

Iran's air defense capable of destroying advanced hostile aircraft: *Commander*

International Desk

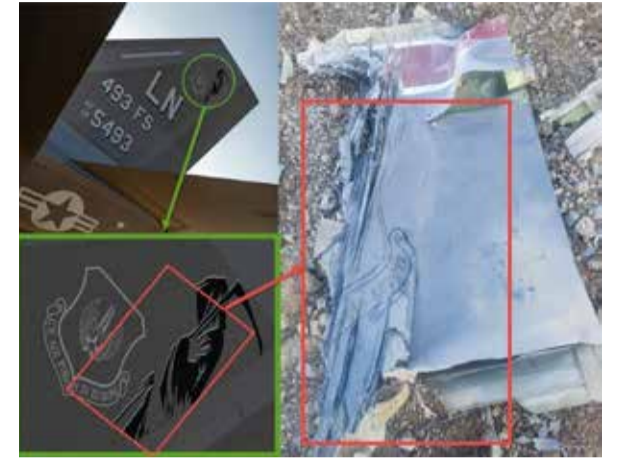
The commander of the Khatam al-Anbiya Joint Air Defense Headquarters said on Saturday that Iranian air defense systems are keeping a close eye on the enemies' fighter jets and drones, emphasizing they are fully capable of tracking and destroying advanced hostile aircraft by means of homegrown capabilities. "The latest successes are indebted to the strenuous efforts and self-sacrifices made by personnel of Ira-

nian air defense units, particularly those of the Army and the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC), across the Islamic Republic," Brigadier General Alireza Elhami said. He added that Iranian air defense forces have managed to intercept and shoot down a number of hostile fighter jets, besides more than 160 unmanned aircraft, including MQ-9 Reaper, Hermes, LUCAS, and other types, before they could carry out any strikes. Since the beginning of the aggression, Iranian forces

have managed to inflict significant damage on US and Israeli military forces. The Associated Press reported that Iran's downing of two US military aircraft has dealt a rare blow to the United States in the past 24 years, demonstrating that despite US President Donald Trump's claim of having "completely destroyed" Iran's defensive capabilities, the country still retains the ability to retaliate. Chief Commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Quds Force

Brigadier General Esmail Qaani also said on Saturday that "all American terrorists" will ultimately flee the region in the same way the USS Gerald R. Ford commander fled the Red Sea in the face of Iranian retaliatory strikes. In a post on his X account, Qaani said that the aircraft carrier USS Gerald R. Ford was forced to retreat from the Red Sea due to fear of Yemeni forces. The USS Gerald R. Ford, the US Navy's newest and most advanced aircraft carrier, had been sent to

West Asia to take part in the US-Israeli aggression against Iran. Meanwhile, the IRGC said on Saturday that it targeted the Israeli regime's industrial and military sites, as well as locations hosting commanders and army units, in the 94th wave of Operation True Promise 4. According to the statement, ballistic missiles and heavy solid- and liquid-fuel projectiles, including Khorramshahr, Kheibar Shekan, and Emad missiles, as well as suicide drones, were used in the strikes.



The remains of an advanced American fighter jet shot down by the IRGC in the sky over central Iran on April 3, 2026
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Minister: Attacking over 30 universities in era of human rights, int'l law 'unbelievable'

International Desk

Iran's Minister of Science, Research and Technology Hossein Simaei Sarraf strongly condemned recent attacks by the United States and the Israeli regime on Iranian universities and research centers, labeling them a blatant violation of international law and a crime against humanity.

He told reporters on Saturday that over 30 universities across the country have been directly targeted in the US and Israeli attacks on Iran. Simaei Sarraf made the remarks on Saturday following an attack by Israel on the laser and plasma research center at Tehran's Shahid Beheshti University. He added that Tehran's University of Science and Technology and Isfahan University of Technology, among others, were also subjected to "brutal attacks" in recent weeks. "According to international documents, attacks on these scientific infrastructures are not only a violation of international law but also constitute a crime against humanity," the minister said. He emphasized that millions of students and researchers have been deprived of



Hossein Simaei Sarraf
● IRNA

education and research opportunities. Simaei Sarraf also referred to Israel's previous assassinations of Iranian scientists, saying that Israel has been pursuing a program of targeting Iranian scientists for years. He recalled casualties from a 12-day conflict, including professors and over 60 students. "Attacking universities and research centers is a return to the Stone Age and demonstrates hostility towards science, culture, and civilization – a hostility that has distanced itself from even the most basic human and democratic values," he asserted. Despite the attacks, Simaei Sarraf affirmed

Iran's commitment to continued scientific and technological development, saying that such acts of violence will not deter the country's efforts to cultivate scientific talent for both Iran and the world. The US and the Israeli regime have launched a large-scale unprovoked military campaign against Iran since February 28. Hundreds of Iranians have lost their lives in the aggression. According to the country's Red Crescent Society "the enemy has so far targeted approximately 600 educational centers across Iran — including schools, universities, and other academic institutions."

