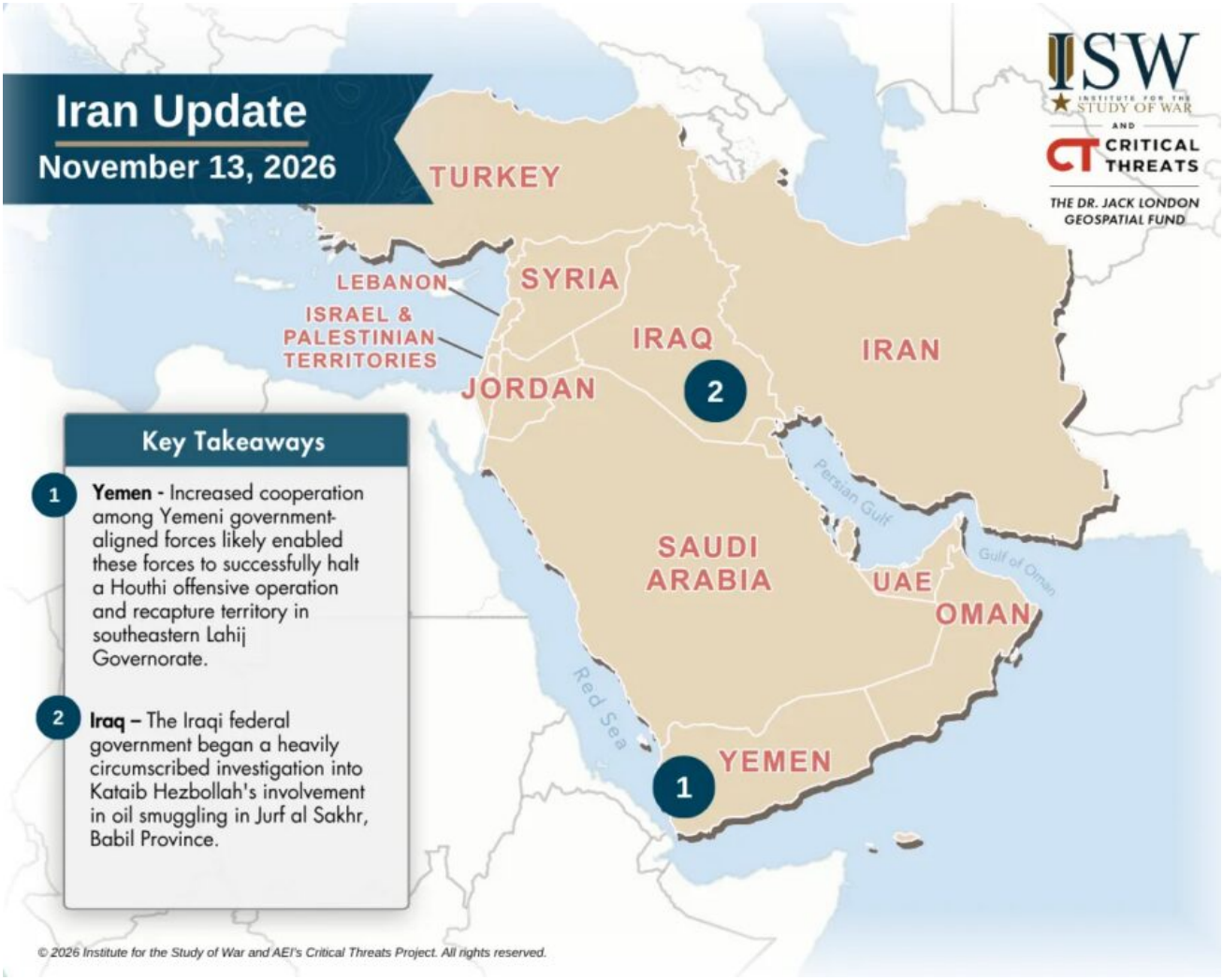
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Key Takeaways

1. Increased cooperation among Yemeni government-aligned forces likely enabled these forces to successfully halt a Houthi offensive operation and recapture territory in southeastern Lahij Governorate. The threat the Houthi advance poses to southern Yemeni territory likely motivated some Southern Transitional Council (STC)-aligned factions to increase their cooperation and coordination with forces currently fighting the Houthis in the area.
2. Saudi aircraft simultaneously provided close air support to aid the Yemeni government-aligned forces' counterattack by targeting Houthi frontline units in Madaribah wa al Arah District and Houthi logistics necessary to sustain Houthi operations in the area. Saudi aircraft targeted Houthi forces and materiel in al Turbah, southern Taiz Governorate, a key staging area for the Houthis that is located about 30 kilometers north of al Majza.
3. The Iraqi federal government began a highly circumscribed investigation into Kataib Hezbollah's involvement in oil smuggling in Jurf al Sakhr, Babil Province, on November 13. An Iraqi federal government investigation committee conducted a field inspection of Kataib Hezbollah's Jurf al Sakhr stronghold on November 13, according to multiple Iraqi media reports and footage from the area.
4. Iraqi Prime Minister Ali al Zaydi almost certainly made a deal with Iranian-backed Iraqi actors to allow an investigation of this nature as a balance between efforts to hold Iranian-backed Iraqi militias accountable and to avoid armed conflict with Kataib Hezbollah. This investigation, which appears to be highly coordinated with the militias, follows a previous attempt by the government to enter Jurf al Sakhr without militia permission.

