

# Israel's strike plan triggered US attack on Iran: Rubio

REUTERS, Washington

Planned Israeli action against Iran that would have seen retaliation against American forces prompted the United States to launch its weekend strikes against Tehran, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said on Monday.

"We knew that there was going to be an Israeli action, we knew that that would precipitate an attack against American forces, and we knew that if we didn't preemptively go after them before they launched those attacks, we would suffer higher casualties," Rubio told reporters.

On Saturday, Israel's defense minister Israel Katz described its missile attack against Iran as pre-emptive.

Iran has said the US assault was unprovoked, occurring as Tehran and Washington were in negotiations on a nuclear accord.

US President Donald Trump has said the US faced an imminent threat from Iran that justified war, although he gave no specifics and some US lawmakers said

he has shown no evidence to back that assessment.

"The United States would not deliberately target a school. Our objectives are missiles, both the ability to manufacture them and the ability to launch them," Rubio told reporters, while adding that the Pentagon was investigating the alleged incident.

He voiced support for toppling Iran's Islamic authorities but said it was not the objective of the US and Israeli war against Tehran.

"We hope that the Iranian people can overthrow this government and establish a new future for that country. We would love for that to be possible," Rubio told reporters.

"But the objective of this mission is the destruction of their ballistic missile capabilities and of their naval capabilities," he said.

Trump also spoke to CNN on Monday, flagging what he said would be an escalation in the assault on Iran. "The big wave hasn't even happened," he said. "The big one is coming soon."



Emergency personnel gather in Ramat Gan, Israel, yesterday, following an Iranian missile barrage amid the US-Israel conflict with Iran. The Middle East has become gripped by war triggered by US and Israeli airstrikes against Iran on February 28, which killed Iran's supreme leader and other officials. PHOTO: REUTERS

# How Khamenei was killed

Report says Mossad spies, traffic cameras sealed Iran supreme leader's fate

AGENCIES

Nearly all the traffic cameras in Tehran had been hacked for years. And when the senior Iranian officials came to work near Pasteur Street in Tehran - where Ayatollah Ali Khamenei was killed in a US-Israeli air strike on Saturday - the Israelis were watching, according to a Financial Times report.

One camera had an angle that proved particularly beneficial, the British daily said, providing Israel a window into the workings of a monotonous part of the closely guarded compound.

Sophisticated algorithms added details to dossiers on members of these security guards that included their addresses, hours of duty, routes they took to work and, most importantly, who they were usually assigned to protect and transport - building what intelligence officers call a "pattern of life", the report detailed.

The effort was a part of a years-long intelligence campaign that helped pave the way for the 86-year-old Ayatollah's assassination.

Tracking this real-time traffic data was one of the many ways Israel and the CIA were able to determine exactly what time the supreme leader would be in his offices on Saturday morning and those who would be joining him.

Israeli intelligence detected a meeting at the leadership compound in the heart of Tehran on Saturday morning and the strikes were moved forward, Reuters had earlier reported.

Crucially, the CIA learned that the supreme leader, who subjected Iranians to severe authoritarianism and repression, would be at the site.

Israel was also able to disrupt single components of roughly a dozen or so mobile phone towers near Pasteur Street, the report said, making the phones seem as if they were busy when called and stopping Khamenei's protection detail from receiving possible warnings.

"The intelligence picture of the arch-

enemy's capital was the result of laborious data collection, made possible by Israel's sophisticated signals intelligence Unit 8200, the human assets recruited by its foreign intelligence agency Mossad and the mountains of data digested by military intelligence into daily briefs," the report said.

Israel, the report said, used a mathematical

method known as social network analysis to parse billions of data points.



"We took their eyes first," the report said, quoting an intelligence official. Both in the June war and now, Israeli pilots have used a specific kind of missile called the Sparrow, variants of which are able to hit a target as small as a dining table from more than 1,000km away - far from Iran and the reach of any of its aerial defence systems, the report elaborated.

Khamenei, unlike his ally Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah, did not live in hiding. When the CIA and Israel determined that Khamenei

Islamic republic's nuclear programme were meant to continue this week.

Israeli intelligence had information from signals intelligence, such as the hacked traffic cameras and deeply penetrated mobile phone networks, the report said. The meeting with Khamenei was on schedule, with senior officials heading to the location, the report said. But the Americans had something even more concrete - a human source, the report said. The vital information provided a window of opportunity for the two countries to go in for the kill. And they did.

