



| Flash |

Military Strikes on Iran – SITREP

#18: March 11, 2026

F-2026-03-11a

Classification: TLP:CLEAR

Criticality: High

Intelligence Requirements: Geopolitics

March 11, 2026

Scope Note

*ZeroFox Intelligence is derived from a variety of sources, including—but not limited to—curated open-source accesses, vetted social media, proprietary data sources, and direct access to threat actors and groups through covert communication channels. Information relied upon to complete any report cannot always be independently verified. As such, ZeroFox applies rigorous analytic standards and tradecraft in accordance with best practices and includes caveat language and source citations to clearly identify the veracity of our Intelligence reporting and substantiate our assessments and recommendations. All sources used in this particular Intelligence product were **identified prior to 4:00 AM (EST) on March 11, 2026**; per cyber hygiene best practices, caution is advised when clicking on any third-party links.*

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| Key Findings

- Iran has reportedly started mine-laying operations in the Strait of Hormuz (SoH). It is unclear how extensive the mining has been thus far, and there is a roughly even chance the mines laid on Tuesday remain inactive. In response, the U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) eliminated 16 Iranian mine-laying ships near the SoH.
- Unconfirmed reports and social media posts have claimed a Chinese vessel parked off the coast of Oman is passing targeting information to Iran. The Liowang-1 is a sophisticated spy ship capable of tracking military positions, including the electronic signatures of interceptor radars in the region.
- The Iranian regime is reportedly expanding its internal securitization and has arrested media figures and those it accuses of spying for foreign intelligence services, very likely out of paranoia over infiltration of the Islamic Republic by U.S. and Israeli intelligence.
- U.S. operations are likely to persist at least into the next week, which will continue to put upward pressure on global markets and likely lead to increased prices across multiple sectors.

| Latest Details

Iran Begins Laying Naval Mines in the Strait of Hormuz

Iran has reportedly started mine-laying operations in the SoH.¹ It is unclear how extensive the mining has been thus far, and there is a roughly even chance the mines laid on Tuesday remain inactive. The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) very likely has the ability to completely choke off SoH traffic using seaborne mines, but doing so would almost certainly cause international opinion to turn more negative against Iran. This includes Iran's ally China, which likely relies on exports from the region to maintain its industrial operations.

In response, the U.S. CENTCOM reportedly eliminated 16 Iranian mine-laying ships near the SoH.² U.S. President Donald Trump has indicated that closing the SoH via naval mines is unacceptable to the United States and its allies and that the United States will likely continue to respond immediately to any efforts by the IRGC to mine the Strait.

- The deployment of mines in the SoH is an escalatory action by Iran, but due to the small number of mines and the likely deployment of inactive mines, it is very likely a symbolic message to President Trump to imply that Tehran still controls the parameters of the conflict.

On March 10, 2026, the U.S. Navy stated the SoH remains too dangerous for transit even with military escort. It has reportedly received near-daily requests for military escort through the SoH from multiple shipping companies operating in the region, which it has had to refuse due to the heightened risk.³ The U.S. Navy assessment on the safety of the SoH almost certainly means shipping traffic will remain at a near standstill for the next several days, which will also very likely increase pressure on global markets across multiple industries.

¹ [hXXps://edition.cnn\[.\]com/2026/03/10/politics/iran-begins-laying-mines-in-strait-of-hormuz](https://edition.cnn.com/2026/03/10/politics/iran-begins-laying-mines-in-strait-of-hormuz)

² [hXXps://www.bbc\[.\]co\[.\]uk/news/live/cd70wzw9vqit](https://www.bbc.com/news/live/cd70wzw9vqit)

³

[hXXps://www.reuters\[.\]com/world/middle-east/us-navy-tells-shipping-industry-hormuz-escorts-not-possible-now-2026-03-10/](https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/us-navy-tells-shipping-industry-hormuz-escorts-not-possible-now-2026-03-10/)

Chinese Spy Ship Reported

Unconfirmed reports and social media posts have claimed a Chinese vessel parked off the coast of Oman is passing targeting information to Iran. The Liowang-1 is a sophisticated spy ship capable of tracking military positions, including the electronic signatures of interceptor radars in the region. Conflicting reports have said the Liowang-1 is currently in the Chinese port of Shanghai; however, military ship locations are often spoofed or misreported for operational security purposes, so there is a roughly even chance the vessel is indeed in the Middle East.⁴

- China is a known ally and supporter of Iran; in addition to joint military exercises, it has provided military assistance to Iran.⁵
- Additionally, Chinese targeting intelligence would very likely make Iran's drone and missile attacks in the region more accurate—including the ability to target U.S.-built Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) systems in Jordan and Saudi Arabia over the weekend. However, China is very unlikely to become directly involved militarily in the conflict and will likely only share intelligence with Iran on a very limited basis.

