

Hegseth Says U.S. Attacks Intensify Under Epic Fury, While Iranian Responses Slow

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The U.S. launched strikes on Iran last week to stop the terrorist-run state from its continued and ill-advised pursuit of nuclear weapons it hopes to use to threaten the American homeland.

Nearly 11 days into Operation Epic Fury, Secretary of War Pete Hegseth says the U.S attacks continue to be strong while Iranian responses wane.

“Today will be, yet again, our most intense day of strikes inside Iran,” Hegseth said during a press briefing today at the Pentagon. “The most fighters, the most bombers, the most strikes; intelligence more refined and better than ever. So, that’s on one hand. On the other hand, the last 24 hours have seen Iran fire the lowest number of missiles they’ve been capable of firing yet.”

The secretary told journalists that much of what the Iranians are doing is lobbing missiles at their neighbors in the Middle East, making enemies of what may have once been bystanders, and launching those missiles from near their own schools and hospitals, putting innocent civilians at risk from retaliatory strikes.

“The [Iranians] are desperate and scrambling. Like the terrorist cowards they are, they fire missiles from schools and hospitals ... deliberately targeting innocents ... because they know their military is being systematically degraded and annihilated,” Hegseth said. “Iran’s neighbors and in some cases former allies in the [Persian] Gulf – they’ve abandoned

them.”

Iranian proxy groups like Hezbollah, the Houthis and Hamas are also broken, ineffective, or on the sidelines now, Hegseth said.

“Iran stands alone, and they are badly losing,” the secretary said. “On day 10 of Operation Epic Fury, we are winning with an overwhelming and unrelenting focus on our objectives.”

The secretary said that, surprisingly, Iran’s response after the initial U.S. assault was to attack its neighbors. The result of that, he said, has not been good for Iran.

“The big mistake by the Iranian regime was to start targeting its neighbors,” Hegseth said. “I think it was a demonstration of the desperation of that regime ... that they still think their pathway out is to try to alienate their Arab partners even more.”

Those neighbors, Hegseth said, have decided instead to side with the U.S.

“[They have] instead decided to come to us and have been willing to go on the offense, have been giving us access, basing and overflight in a new partnership that will continue to remake the region,” Hegseth said.

The U.S. has short-term, clearly defined goals in Iran. First, destroying Iranian missile stockpiles, missile launchers and their defense industrial base. Second, destroy the Iranian navy. And finally, permanently deny Iran the ability to have nuclear weapons.

“It’s a laser-focused maximum authority mission delivered with overwhelming and unrelenting precision,” he said.

Air Force Gen. Dan Caine, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, shared the latest tactical details of Operation Epic Fury.

“To date, [U.S. Central Command has] struck more than 5,000 targets,” Caine said. “[U.S.] Strategic Command bombers recently dropped dozens of 2,000-pound GPS penetrating weapons on deeply buried missile launchers across the southern flank.”

Also, Caine said, the U.S. struck several factories the Iranians use to make one-way attack drones.

“Alongside our regional partners along the southern flank, [we] continue to execute intercepts against one-way attack drones, using fighters and attack helicopters,” he said. “Our strikes mean we’ve made significant progress in reducing the number of missile and drone attacks out of Iran. Ballistic missile attacks continue to trend downward, 90% from where they started. And one-way attack drone [attacks] have decreased 83% since the beginning of the operation – a testament to our air defenders and our air defense systems.”

When it comes to taking out the Iranian navy, Caine said the joint force is making “substantial progress.” So far, he said, the joint force has taken out more than 50 Iranian naval ships using artillery, fighters, bombers and sea-launched missiles.

“We struck and sank an Iranian drone carrier ship, and U.S. Centcom continues today to hunt and strike mine-laying vessels and mine storage facilities,” Caine said. “This work will continue.”

The secretary and President Donald J. Trump have said Operation Epic Fury will not be a long-term, nation-building endeavor, and the secretary reiterated that today.

“This is not [an] endless nation-building ... quagmire – it’s not even close,” Hegseth said. “Our generation of soldiers will not let that happen again, and nor will this president – who very clearly ran against ... never-ending, nebulously scoped missions; those days are dead. Instead, we’re winning

decisively with brutal efficiency, total air dominance and an unbreakable will to accomplish the president's objectives on our timeline."