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Toplines

Increased cooperation among Yemeni government-aligned forces likely enabled these forces to successfully halt a Houthi offensive operation and recapture territory in southeastern Lahij Governorate. The Houthis launched a combined-arms offensive on November 11 that allowed Houthi fighters to advance approximately 12 kilometers southwest from al Majza into al Shatt and al Sarih Junction, both in Madaribah wa al Arah District, on November 12.[1] The southwest Houthi advance was part of a likely Houthi push toward Jabal Kharaz, which provides high ground from which the Houthis could threaten the Mokha-Aden ground line of communication and isolate Yemeni government-aligned forces operating on Yemen's Red Sea coast.[2]

Pervasive coordination and cooperation issues along southeastern frontlines may have enabled previous Houthi advances, such as the recent Houthi advance into al Shatt. The forces currently fighting for Yemen's internationally recognized government consist of a variety of factions with varying objectives and command structures that hamper coordination and cooperation among the fighters, particularly in southeastern Yemen, although this issue persists across the various fronts.[3] One of the more influential factions within this coalition is the Southern Transitional Council (STC), a political organization that controls some forces in the south and seeks to form an independent southern Yemeni state. STC-backed military forces in southern Yemen fight for the Yemeni government but often compete with other government-aligned forces. Some STC-backed groups reportedly refused to allow the northern Yemeni government-aligned forces withdrawing from Yemen's Red Sea coastal plain to enter Aden City in early

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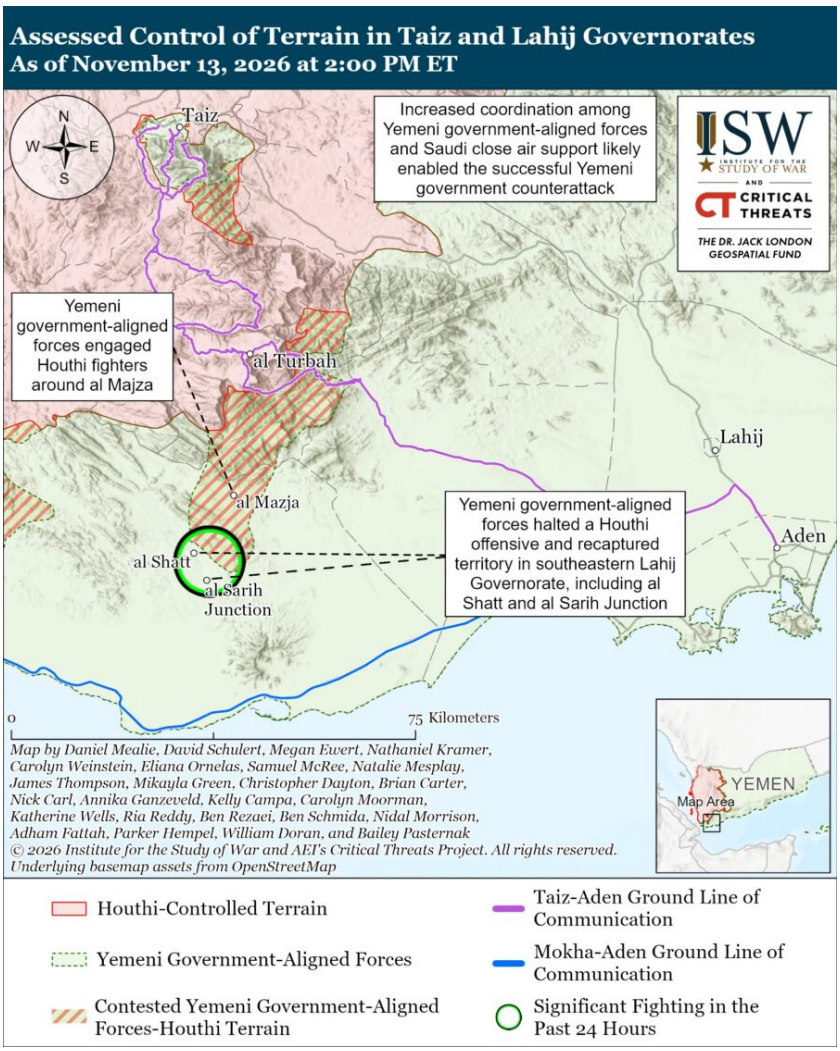
September, for example.[4] At least some STC-backed groups have more recently refused to operate outside the former borders of the Democratic People's Republic of Yemen, which includes Lahij and Aden governorates, until the Yemeni government grants the Yemeni people a referendum on southern Yemeni secession.[5]

The threat that the Houthi advance poses to southern Yemeni territory likely motivated some STC-backed groups to coordinate with the forces currently fighting against the Houthi forces in southwestern Lahij Governorate. The Support and Reinforcement Brigades, an STC-aligned faction, began to reinforce the Southern Giants Brigades and Homeland Shield Forces in southwest Lahij Governorate on November 12.[6] This marks the first time the Support and Reinforcement Brigades have deployed to the Madaribah wa al Arah front since the start of the campaign, according to an independent Yemeni journalist.[7] The Support and Reinforcement Brigades likely decided to deploy and coordinate with the Southern Giants Brigades and Homeland Shield Forces because the Houthi advances on November 12 threatened to consolidate Houthi control over territory in southern Lahij Governorate, which is part of the independent southern Yemeni state that these groups seek to form. Many Support and Reinforcement Brigades fighters, including senior commanders, are from southern Lahij Governorate and members of local Lahij-based tribes.[8] The involvement of the Support and Reinforcement Brigades likely contributed to the successful counterattack in which government forces recaptured both al Shatt and al Sarih on November 13.[9] Yemeni government-aligned forces also reportedly continued to advance and engaged Houthi fighters near al Majza later on November 13.[10]

The Yemeni government is attempting to improve coordination among Yemeni government-aligned groups by establishing a unified command structure for units operating in southwestern Yemen. A Yemeni military source said on November 12 that the Yemeni government implemented a unified joint command structure for forces currently operating in Lahij Governorate, including the Southern Giants Brigades, Homeland Shield Forces, and Support and Reinforcement Brigades, and other local groups.[11] Another independent Yemeni journalist reported on November 13 that the Yemeni government has appointed former Homeland Shield Forces Commander Bashir al Mazarbi al Shuaihi to lead the unified forces.[12] The Yemeni government has not announced Shuaihi's appointment at the time of this writing.

