

IRAN UPDATE SPECIAL REPORT



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June 18, 2025, Information Cutoff: 5:00 PM ET

The Critical Threats Project (CTP) at the American Enterprise Institute and the Institute for the Study of War (ISW) are publishing multiple updates daily to provide analysis on the war with Iran. The morning update will focus on the exchange of fire between Iran and Israel. The evening update will be more comprehensive, covering events over the past 24-hour period and refining items discussed in the morning update.

Key Takeaways

- Iranian Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei rejected the call from US President Donald Trump for Iran's "unconditional surrender." Khamenei also threatened US forces if the United States joins the war against Iran.
- The so-called "Axis of Resistance" has continued to threaten retaliation if the United States joins the war against Iran. These threats have come from Hezbollah, the Houthis, and Iranian-backed Iraqi militias.
- Israeli strikes have driven Iranian forces to begin firing missiles from central Iran rather than western Iran. Iranian forces will need to use longer-range missiles to reach Israel from the launch sites in central Iran.
- Iran is struggling to coordinate large-scale missile strikes targeting Israel due to pressure from Israeli strikes. This is reflected in the volume of recent Iranian missile fire, which has decreased significantly throughout the war.
- Iranian leaders appear concerned about the potential for social unrest. They have taken precautions to protect their regime, while Israel has struck sites connected to the Iranian internal security apparatus.

Iranian Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei categorically rejected US President Donald Trump's call for Iran's "unconditional surrender" and threatened to target the United States if the United States intervenes in the Israel-Iran conflict.[1] Khamenei's statements are consistent with CTP-ISW's assessment that Iran has maintained its negotiating position on its nuclear program during the Israeli air campaign and does not yet appear willing to negotiate an end to the Israel-Iran War.[2] Khamenei delivered a televised speech on June 18 in which he stated that Iran "will not surrender to anyone in the face of imposition." [3] Trump called for Iran's "unconditional surrender" in a social media post on June

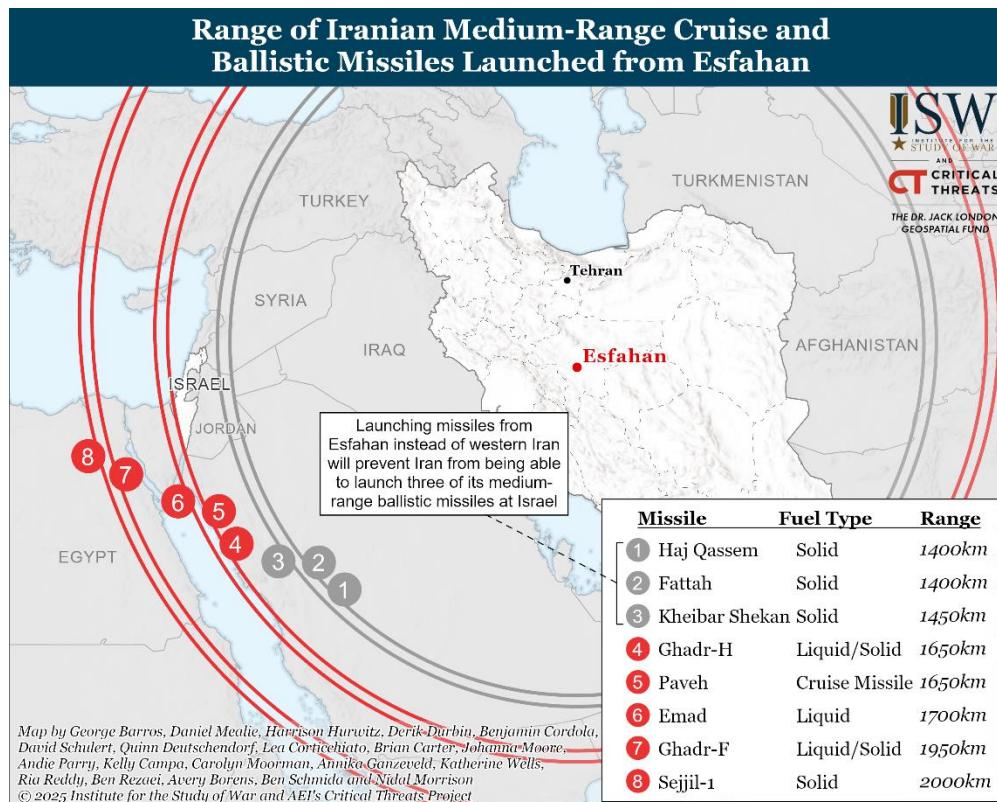
17.[4] Khamenei described Trump’s comments as “unacceptable” and “unwise.”[5] Khamenei also warned that US involvement in the conflict will “undoubtedly cause irreparable damage to [the United States].”[6] The United States is currently deploying additional assets to the Middle East to “provide options to defend US assets and interests.”[7]



