

U.S. Military Operations Against Iran's Missile and Nuclear Programs

Updated October 20, 2026

On February 28, 2026, the United States and Israel [launched military operations](#) against Iran. The same day, President Donald Trump [listed](#) among the operation's objectives preventing Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapon, destroying Iran's missiles, and "[razing] their missile industry to the ground." Some Members of Congress have [questioned](#) the U.S. military operations in Iran given President Trump's [previous assertion](#) that, as a result of the June 2025 U.S.-Israeli strikes, "Iran's key nuclear enrichment facilities have been completely and totally obliterated." Other Members have [supported](#) the President's action, [citing](#) Iran's post-2025 efforts to reconstitute its nuclear program and its ballistic missile capabilities. Reports on the status of Iran's missile and drone programs vary as of October 2026 amid continued, albeit reduced, military confrontation between the United States and Iran.

Iran's Ballistic Missile and Drone Programs

Iran has developed short- and medium-range ballistic missiles, cruise missiles, and space-launch vehicles. Iran has also mass-produced various long-range one-way attack drones, such as the [Shahed-136](#), and has [provided](#) drones to Russia for use in its war in Ukraine. After Israeli strikes on Iranian missile sites in 2024 and 2025, Iran "focused on rebuilding damaged infrastructure and pursuing Russia- and China-origin systems and materials to replace equipment," according to an April 2026 U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) [assessment](#).

Beginning on February 28, 2026, [U.S. and Israeli aircraft](#) targeted [bases](#) and [equipment](#) associated with Iran's [ballistic missile program](#), including missiles Iran may have [stored](#) in [underground](#) facilities. The White House [stated](#) on April 8, after the United States and Iran agreed to a temporary ceasefire, that the operation involved strikes on "more than 450 ballistic missile targets" and "approximately 800 attack drone targets," and that "Iran's ballistic missile arsenal and production capacity has been razed." Since April, the United States has continued to target Iranian [missile](#) and [drone](#) facilities, and Iranian [ballistic missiles](#) and [drones](#) have struck U.S. and partner military and civil sites, as well as vessels in the [Strait of Hormuz](#).

DIA [assessed](#) in April 2026 that Iran "retains thousands of missiles and one-way attack UAVs that can threaten U.S. and partner forces throughout the region, despite degradations to its capabilities from both

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attrition and expenditure.” News [articles](#) in [July](#), [August](#), and [September](#), citing satellite imagery and U.S. and Israeli military and intelligence officials, stated that Iran may have begun rebuilding military infrastructure, restoring access to missile bases, and resuming missile production using stockpiled components. An Iranian official reportedly [asserted](#) in August that Iran has sufficient “stockpiles in our underground missile and drone cities” to enable continued production. Some reports have highlighted the [damage](#) to Iranian production facilities and the [difficulties](#) Iran may face in reconstituting its missile development and production capability.

Iran’s Nuclear Program

Iran for decades has maintained a [uranium enrichment program](#). Uranium enrichment can produce both low-enriched uranium, which can be used in nuclear power reactors, and highly enriched uranium, which is one of the two types of fissile material used in nuclear weapons. Tehran asserts its enrichment program is only meant to produce fuel for peaceful nuclear applications.

Whether the U.S.-Israeli strikes since February 28 have affected Iran’s nuclear facilities is unclear. On March 4, based on analysis of satellite imagery, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) [reported](#) “no damage to facilities containing nuclear material in Iran,” but some damage “at entrances” to the Natanz enrichment facility. The agency subsequently [reported](#) that analysis of such imagery revealed “damage to additional non-nuclear-related buildings” near this facility. The IAEA, which [implements safeguards](#) on Iran’s nuclear facilities because the government is a state party to the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, withdrew inspectors from Iran in June 2025 after U.S.-Israeli airstrikes on Iranian nuclear facilities. In November 2025, Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Kazem Gharibabadi [said](#) Iran was not enriching uranium.

[The IAEA](#) has not been able to inspect the attacked Iranian nuclear facilities since the June 2025 strikes. U.S. government reports have provided differing assessments of the June 2025 strikes’ impacts. According to the 2025 U.S. National Security Strategy, the strikes “[significantly degraded](#)” Iran’s nuclear program, while the 2026 National Defense Strategy stated the strikes “[obliterated](#)” the program.

The U.S. intelligence community has for years [assessed](#) that Iran could have the capability to produce nuclear weapons at some point, but also that Tehran halted its nuclear weapons program in late 2003 and had not mastered all of the necessary technologies for building such weapons. U.S. intelligence also [assessed](#), through 2025, that Tehran had not reauthorized the development of nuclear weapons. Prior to the 2026 airstrikes, Iran “was intending to try to recover from the devastation of its nuclear infrastructure,” the 2026 Annual Threat Assessment (ATA) of the U.S. Intelligence Community [states](#). On March 2, IAEA Director General Rafael Grossi [stated](#) the agency had no evidence of “a structured [Iranian] program to manufacture nuclear weapons.”

Legislative Activity

The House Armed Services Committee (HASC), in a report accompanying the HASC-reported version of a National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2027 (H.R. 8800; H.Rept. 119-698), [directed](#) the Secretary of Defense (who is using “Secretary of War” as a “secondary title” under [Executive Order](#) 14347, dated September 5, 2025) to submit to the committee a report by February 1, 2027, on the “impact of United States military operations ... on Iran’s nuclear and missile capabilities.”

Considerations for Congress

Congress may consider assessing the status and scope of existing [reporting requirements](#) on Iran, including of [Section 1245](#) of P.L. 111-84 ([10 U.S.C. §113 note](#)), which directed the Secretary of Defense

to submit to Congress an “annual report on military power of Iran” by January 30 of each year. Congress has modified this requirement, including by directing the Secretary to provide additional information about Iran’s nuclear and drone programs (P.L. 119-60, §1222). Congress may consult that report to determine whether or not it should include additional information. Congress may consider directing the Pentagon to publish a public version of the report. Members could ask questions concerning the above topics during threat assessment hearings.

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