Saudi aircraft simultaneously provided close air support to aid the Yemeni government-aligned forces' counterattack by targeting Houthi frontline units in Madaribah wa al Arah District and Houthi logistics necessary to sustain Houthi operations in the area. Saudi aircraft targeted Houthi forces and materiel in al Turbah, southern Taiz Governorate, a key staging area for the Houthis that is located about 30 kilometers north of al Majza.[13] Saudi aircraft reportedly targeted Houthi supply lines in al Maqatirah and al Shamayatayn districts, which are also located north of al Majza and likely supported Houthi operations around al Shatt and al Sarih.[14] Saudi aircraft also targeted Houthi forces and vehicles on the frontline as Yemeni government-aligned forces, including the Southern Giants and Homeland Shield Forces, launched counterattacks against the Houthis in unspecified locations within Madaribah wa al Arah District on November 13.[15]

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The Iraqi federal government began a highly circumscribed investigation into Kataib Hezbollah's involvement in oil smuggling in Jurf al Sakhr, Babil Province, on November 13. An Iraqi federal government investigation committee conducted a field inspection of Kataib Hezbollah's Jurf al Sakhr stronghold on November 13, according to multiple Iraqi media reports and footage from the area.[16] Kataib Hezbollah has not allowed federal authorities to enter Jurf al Sakhr in over a decade.[17] The government visit follows a recently leaked, "top secret" Iraqi Interior Ministry report that revealed how Kataib Hezbollah has generated millions of dollars in illicit revenue from oil smuggling in the Jurf al Sakhr area since 2021.[18] Zaydi directed on November 13 the formation of a Jurf al Sakhr investigation committee chaired by the Kataib Hezbollah-affiliated head of the Popular Mobilization Commission's Security and Discipline Directorate and consisting of other federal government representatives.[19] The Popular Mobilization Commission is the Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF)'s administrative body.[20] Iraqi media reported that the investigation committee and a contingent of Iraqi Federal Police met with Iraqi militia members, almost certainly from Kataib Hezbollah, before the inspection.[21] The committee reportedly agreed with the militia members on the investigation's mechanisms and the "arrangement of the committee's rounds," which likely refers to how and where the committee would investigate oil smuggling in Jurf al Sakhr.[22]

Zaydi almost certainly made a deal with Iranian-backed Iraqi actors to allow an investigation of this nature as a balance between efforts to hold Iranian-backed Iraqi militias accountable and efforts to avoid armed conflict with Kataib Hezbollah. This investigation, which appears to be highly coordinated with the militias, follows a previous attempt by the government to enter Jurf al Sakhr without militia permission. Iraqi media reported that Iraqi Army, Federal Police, and Counter Terrorism

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Service units prepared on November 12 to escort an Iraqi government investigative committee into Jurf al Sakhr to inspect smuggling-related oil storage sites, tankers, and transport routes.[23] Kataib Hezbollah Secretary General Abu Hussein al Hamidawi reportedly mobilized fighters in preparation to confront Iraqi government forces and threatened to fire on any Iraqi security forces that entered Jurf al Sakhr without the militia's approval on November 12.[24] The Iraqi federal government suspended its planned operation after Iranian-backed Badr Organization head Hadi al Ameri, State of Law Coalition head Nouri al Maliki, and Interior Minister Yasser al Maliki intervened to mediate between Zaydi and Kataib Hezbollah, according to informed sources speaking to Iraqi media.[25] Hamidawi reportedly objected to Zaydi's Office of the Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces leading the original investigation instead of the PMF.[26] That the chairman of the new investigations committee is the Kataib Hezbollah-affiliated head of a PMF directorate suggests that the committee's orientation was part of the deal Zaydi made with Iranian-backed Iraqi actors.[27]

Zaydi's efforts to constrain the militias, as well as the public release of the report, probably motivated him to make a deal to conduct a highly circumscribed investigation of the area. Pressure by Iranian-backed Iraqi actors in August 2026 forced Zaydi at the time to reverse plans to enter Jurf al Sakhr, but Zaydi's more recent actions to counter militia activity, as well as domestic political pressure, appear to have changed his calculus.[28] Zaydi has taken numerous actions in recent months to constrain the Iraqi militias, including attempting to disarm them and disrupt their illicit economic activities.[29] Zaydi's actions to counter the militias are likely related to US pressure as well as his desire to increase his own personal power as prime minister, which illicit militia operations undermine. The leaked Interior Ministry report on Kataib Hezbollah oil smuggling, which has cost the government millions of dollars in revenue since 2021, included satellite imagery.[30] ISW-CTP assessed on November 10 that this suggests that the government has been monitoring activities in Jurf al Sakhr for years.[31] Parliament also created a committee to investigate militia oil smuggling in Jurf al Sakhr following the release of the report, which also likely motivated Zaydi to follow through with the investigation.[32]

Kataib Hezbollah almost certainly only allowed the investigation committee into specific areas in Jurf al Sakhr that would not further incriminate the militia. A Babil provincial council member said on November 13 that the investigation committee completed their preliminary investigations but will return soon to collect more information.[33] The provincial council member added that no actors objected to or obstructed the committee's preliminary work.[34] Hamidawi had publicly objected to the original investigation committee's refusal to disclose the sites to be investigated.[35] Kataib Hezbollah's eventual support for the investigation committee entering Jurf al Sakhr suggests that the militia received advance notice of where the committee would inspect and that the committee did not receive full access to the area. The provincial council member also said that the investigation committee had to take extra precautions because of mines and war remnants from the Islamic State of Iraq and al Sham (ISIS) in parts of Jurf al Sakhr.[36] Kataib Hezbollah has commonly used this excuse to deny the federal government access to the area and to keep Sunni internally displaced persons (IDPs) from returning to Jurf al Sakhr.[37]

Zaydi also appeared to increase security precautions in and around Baghdad on November 13 in preparation for potential retaliation by Iranian-backed Iraqi militias for government pressure against them. A security source told Iraqi media that all Iraqi military units were on the highest level of military alert in preparation for dealing with a security emergency.[38] Iraqi authorities reportedly inspected people and vehicles entering Baghdad from any direction.[39] Iraqi media also posted footage that purportedly showed a Counter Terrorism Service deployment to the Green Zone, which hosts the US Embassy in Baghdad and other Iraqi federal government buildings.[40] The Iraqi militias and their supporters have historically launched protests in Baghdad, which have sometimes sparked attacks against Iraqi security forces, when the Iraqi federal government acts against militia

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interests.[41]

US and Partner Military Operations

Nothing significant to report.