Iranian **Offensive** **Capabilities:**

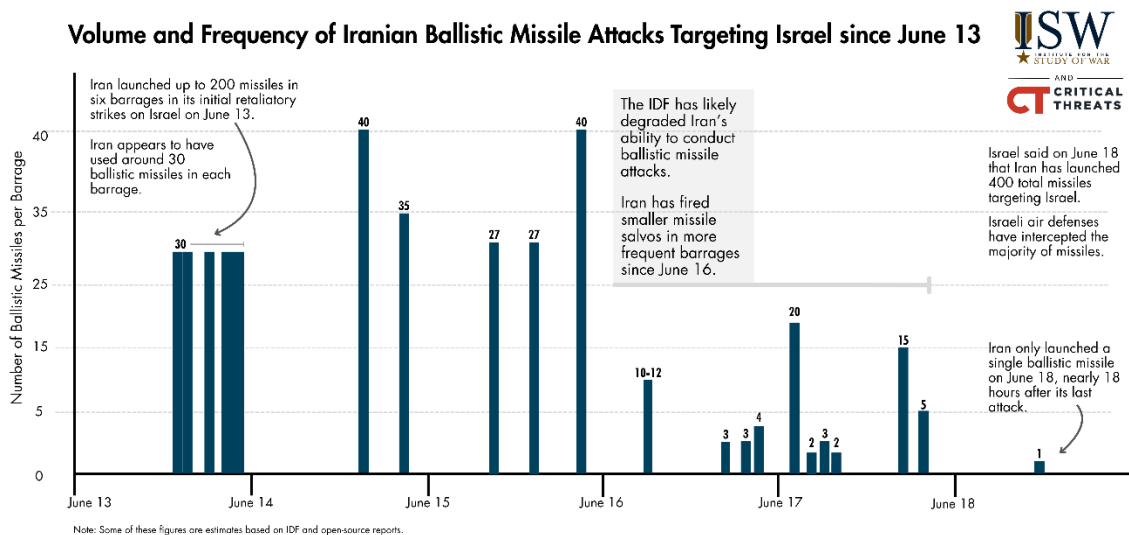
Israeli airstrikes in western Iran since June 12 have degraded Iran’s ability to conduct attacks against Israel from that region and have reportedly forced Iran to relocate forces to central Iran. The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) reported that Israeli strikes in western Iran have forced Iranian forces to withdraw from western Iran to central Iran.[8] The IDF said that Iran has attempted to launch missiles targeting Israel from Esfahan, central Iran, after withdrawing forces from western Iran.[9] The majority of IDF strikes targeting Iranian missiles launchers since June 12 have taken place in western Iran.[10] The IDF estimated on June 17 that it has destroyed between 35 and 40 percent of Iran’s ballistic missile stockpile and around half of Iran’s ballistic missile launchers.[11]

