

# S3T

## SYSTEMIC STABILITY STRESS TEST

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### OPERATION EPIC FURY / OPERATION ROARING LION

US-Israel Joint Military Operations Against Iran

28 February 2026

*Systemic Impact Assessment on International Order Resilience*

**Laboratorium Indonesia 2045**

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On 28 February 2026, the United States and Israel launched joint military operations against Iran—designated Operation Epic Fury (US) and Operation Roaring Lion (Israel). This represents the most significant great power military escalation since the 2003 invasion of Iraq and constitutes a systemic shock to the international order across all seven stability pillars of the S3T framework.

The strikes targeted Tehran, Isfahan, Qom, Karaj, and Kermanshah, including the supreme leader's compound and national security infrastructure. Trump declared 'major combat operations' with explicit regime change objectives. Iran retaliated with unprecedented simultaneous ballistic missile attacks on all US military bases across the Gulf (Al Udeid/Qatar, Ali Al Salem/Kuwait, Al Dhafra/UAE, Fifth Fleet/Bahrain), strikes on Israel, and proxy activation. Houthis announced resumption of Red Sea shipping attacks.

**COMPOSITE SYSTEM STABILITY SCORE: 1.41 (Baseline) → 1.01 (Post-Cascade) — SYSTEMIC CRISIS.** The international system has crossed from Disordered into Systemic Crisis when cascade effects are fully accounted for. All seven pillars degraded to Critical. Historical analogue: July 1914 crisis dynamics / late 1930s structural breakdown.

## PHASE 1: BASELINE ASSESSMENT

Assessment evaluates each stability pillar against real-time conditions produced by US-Israel strikes and Iranian retaliation on 28 February 2026. Scores reflect immediate post-strike environment.

### Pillar 1: Balance of Power Equilibrium

INDICATOR	EVIDENCE / ASSESSMENT	SCORE	TRAJECTORY
<b>Relative military capability distribution</b>	US air/naval superiority demonstrated via multi-day sustained operations. However, simultaneous CENTCOM commitment reduces posture in Indo-Pacific and Europe. Russia exploits Ukraine distraction. China monitors Taiwan implications. Iran retaliatory capability (simultaneous strikes on 4 US bases) reveals US vulnerability despite superiority.	2.0	▼ Deteriorating
<b>Active balancing behavior</b>	US-Israel tight bilateral balancing against Iran. Gulf states (Qatar, UAE, Kuwait, Bahrain) struck by Iranian retaliation despite non-participation—forced into conflict. NATO fragmented (UK blocked base access). No coherent multilateral balancing coalition formed.	2.0	▼ Deteriorating
<b>Bandwagoning vs. balancing ratio</b>	Gulf states coerced into US orbit by Iranian strikes on their territory. Pakistan condemned strikes. Turkey, Egypt hedging. Oman distancing. OIC states under pressure. Bandwagoning under duress, not genuine strategic alignment.	2.0	▼ Deteriorating
<b>Regional power equilibrium in key theaters</b>	Middle East equilibrium shattered: full-spectrum operations against Iran with simultaneous retaliation across entire Gulf. Indo-Pacific under-resourced as carrier groups concentrated in CENTCOM. European theater vulnerable to Russian opportunism.	1.0	▼ Deteriorating
<b>PILLAR COMPOSITE: Balance of Power Equilibrium</b>			<b>1.8</b>

### Pillar 2: Deterrence Credibility

INDICATOR	EVIDENCE / ASSESSMENT	SCORE	TRAJECTORY
<b>Nuclear deterrence stability</b>	Iran nuclear program struck June 2025 (Fordow). Current strikes target remaining missile/military infrastructure. Iran lacks nuclear weapon but threshold status makes breakout risk acute under regime survival pressure. Nuclear escalation ladder activated.	2.0	▼ Deteriorating
<b>Conventional deterrence posture</b>	US demonstrated massive strike capability (two carrier groups, multi-day ops). However, Iranian simultaneous retaliation on four US bases demonstrates deterrence failure—Iran was NOT deterred despite overwhelming US superiority.	2.0	▼ Deteriorating
<b>Alliance commitment credibility</b>	US-Israel alliance credibility strengthened. US extended deterrence to Gulf partners severely damaged—Qatar, Bahrain, UAE, Kuwait struck by missiles targeting US bases on their soil without being consulted on operations that provoked the attack.	1.0	▼ Deteriorating
<b>Threat follow-through consistency</b>	Trump administration demonstrated follow-through on explicit threats (Jan ultimatum, Feb SOTU warnings, then strikes). Strengthens future US threat credibility. However, undermined by striking during active negotiations where breakthrough was reportedly imminent—signals diplomacy is cover for military operations.	2.0	◆ Stable