Iranian Strike Campaign

Assessed Iranian War Aims:

- *Secure international recognition of Iranian control over the Strait of Hormuz*
- *Degrade the US ability and willingness to continue the war*
- *Restore deterrence vis-*à *-vis the United States and its regional partners*
- *Divide the United States and Israel from the Arab states*

Iranian forces targeted US radar infrastructure in Bahrain on November 13, likely to degrade US regional air defense capabilities in retaliation for recent US strikes on Iranian coastal infrastructure.[42] The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) Aerospace Force claimed on November 13 that its forces destroyed a US early warning radar in Bahrain in retaliation for a US airstrike on a telecommunications tower in Sirik, Hormozgan Province.[43] US Central Command (CENTCOM) confirmed on November 13 that Iran launched two drones toward Bahrain but added that US forces intercepted both drones.[44] Iran likely targeted the early warning radar to degrade the United States' ability to detect incoming projectiles and protect fixed targets in Bahrain. This attack is notably the first time that IRGC forces have claimed a strike against a land-based US asset since early September 2026, when Iran launched multiple drone attacks against US bases across the Persian Gulf and Jordan.[45]

Iran also likely intended to signal to regional states and the international shipping industry that the United States cannot guarantee security from Iranian attacks. Iran has targeted US bases and energy infrastructure in regional countries throughout the war, in part, to raise the costs of supporting US forces and deter regional states from doing so.[46] The IRGC also warned international companies against "oil smuggling" and abiding by "enemy tricks" in the same statement in which it claimed the radar strike, likely referring to the US campaign to escort ships through the Strait of Hormuz.[47]

Iran's attack also comes amid continued efforts to compel the international community to recognize its control over the strait. The IRGC Navy claimed on November 13 that a liquefied gas carrier struck a naval mine and suffered major damage after attempting to transit the southern transit route, which is the route through which US forces are escorting ships.[48] ISW-CTP has previously assessed that Iranian claims of vessels striking naval mines are part of an information campaign designed to coerce ships into transiting Iranian territorial waters.[49] ISW-CTP has observed no indicators that Iran has successfully re-mined the strait.

US-Iran Negotiations

Nothing significant to report.

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Iranian Domestic Affairs

Nothing significant to report.

Lebanon

Nothing significant to report.

Iraq

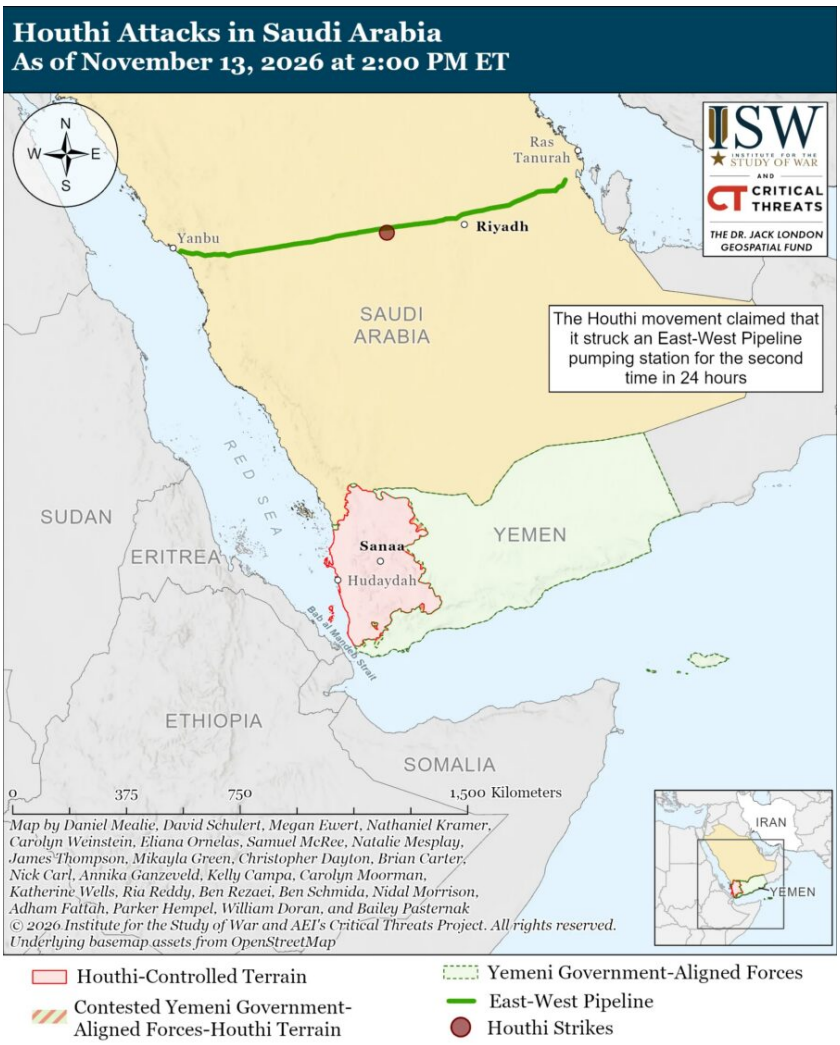
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Arabian Peninsula