Launching ballistic missiles from Esfahan will prevent Iran from being able to use three medium-range ballistic missiles that it has previously used to attack Israel. Esfahan is approximately 1,600 kilometers from Israeli territory. Haj Qassem (1,400-kilometer range), Fattah (1,400-kilometer range), and Kheibar Shekan (1,450-kilometer range) ballistic missiles cannot reach Israel from Esfahan due to their shorter ranges.[12] Iran has claimed to use all three of these missiles in its recent retaliatory attacks against Israel.[13] Iranian ballistic missiles capable of reaching Israel from Esfahan include the Emad (1,700-kilometer range), Ghadr (1,950-kilometer range), and Sejil-1 (2,000-kilometer range).[14] Emad and Ghadr missiles use liquid fuel, which is extremely volatile and challenging to transport.[15] Iran used Emad and Ghadr missiles in its April and October 2024 attacks on Israel and has used these missiles in its retaliatory attacks against Israel in recent days. Iran reportedly used a Sejil-1 missile to attack Israel for the first time on June 18.[16] Iran’s use of the Sejil-1 missile for the first time may reflect Iran’s need to launch longer-range missiles from deeper inside Iranian territory.



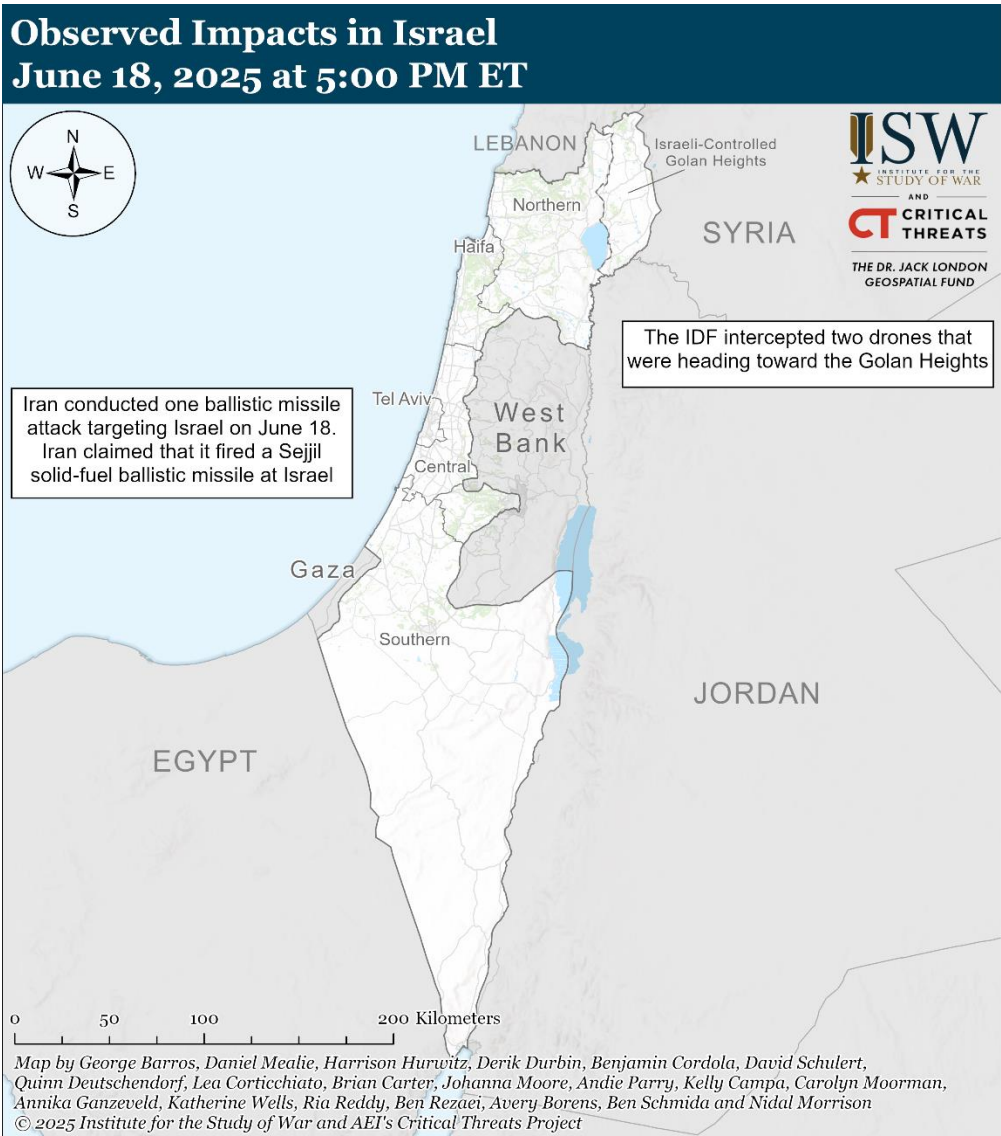
The IDF assessed that Iran has recently used fewer missiles to attack Israel because it is having difficulty coordinating large attacks on Israel, not because Iran is conserving its remaining ballistic missile stockpile. This assessment highlights how Israeli airstrikes have significantly degraded Iran's ballistic missile capabilities.[17] Iranian missile barrages have decreased in size since the beginning of the Israel-Iran conflict on June 12 from approximately 40 missiles per barrage to only a handful of missiles per barrage, according to an Israeli military correspondent.[18] The IDF's assessment is consistent with the IDF's recent statement that it has destroyed around half of Iran's ballistic missile launchers.[19] Iranian leaders would likely only choose to expend their remaining missile stockpile if they viewed the current conflict with Israel as an existential threat. The IDF has also targeted Iranian ballistic missile production sites to prevent Iran from being able to replenish its dwindling stockpile. Iranian ballistic missile attacks since June 15 have not caused any injuries or deaths.[20] Iranian attacks before June 15 killed 24 Israeli citizens.[21] The Israeli Home Front Command changed its civil defense policy on June 18 to allow limited gatherings, which may reflect reduced Israeli concern about Iran's ability to conduct damaging and lethal attacks.[22]