<b>PILLAR COMPOSITE: Deterrence Credibility</b>	<b>1.8</b>
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### Pillar 3: Great Power Competition Management

INDICATOR	EVIDENCE / ASSESSMENT	SCORE	TRAJECTORY
<b>Crisis communication mechanisms</b>	US-Iran channels collapsed. FM Araghchi: 'no communication right now.' Oman mediation destroyed by timing of strikes during reported breakthrough. No functioning deconfliction mechanism for ongoing combat operations.	<b>1.0</b>	<b>▼ Deteriorating</b>
<b>Arms control regime integrity</b>	Iran nuclear talks terminated by military action. JCPOA dead. Iran agreed to IAEA verification and enrichment halt hours before being struck. Signal to all proliferators: compliance guarantees nothing. NPT regime severely damaged.	<b>1.0</b>	<b>▼ Deteriorating</b>
<b>Tacit rules of engagement</b>	All tacit rules shattered. US struck during negotiations (diplomatic norm violation). Iran targeted all US Gulf bases simultaneously (escalation beyond calibrated responses). Senior leadership targeted (no tacit immunity). No red lines respected.	<b>1.0</b>	<b>▼ Deteriorating</b>
<b>Diplomatic engagement quality</b>	Three rounds of talks (Muscat, Geneva) yielded near-breakthrough on enrichment. Destroyed by strikes hours after Oman FM announced agreement. UN SG called for ceasefire—ignored. Diplomacy rendered meaningless.	<b>1.0</b>	<b>▼ Deteriorating</b>
<b>PILLAR COMPOSITE: Great Power Competition Management</b>		<b>1.0</b>	

### Pillar 4: Strategic Restraint

INDICATOR	EVIDENCE / ASSESSMENT	SCORE	TRAJECTORY
<b>Great power overextension indicators</b>	US committed to multi-day sustained Iran operations + Indo-Pacific + Europe + global commitments. Two carrier groups in CENTCOM. Pentagon plans 'weeks-long' operations. Houthis resume Red Sea attacks. Iraq/Syria proxies escalate. Classic overextension.	<b>1.0</b>	<b>▼ Deteriorating</b>
<b>Ideological crusade intensity</b>	Trump called for regime change, urged Iranians to 'take over your government,' offered IRGC immunity. Framed as liberation. Transforms limited military objectives (denuclearization) into maximalist regime change—Morgenthau's definition of ideological crusade.	<b>1.0</b>	<b>▼ Deteriorating</b>
<b>Security dilemma provocation</b>	US massive buildup (largest since 2003) triggered Iranian defensive preparations, IRGC mobilization, Hormuz drills. Spiral dynamics accelerated. Gulf states trapped: hosting US bases made them targets without agency.	<b>1.0</b>	<b>▼ Deteriorating</b>
<b>Proportionality of objectives</b>	US objectives (destroy missiles, prevent nuclear weapons, topple regime) = maximum war aims. Air power alone historically insufficient for regime change. No ground invasion. Gap between stated objectives and employed means is strategically incoherent.	<b>1.0</b>	<b>▼ Deteriorating</b>
<b>PILLAR COMPOSITE: Strategic Restraint</b>		<b>1.0</b>	