The Houthi movement claimed that it struck Saudi energy infrastructure on November 13 as part of its ongoing campaign to compel Saudi Arabia to end military operations in Yemen and accept Houthi demands. Houthi military spokesperson Yahya Saree claimed on November 13 that the Houthis struck an East-West Pipeline pumping station with drones for a second time in 24 hours.[50] The Houthis have targeted and struck the East-West Pipeline on multiple occasions throughout the conflict.[51] A previous Houthi attack on the East-West Pipeline in September 2026 forced Saudi authorities to close the pipeline for approximately 11 days to conduct emergency repairs.[52] ISW-CTP cannot verify the Houthis' claims at the time of this writing. The Houthis seek to impose economic and political costs on Saudi Arabia to compel the kingdom to meet Houthi demands, such as recognizing Houthi sovereignty in Yemen, lifting Saudi controls on Houthi-controlled ports and airports, and granting the Houthis control over Yemen's oil and gas resources.[53]

Saudi Joint Forces Command Spokesperson Major General Turki al Maliki separately announced on November 12 that Saudi air defenses intercepted a Houthi drone near Riyadh and two Houthi drones in the Eastern Province.[54] The Saudi Civil Defense also issued an early warning alert in Jazan Province on November 13.[55] The Houthis have not claimed these attacks as of this writing.

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[55] https://x.com/SaudiDCD/status/21212518670786683 59?a=EvBOrUvrZWME07sKa3I&s=20

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Iran Update, November 14, 2026

Parker Hempel, Ben Rezaei, Carolyn Moorman, Kelly Campa

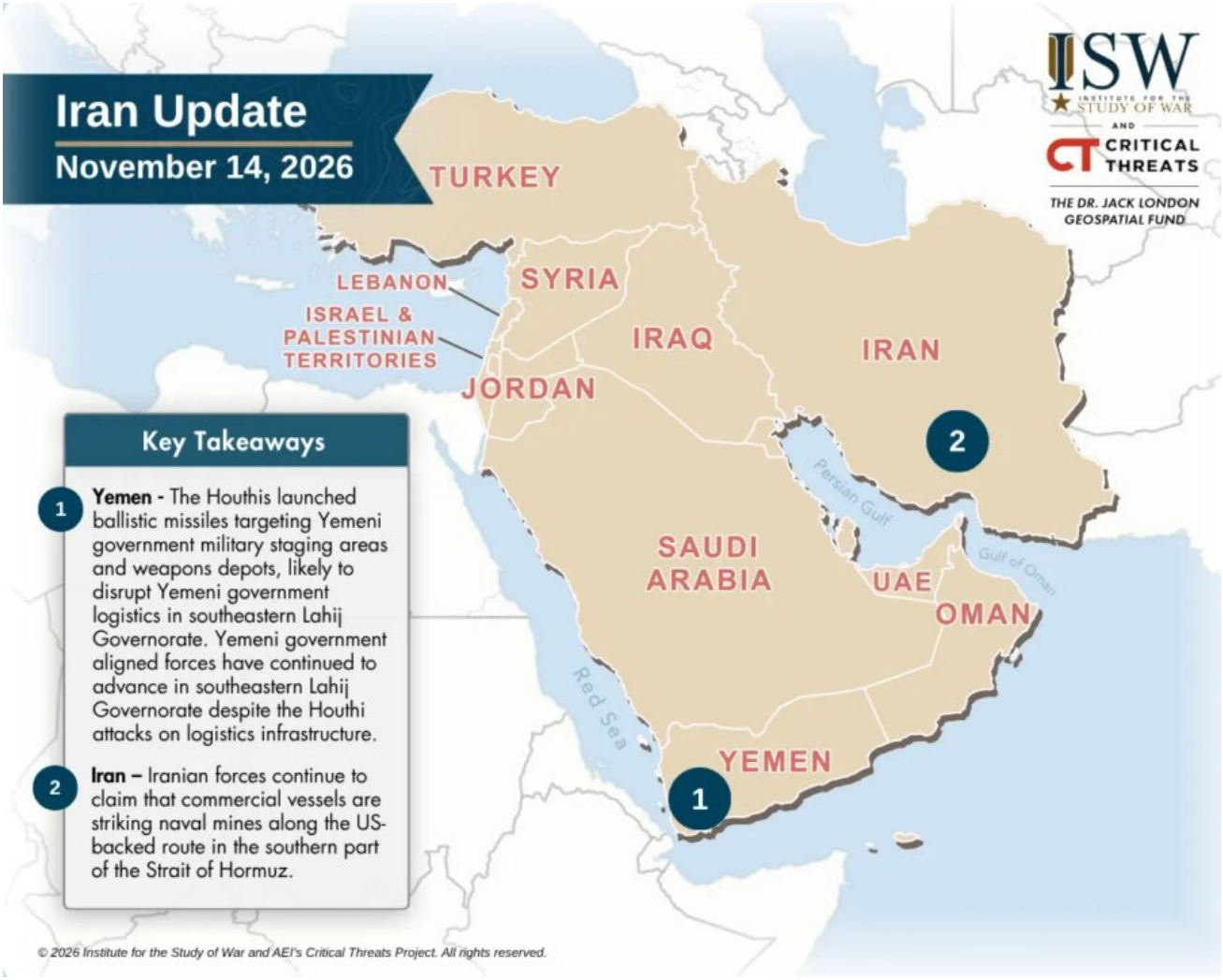
Analyst Notes: Data Cutoff: 2:00 PM ET

The Institute for the Study of War (ISW) and The Critical Threats Project (CTP) at the American Enterprise Institute are publishing updates Monday through Friday to provide analysis on the war with Iran and the broader Middle East. Weekday updates cover events from the past 24-hour period, whereas weekend updates are abbreviated and cover the Houthi-Saudi conflict and major breaking developments related to the war with Iran.

Key Takeaways

1. The Houthis launched ballistic missiles targeting Yemeni government-aligned forces' military staging areas and weapons depots in Lahij and Aden governorates, likely to disrupt logistics that support Yemeni government forces in southeastern Lahij Governorate.
2. Yemeni government-aligned forces have continued to recapture territory and advance in southeastern Lahij Governorate despite the Houthi attacks on logistics infrastructure, however.
3. Saudi aircraft continued to provide close air support to aid Yemeni government-aligned forces' counterattacks by targeting Houthi frontline units in Madaribah wa al Arah District and Houthi logistics necessary to sustain Houthi operations in the area.
4. Iranian naval forces continue to claim that commercial vessels are striking naval mines along the US-backed route in the southern part of the Strait of Hormuz, likely to undermine ship operators' confidence in US escort operations and compel vessels to transit through Iranian territorial waters.

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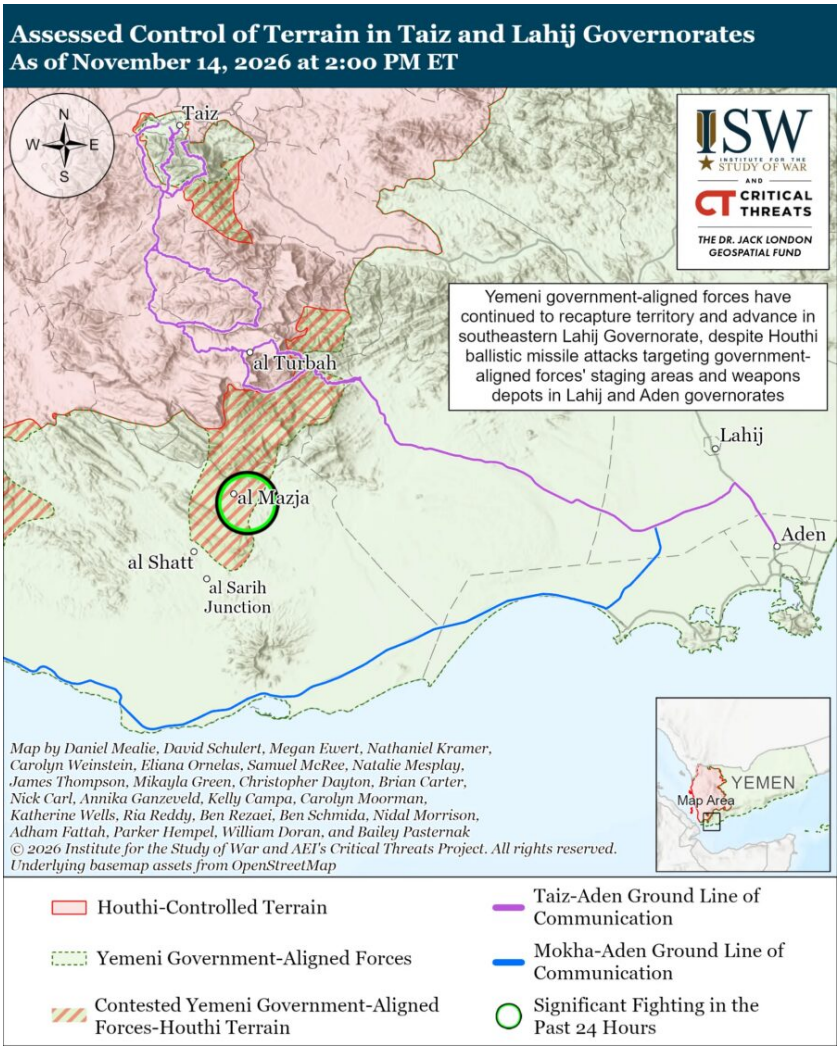
Toplines

The Houthis launched ballistic missiles targeting Yemeni government-aligned forces' military staging areas and weapons depots in Lahij and Aden governorates, likely to disrupt logistics that support government forces in southeastern Lahij Governorate. The Houthi movement claimed that it launched multiple ballistic missile salvos targeting Yemeni government-aligned reinforcements located at two staging areas at Jabal Kharaz and Khor Amira in Madaribah wa al Arah District, southern Lahij Governorate, on November 13 and 14.[1] The Houthis previously targeted government-aligned forces' staging areas in Kharaz on November 12.[2] The Yemeni government-aligned Southern Giants Brigades, Homeland Shield Forces, and Support and Reinforcement Brigades are fighting against the Houthis in this region.[3] Yemeni government-aligned forces are likely using these southern Lahij Governorate staging areas to supply and reinforce offensive operations against Houthi forces in southeastern Lahij Governorate.[4] The Houthis also launched missiles at Aden City on November 13, claiming to target Yemeni government weapons depots, likely in an effort to further disrupt Yemeni government supply and reinforcement efforts for Yemeni government-aligned forces in neighboring Lahij Governorate.[5]

Yemeni government-aligned forces have continued to recapture territory and advance in southeastern Lahij Governorate despite the Houthi attacks on logistics infrastructure.[6] The Southern Giants Brigades posted footage on November 13 that showed Houthi fighters withdrawing from engagements with Giants Brigades fighters in Madaribah wa al Arah District.[7] Official Southern Transitional Council media

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reported on November 13 that Yemeni government-aligned forces were consolidating control over recently captured territory, including the Sarih junction in Madaribah wa al Arah District, which Yemeni government-aligned forces recaptured from the Houthis earlier on November 13.[8]



Saudi aircraft continued to provide close air support to aid Yemeni government-aligned forces' counterattacks by targeting Houthi frontline units in Madaribah wa al Arah District and Houthi logistics necessary to sustain Houthi operations in the area. Saudi aircraft struck Houthi commanders, fighters, and vehicles on the frontline in Lahij Governorate, according to Yemeni government-aligned forces' media on November 14.[9] Saudi aircraft also continued to target Houthi reinforcements moving south from al Turbah, southern Taiz Governorate, which is a key staging area for the Houthis operating further south in Majza. Yemeni government-aligned forces and Houthi fighters have fought in Majza, which is about 30 kilometers south of al Turbah, since November 13.[10] Saudi aircraft have repeatedly struck Houthi supply lines and reinforcements that have likely supported Houthi operations in Madaribah wa al Arah District since November 12.[11] These strikes come amid Houthi attempts to deploy a "large" number of reinforcements from al Shamayatayn District, Taiz Governorate, south to reinforce Houthi fighters in Madaribah wa al Arah District, according to an independent Yemeni journalist on November 14.[12]

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US and Partner Military Operations

Nothing significant to report.