CTP-ISW has recorded 39 reported or confirmed Iranian ballistic missile or interceptor impacts on Israel since the start of the Israeli air campaign on June 12.



Iran has conducted one ballistic missile attack targeting Israel since CTP-ISW's 6:00 AM ET data cutoff on June 18.[23] Israeli air defense systems intercepted a single missile launched from Iran, according to an Israeli military correspondent.[24] The ballistic missile was reportedly a Sejil a solid-fuel missile.[25] This attack marks the first time that Iran has used the Sejil missile, according to Iranian media.[26]

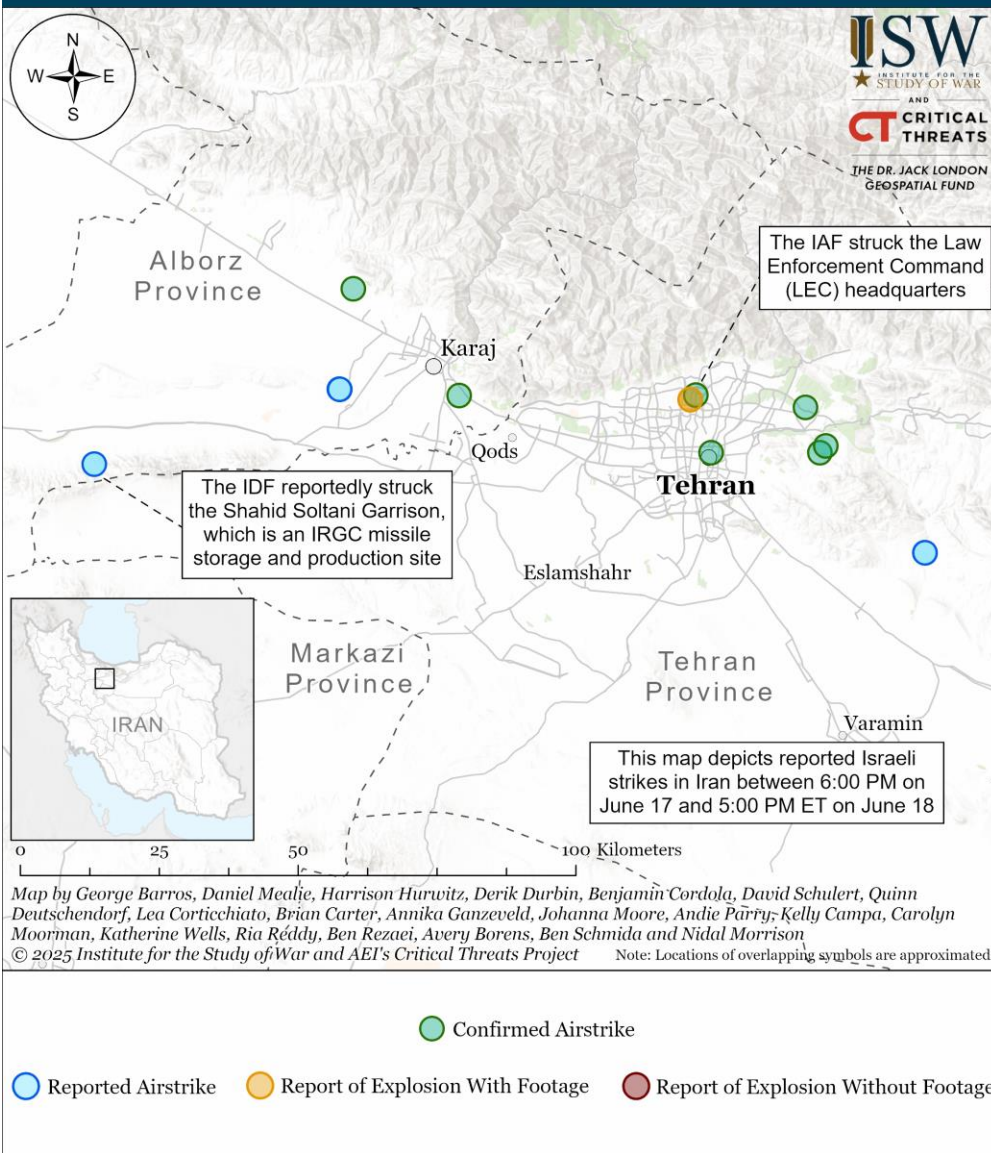
The IDF has intercepted two drones targeting Israel since CTP-ISW's 6:00 AM ET data cutoff on June 18.^[27] The IDF intercepted an Iranian drone over the southern Syrian town of Qarqas that was heading toward the Golan Heights.^[28] The IDF reported that it intercepted another drone that was also heading toward the Golan Heights.^[29] The IDF stated that Iran has launched approximately 1,000 drones targeting Israel since the start of the Israel-Iran conflict on June 12. Israeli air defense systems intercepted 200 of the drones in Israeli airspace while the other 800 drones did not enter Israeli airspace..^[30]



Israeli Strikes on Iranian Military Facilities:

The IDF has continued to target Iranian military infrastructure across Iran since CTP-ISW's last data cutoff at 6:00 AM ET on June 18. The Israeli Air Force (IAF) reportedly struck the Shahid Soltani Garrison near Eshtehard, Alborz Province.^[31] The Shahid Soltani Garrison is an Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) missile storage and production site that reportedly houses Shahab-3, Qiam, Fateh, and Fath ballistic missiles.^[32] The IAF also reportedly struck the IRGC Ground Forces 29th Nabi Akram Operational Division in Kermanshah Province and the Parchin Military Complex in eastern Tehran.^[33] The IDF previously struck the Parchin Military Complex on June 12, 15, and 16.^[34] Iran has used the site to develop and manufacture explosive materials and advanced munitions, including ballistic missiles.^[35]