### Pillar 5: Power Transition Accommodation

INDICATOR	EVIDENCE / ASSESSMENT	SCORE	TRAJECTORY
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<b>Institutional representation adjustment</b>	US unilateral action bypassed UNSC. Russia/China hold vetoes, will block post-hoc legitimation. Rising powers (China, India, Turkey) excluded from decision-making on action with global systemic impact.	2.0	▼ Deteriorating
<b>Status recognition</b>	Iran's diplomatic engagement (three rounds, near-agreement) rendered meaningless by military action. Signals to all middle/rising powers: diplomatic accommodation is unreliable. Status through institutions has no security value.	1.0	▼ Deteriorating
<b>Rate of power shift vs. accommodation</b>	China/Russia will exploit US Middle East entanglement. US strategic bandwidth consumed at cost of Indo-Pacific presence. Power transition dynamics accelerated as US opens new theater while existing competitions unresolved.	2.0	▼ Deteriorating
<b>Revisionist behavior</b>	Russia's Medvedev: negotiations were 'cover operation.' China will frame as hegemonist aggression. Iran fully revisionist—'no red lines after this aggression.' Houthis, Hezbollah, Iraqi militias activated. Revisionist coalition strengthened.	1.0	▼ Deteriorating
<b>PILLAR COMPOSITE: Power Transition Accommodation</b>		<b>1.5</b>	

## Pillar 6: Middle Power Autonomy Space

INDICATOR	EVIDENCE / ASSESSMENT	SCORE	TRAJECTORY
<b>Great power coercion on alignment</b>	Gulf states forced into conflict by hosting US bases—struck by Iran without being party to operations. UK blocked base access (autonomy assertion) but faces retaliation on Chagos deal. Pakistan condemned strikes. Middle powers have no room to hedge.	1.0	▼ Deteriorating
<b>Non-aligned posture viability</b>	Non-alignment nearly impossible in active war zone. Gulf states cannot be US base hosts AND diplomatically neutral. Only Oman maintained autonomy. Multi-alignment collapses under kinetic escalation.	1.0	▼ Deteriorating
<b>Economic diversification options</b>	Tankers avoiding Hormuz. Dual chokepoint crisis (Hormuz + Red Sea). India: 50% crude via Hormuz. No alternative routing compensates. Economic coercion through energy disruption affects all non-combatants.	1.0	▼ Deteriorating
<b>Regional institutional autonomy</b>	GCC fractured—5 of 6 members struck. ASEAN, AU, OIC have no crisis management capacity. UN paralyzed by veto. Only bilateral channels (Oman-Iran) remain functional.	2.0	▼ Deteriorating
<b>PILLAR COMPOSITE: Middle Power Autonomy Space</b>		<b>1.3</b>	

## Pillar 7: Security Primacy Coherence

INDICATOR	EVIDENCE / ASSESSMENT	SCORE	TRAJECTORY
<b>Economic interdependence vs. security logic</b>	Assumption that energy integration restrains conflict proven wrong. US struck Iran despite 20% of global oil via Hormuz. Iran struck Gulf partners despite energy trade role. Security logic completely overrides economic constraints. Oil spiking; recession risk acute.	2.0	▼ Deteriorating
<b>Normative capture of threat assessment</b>	US framing combines counter-proliferation (security) with democracy promotion (ideology). Trump regime change rhetoric clouds assessment. Iran's 'self-defense' framing	1.0	▼ Deteriorating

	while targeting non-combatant Gulf states equally captured. Neither side coherent.		
<b>Commercial lobbying distortion</b>	Defense industry benefits from sustained operations. Energy markets disrupted. Arms sales to Gulf accelerate post-conflict. No commercial constituency for de-escalation.	2.0	◆ Stable
<b>Security posture vs. resource allocation gap</b>	US NDS prioritizes Indo-Pacific great power competition. Actual allocation: two carrier groups in Middle East, sustained multi-day ops, potential weeks-long campaign. Massive gap between stated priority (China) and commitment (Iran).	1.0	▼ Deteriorating
<b>PILLAR COMPOSITE: Security Primacy Coherence</b>		1.5	

## PHASE 2: SHOCK INJECTION SCENARIOS

Three scenarios per S3T methodology: high-probability/moderate-impact, moderate-probability/high-impact, low-probability/catastrophic-impact.

