

# Weekly Intelligence Brief

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## Cuba's Energy Crisis Worsens Amid Sanctions

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On 21 MAR, Cuba's power grid collapsed for the third time this month. The Cuban Electric Union announced a nationwide blackout caused by an unexpected failure of a generating unit. These outages have lasted for extended periods, with the longest reaching 29 hours from 16 MAR through 17 MAR.

Cuba produces about 40% of the fuel needed to run its energy grid, which is collapsing as it is currently unable to receive the other 60% from imports. In late January, the United States (U.S.) imposed a fuel

blockade, which enforced new tariffs on countries that supply oil to Cuba, cutting off their main suppliers. Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel says the country has gone three months without receiving the fuel they need.

On 20 MAR, the Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) of the U.S. Department of the Treasury updated its general licensing, adding Cuba to the list of prohibited countries for Russian crude and petroleum products. Russian shipments carrying approximately 200,000 barrels of crude intended for Cuba were diverted to Trinidad and Tobago, despite Russia's history of

bypassing U.S. sanctions. Amid these shortages, Cuba is receiving limited aid. One of three ships originating from Puerto Progreso in Mérida, Mexico, has arrived carrying supplies such as solar panels, food, and medicine. Additional assistance has been announced by Brazil, China, and Chile.

We can assess with high confidence that Cuba will likely continue to experience severe blackouts and infrastructure challenges due to ongoing fuel shortages. We can also assess with moderate confidence that the United States will likely continue to intensify sanctions on Cuba in pursuit of regime change.

# Pakistan Breaks Ceasefire with Afghanistan

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On 25 MAR, Pakistan launched an artillery strike into eastern Afghanistan, killing at least two civilians and ending a temporary ceasefire between the two countries. The agreement followed six months of escalating cross-border violence.

Tensions began rising in OCT 2025 after a series of militant attacks inside Pakistan. Khawaja Muhammad Asif, Pakistan's Minister for Defense, claimed the attackers were harbored in Afghanistan under the protection of the Taliban. In FEB 2026, Taliban leaders denied these accusations. Despite this, both sides continued exchanging strikes, and Pakistan's

Minister for Defense later described the situation as "open war."

On 19 MAR, a ceasefire was established with support from regional actors including Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Türkiye. The agreement coincided with the start of Eid al-Fitr, a major three-day Islamic holiday. The ceasefire was initially set to last through 23 MAR and was extended by two days with backing from religious leaders in both countries.

The ceasefire was breached on 25 MAR when Pakistani forces fired dozens of artillery shells across the border into the Narai and Sarkano districts, where Pakistani Defense officials believe there are suspected terrorist groups and supporters.

Afghan forces retaliated by destroying three Pakistani military posts and killing one soldier.

With no immediate signs of de-escalation, regional actors have called for greater involvement from the United States (U.S.) and China. However, neither has indicated a willingness to host or mediate negotiations.

We can assess with high confidence that it is highly likely that the U.S. and China will not host or mediate negotiations. We can also assess with high confidence that it is highly likely that, as fighting continues, civilian casualties, displacement, and regional instability will increase.

# Iran-backed Houthis Join War with Missile Attack Against Israel

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On 28 MAR, the Iran-backed paramilitary organization Ansar Allah, commonly known as the Houthis, launched a missile into Israel, signaling the group is entering the conflict. The Israeli Iron Dome air defense system intercepted the missile before it made contact. There have been no Israeli casualties reported.

The Houthis are located in Northwestern Yemen and have been credited with

attacks on international shipping and the capture of large container ships in the Bab-el-Mandeb Strait, the main choke point in the Red Sea. However, these attacks have paused due to the Israel– Hamas ceasefire.

Prior to the start of the United States–Iran conflict, the Houthis' leadership issued statements saying they would restart attacks in the Red Sea if the United States carried out any military operation against Iran. Houthis' leadership also relocated multiple missile systems closer to the banks of the Red Sea following their statement. Since the start of

the conflict on 28 FEB, the Houthis have remained unengaged, stating that Tehran will provide instructions on when and how to act.

We can assess with high confidence that it is likely the Houthis will remain engaged in the conflict and will restart attacks in the Red Sea. We can also assess with high confidence it is very likely that if the Houthis restart their attacks in the Red Sea, oil prices will continue to rise, as both major shipping lanes, the Strait of Hormuz and the Bab-el-Mandeb Strait, would be blocked under Iranian control.

## Weekly Intelligence Brief

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