There is a roughly even chance that China shared targeting information for the THAAD radar strikes over the weekend, but it is very unlikely that China is providing consistent, near real-time information to Tehran. Any Chinese military vessels in the region are almost certainly there to observe the conflict and ensure the security of its investments in the Gulf. Unless a Chinese vessel is inadvertently attacked, China is almost certain to avoid direct conflict.

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[hXXps://www.timesnownews\[.\]com/world/middle-east/a-30000-ton-chinese-eye-watching-americas-war-on-iran-the-rulebook-is-in-mandarin-article-153786403](https://www.timesnownews.com/world/middle-east/a-30000-ton-chinese-eye-watching-americas-war-on-iran-the-rulebook-is-in-mandarin-article-153786403)

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[hXXps://www.aljazeera\[.\]com/features/2026/3/5/where-are-irans-allies-why-moscow-beijing-are-keeping-their-distance](https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2026/3/5/where-are-irans-allies-why-moscow-beijing-are-keeping-their-distance)

Iran Expanding Internal Security

The Iranian regime is reportedly expanding its internal securitization and has arrested media figures and those it accuses of spying for foreign intelligence services, very likely out of paranoia over infiltration of the Islamic Republic by U.S. and Israeli intelligence.⁶

- On March 10, 2026, Iran arrested 30 individuals accused of spying, as well as “media operatives,” including one foreign individual it claimed was spying for two unspecified Gulf countries.
- Iranian media also reported arrests related to alleged militant and anti-government activities along both the southeastern and northwestern border areas of Iran.⁷

The regime in Tehran is very likely worried about fractures within the government and internal security threats. The transition to a new Supreme Leader—only the second such event in the history of the Islamic Republic—combined with the ongoing conflict has almost certainly given the governing elite in Tehran a sense of unease. Additionally, past Israeli infiltration of the Iranian regime has very likely damaged Tehran’s confidence in its own security apparatus. Iran will almost certainly increase the number of arrests of individuals suspected of being spies or working against the Iranian government.⁸

Conclusion

President Trump has given conflicting assessments of when the United States might conclude operations in Iran. Initially, on March 9, 2026, he indicated the U.S.-led operation “is very complete, pretty much.” However, later on the same day, he told reporters “we’re going to go further.”⁹

If the United States attempts to end the conflict unilaterally, it will very likely leave the region in chaos—with Iran still armed, Israel still unsatisfied with the security situation, and U.S. stated objectives unmet.

⁶ [hXXps://understandingwar\[.\]org/research/middle-east/iran-update-evening-special-report-march-10-2026/](https://understandingwar.org/research/middle-east/iran-update-evening-special-report-march-10-2026/)

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸

[hXXps://iranwire\[.\]com/en/special-features/142909-the-shadow-war-how-israels-mossad-infiltrated-irans-security-apparatus/](https://iranwire.com/en/special-features/142909-the-shadow-war-how-israels-mossad-infiltrated-irans-security-apparatus/)

⁹ [hXXps://www.bbc\[.\]co\[.\]uk/news/articles/c93j2dw72q9o](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c93j2dw72q9o)

- U.S. operations are likely to persist at least into the next week, which will continue to put upward pressure on global markets and likely lead to increased prices across multiple sectors.

Appendix A: Traffic Light Protocol for Information Dissemination

	Red	Amber
WHEN SHOULD IT BE USED?	Sources may use TLP:RED when information cannot be effectively acted upon by additional parties and could lead to impacts on a party's privacy, reputation, or operations if misused.	Sources may use TLP:AMBER when information requires support to be effectively acted upon but carries risks to privacy, reputation, or operations if shared outside of the organizations involved.
HOW MAY IT BE SHARED?	Recipients may NOT share TLP:RED with any parties outside of the specific exchange, meeting, or conversation in which it is originally disclosed.	Recipients may ONLY share TLP:AMBER information with members of their own organization and its clients, but only on a need-to-know basis to protect their organization and its clients and prevent further harm. Note that TLP:AMBER+STRICT restricts sharing to the organization only.
	Green	Clear
WHEN SHOULD IT BE USED?	Sources may use TLP:GREEN when information is useful for the awareness of all participating organizations, as well as with peers within the broader community or sector.	Sources may use TLP:CLEAR when information carries minimal or no risk of misuse in accordance with applicable rules and procedures for public release.
HOW MAY IT BE SHARED?	Recipients may share TLP:GREEN information with peers and partner organizations within their sector or community but not via publicly accessible channels.	Recipients may share TLP:CLEAR information without restriction, subject to copyright controls.

Appendix B: ZeroFox Intelligence Probability Scale

All ZeroFox intelligence products leverage probabilistic assessment language in analytic judgments. Qualitative statements used in these judgments refer to associated probability ranges, which state the likelihood of occurrence of an event or development. Ranges are used to avoid a false impression of accuracy. This scale is a standard that aligns with how readers should interpret such terms.

Almost No Chance	Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Roughly Even Chance	Likely	Very Likely	Almost Certain
1-5%	5-20%	20-45%	45-55%	55-80%	80-95%	95-99%