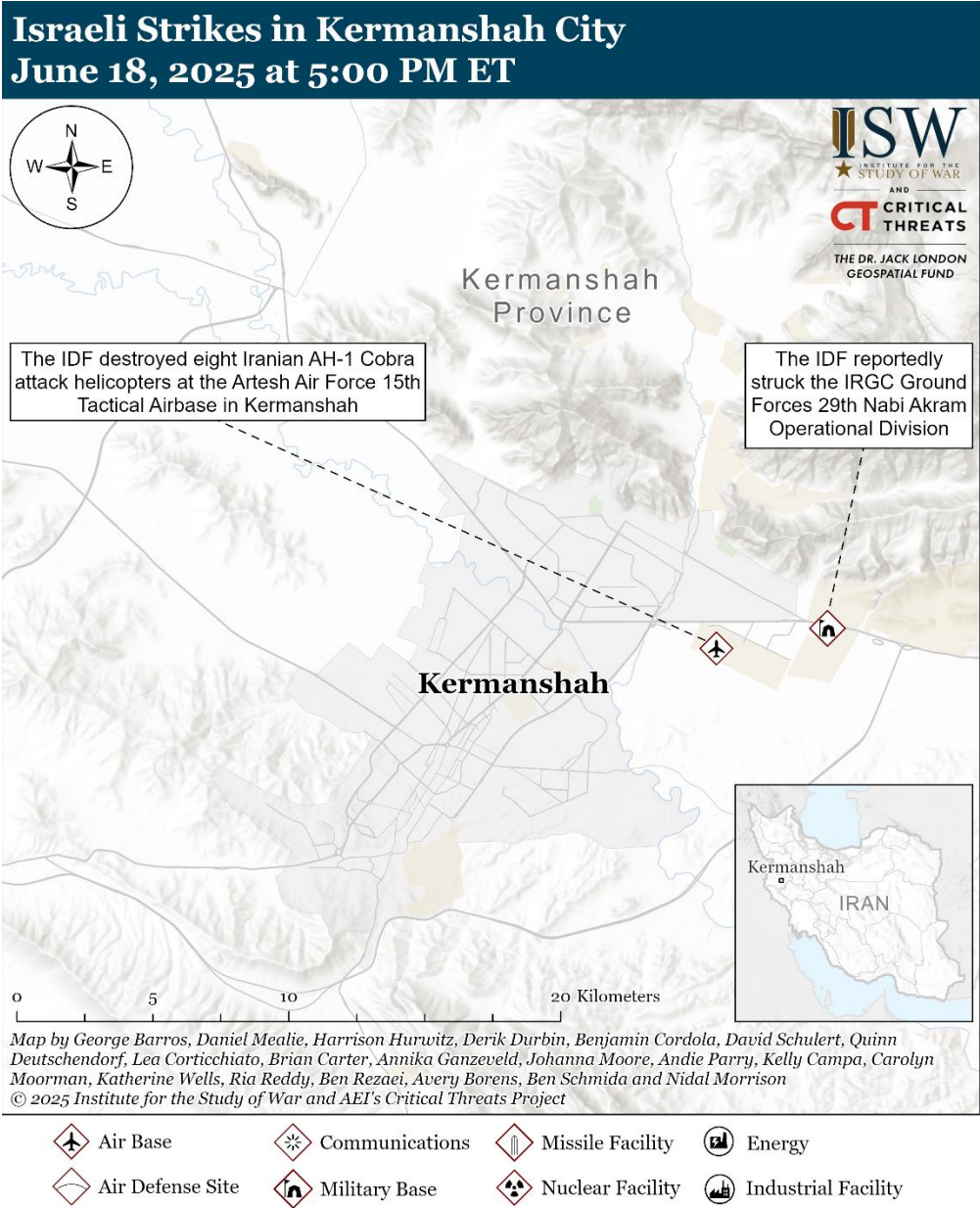
Israeli Strikes in Tehran and Alborz Provinces June 18, 2025 at 5:00 PM ET



The IAF also reportedly targeted the Persian Resources Research Center in Zanjan City, Zanjan Province, on June 18.[36] The Persian Resources Research Center produces metallic powders and nano powders, including aluminum, magnesium, zinc, and carbon black.[37] Aluminum can be used to produce centrifuge rotors, which are essential for uranium enrichment.[38] Several of these minerals, such as magnesium, can also be used to manufacture various types of military equipment, including aircraft engines, protective gear, and communication systems.[39] It is unclear whether this research center had any direct ties to the Iranian military or nuclear program, however.

Israeli airstrikes have destroyed Iranian aircraft that could try to challenge Israeli air superiority. Commercially available satellite imagery captured on June 17 shows that Israeli airstrikes destroyed an Iranian KC-707 aerial refueling aircraft at the Artesh Air Force 14th Tactical

Airbase in Mashhad, Khorasan Razavi Province. The IAF also destroyed eight Iranian AH-1 Cobra attack helicopters at the Artesh Air Force 15th Tactical Airbase in Kermanshah on June 18.[40] The IDF said that Iran intended to use the helicopters to attack IAF aircraft operating in Iranian airspace.[41] Iran maintains other aerial assets despite these airstrikes. Commercially available satellite imagery captured on June 17 shows several undamaged Shahed-136 drones and F-5 fighter aircraft at an airbase in Dezful, Khuzestan Province.