### SCENARIO A: Strait of Hormuz Partial Closure and Sustained Regional Attrition

<b>Shock Type</b>	MILITARY + ECONOMIC SHOCK
<b>Probability</b>	HIGH (65-75%)
<b>Time Horizon</b>	Immediate (0-30 days)
<b>Primary Pillars</b>	P1, P2, P6, P7
<b>Score Adjustment</b>	P1: -0.5   P6: -0.5   P7: -0.5
<b>Magnitude</b>	SIGNIFICANT
<b>Historical Analogue</b>	Iran-Iraq Tanker War (1984-1988)

Iran deploys asymmetric naval assets to harass Strait of Hormuz transit. Combined with Houthi Red Sea resumption, dual-chokepoint crisis emerges. Tankers avoid both passages. Oil spikes to \$120-150/barrel. US forced into open-ended escort operations while continuing air strikes. Global energy supply chain severely disrupted. War of attrition with no clear endpoint.

### SCENARIO B: Multi-Front Proxy War Activation

<b>Shock Type</b>	MILITARY + POLITICAL SHOCK
<b>Probability</b>	MEDIUM-HIGH (45-55%)
<b>Time Horizon</b>	Immediate to 1-3 months
<b>Primary Pillars</b>	P1, P2, P3, P4, P6
<b>Score Adjustment</b>	P1: -0.5   P2: -0.5   P3: -0.5   P4: -1.0
<b>Magnitude</b>	SEVERE
<b>Historical Analogue</b>	2006 Lebanon War + 2003 Iraq insurgency combined

Hezbollah opens northern front against Israel. Kata'ib Hezbollah/Iraqi PMF attack US forces in Iraq/Syria. Houthis launch ASBMs at US naval assets. US faces simultaneous engagements across five theaters. Force posture in Indo-Pacific further degraded. China accelerates Taiwan pressure. Russia probes NATO flank.

### SCENARIO C: Iranian Regime Collapse and Nuclear Threshold Crisis

<b>Shock Type</b>	POLITICAL + MILITARY + NORMATIVE SHOCK
<b>Probability</b>	LOW-MEDIUM (15-25%)
<b>Time Horizon</b>	1-6 months
<b>Primary Pillars</b>	ALL PILLARS (P1-P7)
<b>Score Adjustment</b>	All pillars: -0.5 to -1.0
<b>Magnitude</b>	CATASTROPHIC
<b>Historical Analogue</b>	Iraq 2003 + Libya 2011 state failure

Sustained strikes degrade IRGC C2. Domestic protests (100+ cities) reignite as coercive capacity degrades. IRGC fragments. Supreme leader incapacitated. Power vacuum. Enriched uranium stockpile unsecured. Regional proxies lose coordination—some escalate independently. Humanitarian crisis of 88 million. Refugee flows destabilize neighbors. NPT suffers terminal damage: Iran complied with demands hours before being struck.

## PHASE 3: CASCADE ANALYSIS

Security dilemma as primary transmission mechanism. Three principal cascade pathways identified.

### CASCADE 1: Strategic Restraint Failure → Balance of Power Disruption → Middle Power Entrapment

<b>Origin Pillar</b>	P4 (Strategic Restraint): US pursues maximalist regime change via air power, exceeding proportionality.
<b>First-Order Effect</b>	P1 (Balance of Power): US force concentration in Middle East creates vacuum in Indo-Pacific/Europe. China/Russia gain relative advantage without firing a shot.
<b>Transmission Mechanism</b>	Security dilemma spiral: US overcommitment → Iranian max retaliation → Gulf states dragged in → China/Russia exploit → US must sustain multi-theater posture beyond capacity.
<b>Second-Order Effect</b>	P6 (Middle Power Autonomy): Gulf states lose policy independence. ASEAN faces energy crisis. India 50% crude disrupted. Strategic autonomy collapses globally.
<b>Feedback Loops</b>	Overextension → retaliation → theater expansion → deeper overextension. Self-reinforcing with no internal correction. Each proxy activation requires US response.
<b>Circuit Breakers</b>	Congressional war powers vote. UK/European basing refusal. Gulf states demanding consultation. Oman mediation. Chinese/Russian UNSC intervention.
<b>Terminal State</b>	US strategic exhaustion across three theaters. Competition management collapses. System transitions to Systemic Crisis.

