



[Iran Strikes Two U.S. Military Bases in Iraq](#)

Iran launched missiles at two American military bases in Iraq this week, as retaliation for the killing of General Qassem Soleimani. The Al-Asad base in Iraq's Anbar province was hit by dozens of missiles, and a base in the city of Erbil was hit as well. Both bases house American and coalition troops that are currently fighting ISIS in Iraq. There were no casualties suffered by American or Iraqi forces, and President Trump said in a press conference on Wednesday morning that the structural damage was not serious. Iran claimed the attack was retribution for the American strike that killed its leading military commander, Qassem Soleimani. The attack appears to be as far as Iran was willing to go to avenge General Soleimani, with President Trump noting in his Wednesday press conference that Iran was standing down.

Iran's Revolutionary Guards took responsibility for the strikes immediately after the news became public. State media in Iran approximated thirty casualties for American and coalition forces, but that was soon debunked by the Pentagon and Department of Defense. Prior to the attack, Iraqi Prime Minister Adel Abdul Mahdi said his country was warned that Iran would be launching an attack on American positions in Iraq. Iran warned that if there was any response from the United States, they would hit more military installations throughout the Middle East. Iran also threatened that if American forces used any regional countries as a base from which to attack the Iranian mainland, that country would be targeted. Specifically, this threat was leveled at Dubai in the United Arab Emirates, and Haifa in Israel.

After the strikes, Iran's Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei called them a "slap in the face" to the United States, and said it was a proportional response to the killing of Soleimani. Iran's President Hassan Rouhani said that the "final answer" would be for American forces to be expelled permanently from the entire Middle East, a wish that was echoed by Khamenei. Javad Zarif, Iran's Foreign Minister, said that Iran was not seeking war or an escalation, but that it would defend its territory and its interests.

In a press conference on Wednesday morning, President Trump said that the United States should be "grateful and happy" that no servicemembers were killed or wounded in the attacks. He also echoed his previous statements that Iran would never be permitted to procure a nuclear weapon while the Trump Administration was in the White House. President Trump renewed calls for the United Kingdom, Germany, France, and Russia to abandon what was left of the nuclear deal that limited Iran's nuclear activity, the JCPOA, and to renegotiate the treaty. He also announced that the United States would be placing more sanctions on Iran, but there was no mention of a military response.

Moving forward, it appears that both sides are trying to deescalate tensions. For Iran, attacking military installations throughout the Middle East is not a new strategy, as these attacks were commonplace even before the killing of Soleimani. The fact that there were no American casualties and only two bases were attacked is a relief for the United States. It also gives the impression that Iran was more interested in a PR move to say they avenged Soleimani's death, without escalating into a full war.