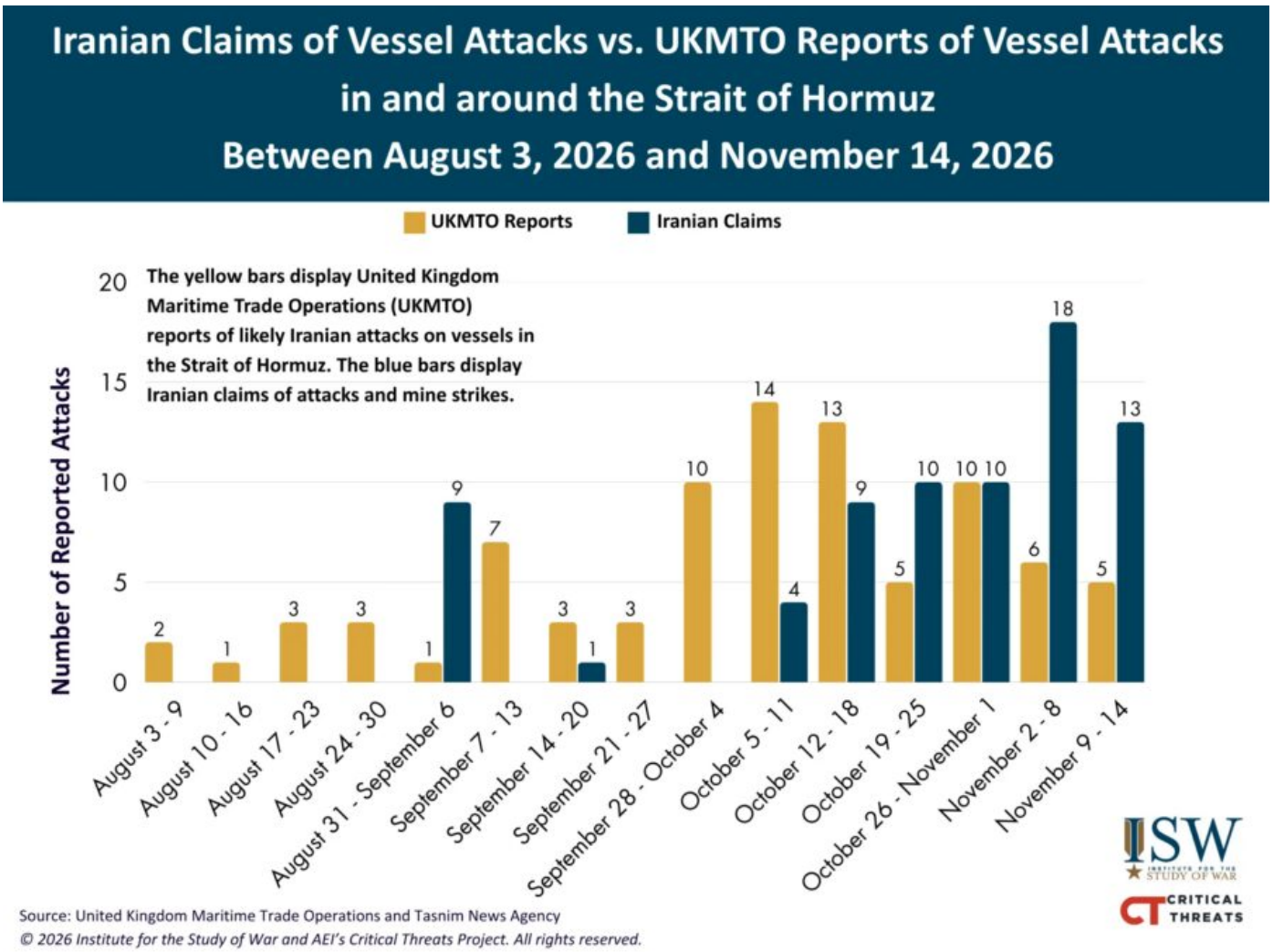
Iranian Strike Campaign

Assessed Iranian War Aims:

- *Secure international recognition of Iranian control over the Strait of Hormuz*
- *Degrade the US ability and willingness to continue the war*
- *Restore deterrence vis-*à *-vis the United States and its regional partners*
- *Divide the United States and Israel from the Arab states*

Iranian naval forces continue to claim that commercial vessels are striking naval mines along the US-backed route in the southern part of the Strait of Hormuz, likely to undermine ship operators' confidence in US escort operations and compel vessels to transit through Iranian territorial waters. The Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) Navy claimed on November 13 that a liquefied gas carrier transiting with a US fighter jet escort and two oil tankers struck mines and exploded or caught fire while using "unauthorized routes" to transit through the Strait of Hormuz.[13] The IRGC and Artesh have recently started to note in their claims of vessels hitting mines that the vessels were allegedly under US escort, likely to try to reinforce Iran's information operation to discredit US escort operations.[14] The Artesh Navy separately claimed on November 14 that another oil tanker struck a mine and caught fire east of the strait.[15] Iran regularly issues these "updates" about vessels hitting naval mines in order to portray the southern route as persistently unsafe even when Iranian forces do not conduct visible attacks.[16] US Central Command announced on August 27 that US forces had completely demined the strait.[17] ISW-CTP has not observed any indicators that Iran has successfully re-mined the southern route.