## IRAN SCHOOL UN calls for probe into deadly strike

REUTERS, Geneva

The UN human rights office yesterday urged what it called the forces behind a deadly attack on a girls' school in Iran to investigate and share insights into the incident, without saying who it believed was responsible.

"The High Commissioner (Volker Turk) calls for a prompt, impartial and thorough investigation into the circumstances of the attack. The onus is on the forces that carried out the attack to investigate it," UN human rights office spokesperson Ravina Shamdasani told a Geneva press briefing.

"This is absolutely horrific," Shamdasani said, adding that images circulating on social media captured "the essence of the destruction, despair and senselessness and cruelty of this conflict".

Turk also urged all parties to exercise restraint and to return to the negotiating table, she said.

The school in southern Iran was hit on Saturday, the first day of US and Israeli attacks against the country. Secretary of State Marco Rubio said on Monday that US forces "would not deliberately target a school". Israel has said it is investigating the incident.

## US-UK ties 'not like it used to be' Trump says after Starmer's refusal to allow US to use British bases in Cyprus

AFP, London

US President Donald Trump said the historical relationship between his country and Britain was "not like it used to be", in an interview to British daily newspaper The Sun, amid a major transatlantic fall out over US-Israeli strikes against Iran.

"This was the most solid relationship of all. And now we have very strong relationships with other countries in Europe," he said, singling out France and Germany, after UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer's initial refusal to allow the United States to use British military bases in its war with Iran.

Trump said Starmer "has not been helpful", adding: "I never thought I'd see that. I never thought I'd see that from the UK. We love the UK."

In a telephone interview from the White House on Monday evening, Trump said: "This was the most solid relationship of all. And now we have very strong relationships with other countries in Europe."

"It's a different world, actually. It's just a much different kind of relationship that we've had with your country before."

"It's very sad to see that the relationship is obviously not what it was," he added.

The scathing comments come a day after Trump described Starmer's reaction as "very disappointing" in an interview with The Daily Telegraph.

He added that Starmer's later decision to allow the use of UK bases on specific grounds as "useful" but said it "took far too much time".

## Golestan Palace in Tehran damaged

AFP, Tehran

Iran's Unesco-listed Golestan Palace in Tehran has been damaged in US and Israeli strikes, local media reported Monday.

"Following the joint US-Israeli attack on Arag square in southern Tehran on Sunday evening, parts of the Golestan Palace... were damaged," the ISNA news agency reported, adding that windows, doors, and mirrors were hit by reverberations from blasts.

The former royal palace "was reportedly damaged by debris and the shock wave following an air strike to the Arag Square, located in the buffer zone of the site in the Iranian capital", Unesco said in a statement late on Monday.

The UN agency said it had "communicated to all parties concerned the geographical coordinates of sites on the World Heritage List as well as those of national significance, to avoid any potential damage".



Burned-out cars lie beside a damaged residential building after a Russian air strike in Druzhkivka, Donetsk region, Ukraine on Monday, in this handout from Ukraine's 93rd Kholodnyi Yar Brigade. PHOTO: AFP

## France to boost nuclear arsenal

Macron hints at support for allies; Nato chief says 'widespread support' for US Iran campaign

AFP, Ile Longue

President Emmanuel Macron said Monday evening that France will expand its atomic arsenal and could deploy nuclear-armed aircraft to allied countries for the first time, as he unveiled an unprecedented plan to bolster security on the continent.

Speaking from the Ile Longue nuclear submarine base as the clock ticks on his presidency, Macron announced that eight European countries including Germany, Poland, Sweden and Britain had agreed to participate in what he called a "forward" nuclear deterrence scheme.

"Today more than ever, independence cannot mean isolation," Macron said in his 50-minute speech, with one of France's four ballistic missile submarines in the background.

"We are currently experiencing a period of geopolitical upheaval fraught with risks," Macron said, speaking after the launch of US and Israeli attacks against Iran in a campaign that risks destabilising the Middle East.

Macron said eight European countries had agreed to join his plan to use France's nuclear stockpile to bolster security on the continent. "Germany will be a key partner in this effort," he said.

Meanwhile, Nato chief Mark Rutte said yesterday there was broad backing among US European allies for President Donald Trump's military campaign against Iran. "I feel widespread support in Europe. I was on the phone with many leaders over the weekend and also early this week," Rutte told journalists on a visit to North Macedonia.