STUDY NOTES · BASIC CONCEPT

What is Operation Epic Fury? How much has it costed the USA?

International Relations

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WHAT?

Operation Epic Fury is the official U.S. military code name for the ongoing large-scale campaign against Iran, launched on **February 28, 2026**, under the direction of President Donald J. Trump. It involves joint U.S. and partner forces (including Israel, which uses the codename Operation Roaring Lion for its portion) conducting extensive airstrikes, missile attacks, and naval operations to dismantle key elements of the Iranian regime's military capabilities.

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Key Objectives and Scope

The mission focuses on:

- Destroying Iran's offensive missile arsenal and production facilities.
- Neutralizing air defense systems, drone launch sites, and command/control infrastructure of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC).
- Eliminating naval assets (e.g., over 30 ships reported destroyed or damaged).
- Preventing Iran from developing or deploying nuclear weapons.
- Broader goals include degrading the regime's ability to sponsor terrorism and threaten regional allies.

It began with massive initial strikes (nearly 900 in the first 12 hours, escalating to thousands of targets overall), involving B-2 stealth bombers, F-22/F-35 fighters, carrier-based aircraft from groups like the USS Abraham Lincoln, Tomahawk missiles from destroyers (e.g., USS Bulkeley), and more.

This represents one of the largest concentrations of U.S. military firepower in the Middle East in recent decades. Iranian retaliatory missile and drone attacks have declined sharply (e.g., ballistic missiles down ~90%), but the

conflict remains active as of March 8, 2026, with potential for weeks or months of operations.

The Operation has seen massive expenditure in its opening phase. A detailed analysis from the **Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS)** estimates the **first 100 hours** (roughly the initial 4+ days) cost approximately **$3.7 billion**, equating to about **$891 million per day**.

Key Cost Breakdown (per CSIS estimates)

- **Munitions replacement**: ~$3.1 billion (the largest portion, unbudgeted). U.S. forces expended over **2,000 precision munitions** in the opening strikes, including expensive Tomahawk cruise missiles (~$3.6 million each), Precision Strike Missiles (PrSM—in first combat use), ATACMS rockets, and air defense interceptors (e.g., SM-2/SM-3). Air defense costs alone ranged from $1.2–3.7 billion (midpoint ~$1.7 billion used in total calc), though allied nations (Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait, UAE) intercepted many Iranian drones/missiles, easing some U.S. burden.
- **Operational costs** (air, naval, ground ops): ~$196 million total (~$125 million for air ops in first 100 hours, plus daily increases; $178 million budgeted, rest unbudgeted).
- **Combat losses and repairs** (e.g., damaged infrastructure, lost aircraft like three F-15s in a friendly fire incident): ~$350 million (unbudgeted).

Of the $3.7 billion, only a small fraction (~$200 million or so) was already in the existing Department of Defense budget. The remaining ~$3.5 billion is unbudgeted, likely requiring a supplemental appropriation from Congress or other funding mechanisms. The Pentagon may soon seek additional funds, with discussions around ramping up production via the Defense Production Act.

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