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US-Iran Negotiations

Nothing significant to report.

Iranian Domestic Affairs

Nothing significant to report.

Lebanon

Nothing significant to report.

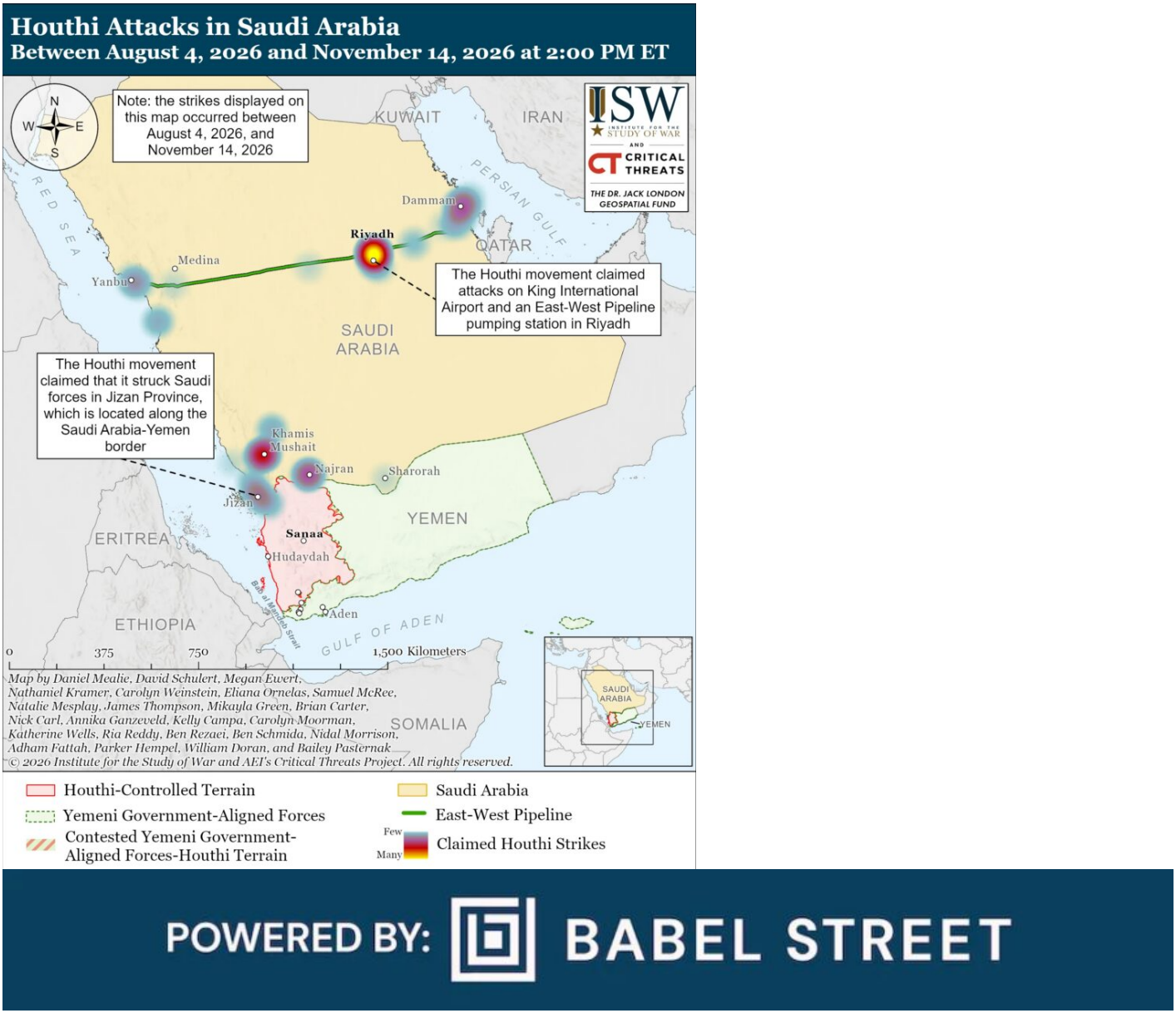
Iraq

Nothing significant to report.

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Arabian Peninsula

The Houthi movement claimed that it struck Saudi critical infrastructure and a military site on November 13 as part of the ongoing Houthi campaign to compel Saudi Arabia to end military operations in Yemen and accept Houthi demands.[18] The Houthi movement claimed that it launched drones targeting the King Khalid International Airport and an East West Pipeline pumping station in Riyadh.[19] The Houthi movement also claimed that it struck Saudi forces located in Tuwaal District, Jizan Province, which is along the Saudi Arabia-Yemen border.[20] Saudi Arabia separately intercepted Houthi drones near Riyadh and southern Saudi Arabia on November 14.[21] The Houthis seek to impose economic and political costs on Saudi Arabia to compel the kingdom to meet Houthi demands, such as recognizing Houthi sovereignty in Yemen, lifting Saudi controls on Houthi-controlled ports and airports, and granting the Houthis control over Yemen's oil and gas resources.[22]



Endnotes

[1] https://t.me/army21ye/4076 ; https://t.me/army21ye/4080
[2] https://t.me/army21ye/4062 ;

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https://understandingwar.org/research/middle-east/iran-update-november-12-2026/
[3] https://understandingwar.org/research/middle-east/iran-update-november-13-2026/
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https://x.com/alamalikah/status/2121378082770546688
[5] https://t.me/army21ye/4075 ; https://www.sabanew dot net/story/ar/155765
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[15] https://t.me/Tasnimnews/458707
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[19] https://t.me/army21ye/4079 ; https://t.me/army21ye/4078
[20] https://t.me/army21ye/4078
[21] https://x.com/CJFCSpox/status/2121590530090131828
[22] https://understandingwar.org/research/middle-east/iran-update-november-9-2026/ ;
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