Israeli Strikes on the Iranian Nuclear Program:

CTP-ISW has not observed any new Israeli airstrikes targeting Iran's nuclear program or new damage to nuclear sites that the IDF previously targeted since CTP-ISW's last data cutoff at 6:00 AM ET on June 18.

Iranian

Regime

Stability:

The Iranian regime appears to be very concerned about internal unrest. An internet monitoring group reported a “near-total internet blackout” across Iran on June 18. The internet disruption has caused many Iranian media outlets to go offline, which limits the amount of information coming from the Iranian domestic information space.[42] The regime has also arrested several individuals whom it claims are “Mossad spies” since the start of the Israeli air campaign on June 12, which further illustrates the regime’s growing paranoia about infiltration and heightened concern about internal security threats.[43] The Iranian Parliament passed a bill on June 17 that imposes harsher penalties on individuals who cooperate with “hostile” foreign governments, almost certainly referring to Israel and the United States.[44] The bill defines “cooperation” broadly, including actions such as sending videos or images to foreign media networks that might “weaken public morale or create division.”[45]

Iran has likely taken these steps to crack down on any potential internal unrest and threats to regime stability that Israel's ongoing air campaign against Iran could incite. CTP-ISW previously assessed that Israeli airstrikes on Iran's energy infrastructure will likely worsen Iran's ongoing energy crisis by causing more frequent electricity shortages.[46] Iranians have previously protested against the regime in response to energy shortages and blackouts.[47] Israeli airstrikes have also damaged water infrastructure in northern Tehran, which has led to disruptions in the local water supply. Israeli strikes will also likely impact Iran's already struggling economy, which could stoke internal unrest. The Iranian rial has depreciated by 116,000 rials to one US dollar since the start of the Israeli air campaign on June 12. Reuters reported on June 17 that Iranian oil exports have nearly come to a halt, with a projected 94 percent decline by the end of the week.[48] Residents in Tehran told Iranian opposition media on June 18 that the regime reportedly deployed riot police to Tehran, which underscores the regime's concern about the possibility of internal unrest amid the Israeli air campaign.[49]

The IDF has continued to target the Iranian internal security apparatus. The IAF struck the Law Enforcement Command (LEC) Headquarters in Tehran City on June 18.[50] Israeli Defense Minister Israel Katz stated that the IAF “destroyed” Iran's “central repressive arm.”[51] The IAF previously struck the LEC Headquarters on June 15.[52] The LEC has many subordinate units, including the Prevention and Operations Police, which commands law enforcement stations across Iran, and Special Units, a highly trained, anti-riot force that deploys when regular police cannot contain civil disorder.[53] Disruption to institutions like the LEC could degrade the regime's ability to maintain internal security and social control. The IAF also reportedly conducted new airstrikes targeting the

Shahid Meisami Group in Karaj, Alborz Province.[54] The IAF previously targeted the Shahid Meisami Group on June 16.[55] The United States sanctioned the Shahid Meisami Group in December 2020 for testing and producing chemical agents for use as incapacitation agents.[56] Iran has previously used pharmaceutical-based agents to suppress internal dissent.[57]