IRGC denies involvement in Riyadh US embassy attack, blames Israel

International Desk

Iran has firmly rejected any connection to the recent attack on the US Embassy in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, accusing Israel of orchestrating the incident as part of a broader regional destabilization campaign. In a formal statement, the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC) dismissed reports by The Wall Street Journal linking the attack to Iran, asserting instead that the operation was a deliberate act by Israel seeking to provoke regional chaos. The IRGC emphasized that

Iran's military objectives have been transparent and repeatedly communicated to neighboring and Muslim countries, warning against the "fomenting of discord" by the US-Israeli axis. The statement urged West Asian nations to remain vigilant against efforts aimed at undermining stability and destroying the region. In a strong warning later, Ebrahim Zolfaghari, spokesperson for the IRGC's Khatam al-Anbiya Central Headquarters, declared that any aggression against Iranian diplomatic missions would trigger im-

mediate and decisive retaliation against all Israeli embassies and facilities across the region. "Do not forget—we act with speed and force," he stressed, underscoring Iran's readiness to respond with full military capability. The announcement comes amid ongoing US-Israel aggression on Iran since February 28, which Iran has countered by targeting Israel and American interests in regional countries, while maintaining that its actions are strictly focused on military and strategic US assets. On April 4, the IRGC also



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formally appointed Major General Hussein Mohebbi as the new spokesman, succeeding General Ali Mohammad Naeini, who was martyred in US-Israeli strikes.

FM rejects reports of Iran's refusal to hold talks in Islamabad

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Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi rejected reports alleging Iran opposes Pakistan's mediation efforts or refuses dialogue in Islamabad, accusing Western media of "misinterpreting" Tehran's stance. In a post on X on Saturday, Araghchi affirmed Iran's appreciation for Pakistan's diplomatic initiatives, stating unequivocally: "We have never refused to go to Islamabad." He stressed that what matters to Iran are the terms of a conclusive and lasting end to the "illegal war"



Abbas Araghchi

that is imposed on the country. The US and Israel launched attacks on Iran on February 28, triggering widespread regional instability and global economic repercussions, particularly

in oil and energy markets. Despite Pakistan's active mediation efforts, The Wall Street Journal reported on Friday that regional diplomacy led by Islamabad has hit a deadlock, with Iran for-

mally informing mediators it has no intention of meeting US officials in Islamabad and deeming Washington's demands unacceptable. Pakistani officials have denied these claims, reinforcing Iran's position. According to the WSJ, Turkey and Egypt continue efforts to break the impasse, exploring new venues such as Doha and Istanbul, alongside fresh proposals. Iran has insisted on US compensation for damages, withdrawal from Middle Eastern bases, and binding guarantees against future attacks.

Over one month ...

Plans involving Kurdish armed groups based in Iraq's Kurdistan region, expected to cross into western Iran early in the conflict, have failed to materialize. Iran, wary of their potential role, has carried out continuous strikes on their bases in northern Iraq, dealing significant blows. Meanwhile, regional allied groups have stepped in. Hezbollah, previously seen by Israel as weakened, has joined the conflict with force and unveiled new capabilities. Iraqi resistance attacks have led to NATO's withdrawal from Iraq and

the evacuation of US forces from Victoria Base to Jordan. These developments suggest earlier assumptions about weakening the Resistance Axis were off the mark. Still, Iran's actions largely fall within the framework of retaliatory deterrence. Its responses remain predictable, typically mirroring strikes on its own infrastructure. The main variation lies in geography, extending beyond Israel to US-aligned Arab states. There is little indication so far of preemptive or surprise operations. A shift toward more proactive deterrence, imposing heavy-

er and less predictable costs, could potentially reshape the battlefield in Iran's favor. While control of the Strait of Hormuz remains a key leverage point, inflicting higher human costs on adversaries could emerge as another decisive factor. Where does the conflict head next? Now in the second month of the war, signs point to further escalation. Trump has claimed negotiations are underway, even presenting a 15-point draft proposal, while asserting Iran is pushing for talks. Tehran has denied this and outlined its own conditions for ending

the war. Even if talks take place, the gap between the two sides appears too wide to bridge. Despite heavy losses, both sides retain the capacity to continue. With negotiations either unlikely or doomed to fail, and international mediation efforts struggling, the trajectory points toward intensified conflict. The continued buildup of US forces suggests Washington may soon take more action. Iran, for its part, says it is fully prepared for any scenario, including ground incursions or even attempts to occupy parts of its territory.

Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist

