



Day 17 of the US war of aggression against Iran (Ticker 8:15 a.m.)

March 16, 2026 by [Peter F. Mayer / Jochen Mitschka](#) 7.3 minute read

The fog of war still hangs over the Middle East. Censorship, propaganda, and narratives prevent most people from seeing clearly what is happening. TKP is once again trying to clear the fog as best it can.

First, regarding the "closure" of the Strait of Hormuz: Iran has not contractually committed itself to keeping its territorial waters in the Strait of Hormuz (or the entire strait) open at all times and without restriction to all traffic. There is no bilateral or multilateral treaty containing such an absolute, unconditional obligation – neither "at all times" nor "to all traffic" (including military vessels or during times of crisis).

The 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) states that the Strait of Hormuz is an international waterway where the transit-passage regime normally applies (Articles 38 et seq. UNCLOS) – ships and aircraft may pass freely, continuously, and without hindrance, and the coastal states (Iran and Oman) may not impede or suspend this (Article 44). Iran has only

signed UNCLOS *but never ratified it* . *At the time of signing, it explicitly stated that it would only apply the transit-passage regime to states that had themselves ratified UNCLOS*. Therefore, Iran is not contractually bound by UNCLOS.

Iran has ratified the 1958 Geneva Convention on the Territorial Sea and Contiguous Area. It provides for an inalienable right of innocent passage through international straits (Article 16, paragraph 4). However, this is not an unrestricted "*free passage for all traffic*": passage must be "*innocent*" (must not endanger the peace, order, or security of the coastal state). The coastal state may issue regulations and (in the case of warships) may require prior authorization in some cases. It is weaker than the UNCLOS Transit Passage regime.

Iran does not recognize customary international law granting full transit passage to all states and has repeatedly stated this. It reserves the right to [act](#) in its territorial waters for security reasons or in the event of a threat .

In other words, Iran is not violating any treaties or legal regulations by closing the Strait of Hormuz to ships belonging to hostile states. It's that simple.

But the war of aggression waged by Israel and the USA violates virtually every rule and treaty that exists in international law. And anyone who supports this aggressive coalition is also violating them.

Anyone who claims that Iran's actions are illegal contradicts the German government's claims that Ukraine's attacks in international waters against Russian tankers and ships are legal.

7:00 AM

Since 9:00 PM German time on March 15, 2026, mutual attacks in the ongoing war with Iran have continued without any de-escalation . Shortly before and into the evening, Iran fired several salvos of missiles at Israel, including, for the first time in the current war, a Sejil ballistic missile, as previously reported. [Impacts](#) occurred in Ramla, Ramat Gan, Bnei Brak, and Tel Aviv, among other locations. One of the split warheads (it is not a banned cluster munition in the Western sense, even though the media refers to it as such) struck a residential building, injuring at least two people.

In the hours that followed, [the Israeli army reported](#) new airstrikes against Iran in the west of the country, including targets in the provinces of Khuzestan, Hormozgan, and near Tehran, as well as military installations in Dezful and Bandar Abbas. At approximately 10:55 p.m. German time, Iran again rejected talks with the US on ending the war, stating that there was currently no basis for negotiation; at the same time, [Spain](#) temporarily withdrew its special forces from Iraq, taking the security situation into account, even though it is officially excluded from retaliatory strikes, as Spain has taken a stance against the war with Iran.

During the night of March 16, 2026, and into the early morning, the US and Israel continued their bombing campaign: there were new explosions and plumes of smoke over Tehran, Hamadan, and Isfahan; among other things, a Red Crescent facility was [damaged](#) . Attacks against medical facilities, such as those in Gaza, are clearly continuing. Israel also carried out three airstrikes on

the city of Khiam in southern Lebanon, where "Hezbollah targets" were hit, resulting in the deaths of more families and the destruction of [homes](#) .

Iranian drone and missile attacks continued to target Gulf states, or more precisely, " *US interests* " in these states: The United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia intercepted dozens of missiles, though it was not reported how many reached their targets; in Dubai, a drone attack on a fuel tank triggered a fire that has since been contained, prompting the airport to temporarily [divert](#) flights .

Iran emphasizes that it would not be attacked without the cooperation of other states in the war of aggression against the country. Incidentally, after the 9/11 attacks, the US declared that anyone harboring the attackers was complicit in the attack and subsequently bombed Afghanistan, Iraq (even though Saddam Hussein had no connection to al-Qaeda), and other countries.

A small detail: The Taliban were even [prepared to hand over the alleged attackers](#) , yet they were bombed and had to fight a 20-year war before the US and aid workers forced them out of the country.

In Iraq, there were further attacks on US facilities near Baghdad, [injuring](#) several people .

The Iraqi resistance had already forced the US to leave the country once before. After the US invasion of Iraq in 2003 and the swift overthrow of Saddam Hussein, a broad Iraqi resistance movement formed, comprised of Sunni insurgents and Shiite militias. Through guerrilla tactics, improvised explosive devices (IEDs), suicide bombings, and targeted attacks on US troops and local collaborators, this resistance resulted in the deaths of over 4,000 American soldiers and the injuries of tens of thousands. The ongoing losses, the immense financial costs, and the growing pressure from the US public had already rendered the occupation politically untenable: in 2008, the Bush administration signed an agreement with the Iraqi government stipulating the complete withdrawal of US combat troops by the end of 2011 – the resistance had thus effectively forced the US to leave the country. The US only reappeared with bases in Iraq when IS (ISIS) terrorist groups attacked the Iraqi capital. (As was later learned, they were largely trained and equipped by the US, as " *moderate rebels* ,,.)

Now we are seeing the second guerrilla war gain momentum, which could cause the same thing.

In several statements, US President Trump called on NATO allies and other states to send ships to secure the Strait of Hormuz, and stressed that Iran urgently wanted a deal – which Tehran immediately [rejected](#) .

08:00:

Iraq is responding to Iran's attacks on "US interests in Iraq" and showing that the country will not be forced into war against Iran.

Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammed Shia' al-Sudani [reacted](#) to the attack on the US embassy in Baghdad. **In his view, Iraq has no right to retaliate should Iran attack the American embassy, even if it is located on Iraqi territory, because under international law, an attack**

on an embassy is considered a direct attack on the country it represents. In other words, an attack on the embassy is an attack on the United States. The American embassy is targeting the United States, not the Iraqi people.

Of course, such a statement is more difficult to make if you have bank accounts in the USA.

8:15 a.m.

US-Israeli airstrike hits school in Iran

A US-Israeli airstrike hit the Shahid Khomeini **Boys' School** in the city of Khomein early Monday morning, the Fars news agency reported, publishing photos showing severe damage to part of the building.

The Mehr news agency quoted a deputy governor of Markazi province as saying that the school had been attacked without any casualties, but several nearby houses had been damaged.

also **The Iranian Red Crescent** shared the images, describing them as an "air raid on a school in Khomein".