Two anti-regime hacker groups conducted cyber attacks on June 18 that targeted Iranian financial and media institutions. Gonjeshke Darande (Predatory Sparrow) targeted Iranian cryptocurrency exchange company Nobitex, "burning" over \$90 million of Nobitex holdings.[58] Gonjeshke Darande is a pro-Israel hacker group that has conducted cyber attacks targeting Iranian infrastructure since at least 2021.[59] Gonjeshke Darande claimed that Nobitex enabled the Iranian regime to bypass sanctions and finance the Axis of Resistance.[60] Gonjeshke Darande recently targeted Iranian state-owned Bank Sepah on June 17.[61] The United States sanctioned Bank Sepah in November 2018 for supporting the Iranian Defense Ministry.[62] Bank Sepah users have been unable to access their accounts, process payments, or withdraw cash from ATMs since the cyber attack.[63] The IRGC Cyber Security Command claimed that it thwarted several Israeli cyber attacks on Iran's banking network on June 17.[64] The command stated that cyber attacks disrupted services at two banks.[65] The cyber attacks on Iranian financial institutions come amid already dire economic conditions in Iran. An unidentified group separately hacked Iranian state TV and broadcasted anti-government videos calling on Iranian citizens to "take to the streets." [66] Iran's Information and Communications Ministry announced a temporary restriction on internet access following the cyber attack.[67]

Axis of Resistance Response to the Israel-Iran War:

The Iranian-led Axis of Resistance has threatened to retaliate if the United States joins the Israel-Iran War. A US official speaking to Al Jazeera said that US participation in the conflict would drive Iran's proxies to attack US forces and assets in the region.[68] A senior Iranian official also told Al Jazeera that Iran would call on Lebanese Hezbollah to join the conflict if the United States becomes directly involved.[69] An Iranian-backed Iraqi militia stated on June 18 that it is prepared to "attack American bases in the event of any American aggression against Iran." [70] Iranian-backed Iraqi militias Kataib Hezbollah, Kataib Sayyid al Shuhada, Harakat Hezbollah al Nujaba, and Ansar Allah al Awfia announced on June 17 that they had developed a "joint plan" to target US forces if the United States joins the Israeli air campaign against Iran.[71] Unspecified US officials told the *New York Times* that the Houthis would "almost certainly" resume attacks against international shipping in the Red Sea if the United States attacks Iran.[72] Two Iranian officials also told the *New York Times* that Iran would attack US bases in Iraq and then target US bases in other unspecified Arab countries if the United States joins the war.[73]

The Israeli air campaign will likely have a secondary effect of weakening Iranian-backed Axis of Resistance groups. The IDF struck a site in Iran on June 18 that produced anti-tank missiles for Lebanese Hezbollah and other Axis of Resistance members.[74] Many of Hezbollah’s weapons stockpiles have been destroyed by Israeli airstrikes, seized by the Lebanese Armed Forces, or used in Hezbollah’s 2023-2024 conflict with Israel.[75] A source close to Hezbollah told a Saudi outlet that Hezbollah “will join the Israel-Iran war only if the Iranian regime starts to collapse” and that the group would use “heavy weapons” to support Iran.[76] The Hezbollah-linked source also stated that Israel’s destruction of the IRGC would mean “the end of Hezbollah.”[77] Iran, and specifically the IRGC, have tried to help Hezbollah reconstitute since the November 2024 Israel-Hezbollah ceasefire. Israel separately struck the Khojir Military Complex on June 17, as CTP-ISW reported in its June 18 morning update. Iran reportedly produced missiles at the Khojir complex for Russia, Hezbollah, and the Houthis.[78]

US	Posture	on	Iran:
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US President Donald Trump stated on June 18 that he seeks "complete victory" against Iran, which he defined as "no nuclear weapon."[79] Trump said that he doesn't “want to get involved” but he believes that Iran would use a nuclear weapon if it was allowed to obtain one.[80] Trump also said that only the US military is capable of destroying Fordow but “that doesn’t mean we are going to be doing it at all.”[81] Trump also stated on June 18 that he’s “had it” with Iran and that he was still deciding whether or not to join the Israeli air campaign.[82] The United States continues to move additional assets to the Middle East to “enhance [the United States’] defensive posture” in the region.[83] The United States will reportedly deploy the USS *Gerald R. Ford* carrier strike group to the eastern Mediterranean Sea in the next week.[84] The USS *Nimitz* carrier strike group is also en route to the Middle East from the South China Sea.[85] Flight tracking data from June 15 showed over 31 US Air Force refueling tankers, including KC-135s and KC-46s, leaving the United States toward Europe.[86] Commercially available satellite data captured on June 17 showed that unsheltered US aircraft at al Ubeid Airbase in Qatar have relocated to an unspecified location.[87]

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