### CASCADE 2: Competition Management Collapse → Deterrence Erosion → Proliferation Cascade

<b>Origin Pillar</b>	P3 (Competition Management): All diplomatic channels and arms control frameworks destroyed by striking during active negotiations.
<b>First-Order Effect</b>	P2 (Deterrence): NPT deterrence collapses. Iran agreed to enrichment halt—was struck anyway. North Korea vindicated. Saudi accelerates nuclear program. Turkey reconsiders.
<b>Transmission Mechanism</b>	Diplomatic compliance punished → future diplomatic proliferation solutions impossible → states rationally pursue nuclear weapons as sole reliable deterrent.
<b>Second-Order Effect</b>	P5 (Power Transition): Rising powers conclude institutional accommodation meaningless. Revisionist coalition hardens. Middle powers pursue independent deterrents.
<b>Feedback Loops</b>	Proliferation cascade → arms race → further deterrence instability → more states seek nuclear capability → NPT terminal collapse.
<b>Circuit Breakers</b>	IAEA emergency session. US links strikes to regime behavior not compliance. Major power NPT recommitment. ME NWFZ grand bargain.
<b>Terminal State</b>	Non-proliferation regime collapses. Multiple new nuclear states within decade. Primary restraint mechanism lost.

### CASCADE 3: Energy Chokepoint Crisis → Global Economic Shock → Political Destabilization

<b>Origin Pillar</b>	P7 (Security Primacy): Security logic overrides economic interdependence—both sides attack through critical energy infrastructure.
<b>First-Order Effect</b>	P6 (Middle Power Autonomy): Energy-dependent states face acute crisis. India (50% via Hormuz), Japan, Korea, China, Europe face \$120-150/bbl. Economic pressure forces alignment.

<b>Transmission Mechanism</b>	Energy spike → inflation → cost of living crisis → domestic political instability → populist pressure for intervention or withdrawal.
<b>Second-Order Effect</b>	P4 (Strategic Restraint): Domestic political pressure vs. sunk cost commitment. Gulf states face dual security + economic crisis. Europe faces 2022-level energy shock.
<b>Feedback Loops</b>	Energy disruption → economic crisis → political instability → reduced diplomatic capacity → prolonged conflict → deeper disruption.
<b>Circuit Breakers</b>	Saudi/UAE pipeline bypass (2.6M bpd). US SPR release. OPEC+ emergency production. Chinese diplomacy for energy flows. Rapid ceasefire.
<b>Terminal State</b>	Global recession. Developing states fiscal crises. Deglobalization accelerates.

## PHASE 4: RESILIENCE SCORING

PILLAR	BASELINE	POST-SHOCK	POST-CASCADE	WEIGHTED	STATUS
P1: Balance of Power	1.8	1.5	1.3	1.95	CRITICAL
P2: Deterrence	1.8	1.5	1.2	1.80	
P3: Competition Mgmt	1.0	1.0	0.8	1.00	CRITICAL
P4: Strategic Restraint	1.0	0.8	0.8	1.00	
P5: Power Transition	1.5	1.3	1.0	1.25	CRITICAL
P6: Middle Power Space	1.3	1.0	0.8	0.80	CRITICAL
P7: Security Primacy	1.5	1.3	1.0	1.00	CRITICAL
<b>SYSTEM COMPOSITE</b>				<b>1.01</b>	<b>SYSTEMIC CRISIS</b>

*\*Weighting: P1-P2 carry 1.5x (structural foundations); P3-P5 carry 1.25x (management mechanisms); P6-P7 carry 1.0x (enabling conditions).*

**POST-CASCADE CLASSIFICATION: 1.01 — SYSTEMIC CRISIS.** Fundamental breakdown of stability mechanisms in progress. High probability of expanded great power conflict. All pillars Critical post-cascade. No self-correcting mechanisms active. Historical analogue: July 1914—localized military action cascading into systemic breakdown through alliance entrapment, miscalculation, and absent circuit breakers.

