

A-10 Thunderbolt: the USA deploys more Warthogs in the Gulf

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The U.S. Air Force (USAF) is significantly intensifying its presence in the Persian Gulf. At the center of the maneuver is the **Fairchild Republic A-10C Thunderbolt II**, the legendary ground attack aircraft whose fleet in the region will increase from the initial dozen units to a total of about 30 aircraft.

Strategic redeployment

This Monday, twelve aircraft from the **107th Fighter Squadron** (Michigan Air National Guard) initiated the reinforcement. During the journey to the crisis area, they made a technical stop at the British base of **Lakenheath**, supported by KC-135 Stratotanker refuelers, an operation that underscores the scope and flexibility of the mission.

Since the official announcement of the A-10 deployment last March 15, clear operational objectives have emerged:

- **Strait of Hormuz:** Countering Iranian drones and fast boats in the crucial waterway, currently subject to blockades by Tehran.
- **Iraq:** Operations against Iranian-backed Shia militias attacking U.S. installations.



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The Avenger as a psychological weapon

Videos circulating on social media show an unusually aggressive use of the **Gatling GAU-8/A Avenger 30 mm cannon**. The bursts lasting up to nine seconds draw particular attention, a stark contrast to standard procedures that call for short bursts of two or three seconds.

From a technical standpoint, such an action has a huge logistical impact on the aircraft: although the firing rate has been reduced over time from the original 4,200 to the current **3,900 rounds per minute**, a single nine-second burst consumes about **585 rounds**. Considering that the A-10 has a maximum capacity of **1,147 rounds**, such a burst instantly depletes over **50% of the entire onboard ammunition reserve**.

> ***Analysis:*** *These prolonged attacks likely serve as a* **"*Show of Force*"***. The enormous acoustic and visual impact of the cannon aims to exert a psychological deterrent effect on militias on the ground. Thanks to its heavy armor, the A-10 remains largely protected from small arms fire during these low-altitude passes.*

The political powder keg in Iraq

The situation in Iraq remains highly volatile from a diplomatic and military perspective. The main issue is the legal classification of the targeted groups: the Shia **Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF)** have been officially subordinate to the Iraqi Prime Minister since 2015.

Despite this integration into state security forces, many PMF factions have begun attacking U.S. targets following the outbreak of war with Iran. This has created a diplomatic paradox: the Iraqi government has officially protested against U.S. air raids on its territory, even granting the PMF authorization for **legitimate defense** against American forces.

In this scenario, the United States finds itself in direct military conflict with units that are formally part of a partner state's security architecture. However, the deployment of additional A-10 squadrons unequivocally signals that Washington intends to maintain high military pressure, ignoring the political complexities of the Baghdad government.