# VULNERABILITY CLUSTER ANALYSIS

## CLUSTER 1: Hormuz-Red Sea Dual Chokepoint Collapse

<b>Pillars Involved</b>	P1 (Balance of Power), P6 (Middle Power Autonomy), P7 (Security Primacy)
<b>Primary Trigger</b>	Iran deploys mines/ASMs in Hormuz while Houthis resume Red Sea attacks. Both chokepoints contested simultaneously.
<b>Cascade Pathway</b>	Cascade 3: Energy → Economic shock → Political destabilization globally
<b>Probability</b>	HIGH (65-75%) — Houthi resumption announced; tankers already avoiding Hormuz
<b>Time to Impact</b>	0-7 days initial disruption; 2-6 months full economic cascade
<b>Circuit Breakers</b>	US Navy escorts; Saudi/UAE pipeline bypass (2.6M bpd); OPEC+ emergency; rapid ceasefire
<b>Early Warning</b>	Tanker traffic volume; insurance premiums; Houthi tempo; IRGC mine-laying; oil futures backwardation

## CLUSTER 2: Non-Proliferation Regime Terminal Collapse

<b>Pillars Involved</b>	P2 (Deterrence), P3 (Competition Management), P5 (Power Transition)
<b>Primary Trigger</b>	Iran struck hours after agreeing to enrichment halt/IAEA verification. Compliance = no security.
<b>Cascade Pathway</b>	Cascade 2: Competition Management → Deterrence erosion → Proliferation cascade
<b>Probability</b>	MEDIUM-HIGH (50-60%) — Saudi acceleration likely; DPRK vindicated; Turkey reconsidering
<b>Time to Impact</b>	6-24 months diplomatic fallout; 2-10 years proliferation cascade
<b>Circuit Breakers</b>	Post-conflict grand bargain; IAEA emergency; ME NWFZ treaty; US-China NPT commitment
<b>Early Warning</b>	Saudi enrichment activity; DPRK test tempo; Turkish nuclear rhetoric; IAEA compliance rates

## CLUSTER 3: US Multi-Theater Overextension

<b>Pillars Involved</b>	P1 (Balance of Power), P4 (Strategic Restraint), P5 (Power Transition)
<b>Primary Trigger</b>	US commits weeks-long Iran ops + Indo-Pacific + Europe + proxy threats. Two carrier groups in CENTCOM = force gap elsewhere.
<b>Cascade Pathway</b>	Cascade 1: Restraint failure → Balance disruption → Opportunistic revisionism
<b>Probability</b>	MEDIUM (40-50%) — Dependent on China/Russia decision timelines
<b>Time to Impact</b>	1-6 months probing; 6-24 months structural shift
<b>Circuit Breakers</b>	Rapid US objective achievement; Congressional constraints; allied burden-sharing; China/Russia caution
<b>Early Warning</b>	Chinese Taiwan Strait activity; Russian NATO flank movements; US carrier redeployment; Congressional votes

## FINAL ASSESSMENT

The US-Israel joint military operations against Iran on 28 February 2026 constitute a systemic-level shock to the international order. The S3T framework produces the following conclusions:

- 1. All seven pillars degraded to Critical post-cascade.** First time in post-Cold War era that a single event simultaneously compromises every pillar. The combination of military escalation (P1, P2), diplomatic destruction (P3), strategic overreach (P4), institutional bypass (P5), middle power entrapment (P6), and economic-security decoupling (P7) creates conditions analogous to 1914 and 1939 systemic breakdowns.
- 2. The timing of strikes during reported diplomatic breakthrough inflicts damage beyond the military dimension.** Destruction of the Oman mediation track, hours after Iran agreed to enrichment verification, establishes the precedent that compliance offers no protection. This is the single most damaging element for long-term stability, undermining the rational basis for future diplomatic solutions.
- 3. Three self-reinforcing cascade pathways are active simultaneously.** Energy chokepoint crisis, non-proliferation erosion, and US overextension dynamics interact and amplify each other. Circuit breakers exist but require political will currently absent. Window for activation: days to weeks, not months.
- 4. Post-cascade composite 1.01 = Systemic Crisis.** Fundamental stability mechanism breakdown with high probability of expanded conflict. The analogues—July 1914, late 1930s—indicate an environment where localized military actions cascade beyond initiating parties' control.

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### END OF ASSESSMENT

*S3T — Systemic Stability Stress Tes  
28 February 2026*