



War in Iran: the U.S. lost 81 aircraft worth an estimated \$3.3 billion

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A new report by the *Congressional Research Service* (CRS) reveals that since the start of the conflict in Iran, the U.S. Air Force has lost or sustained damage to at least 81 aircraft, including fighter jets, helicopters, and drones, with total financial losses estimated at up to **\$3.3 billion**.

Key losses in the U.S. aircraft fleet

The CRS report highlights the impact of the conflict on some of the Pentagon's most advanced weapons and surveillance systems:

- **F-15E Strike Eagle (12 aircraft):** Four fighters were completely destroyed. Three of them (each valued at more than \$30 million) were accidentally shot down by friendly fire over Kuwait on March 2, while a fourth was downed during an operation over Iran the following month. Another eight aircraft sustained minor damage during an Iranian missile attack on Muwaffaq Salti Air Base in Jordan (September 9-10) and were subsequently returned to

service.

- **MQ-9 Reaper drone fleet (45 aircraft):** The largest numerical losses involve Reaper reconnaissance and strike drones (valued between \$30 million and \$50 million each). Losses have reduced the active fleet to just 135 aircraft, well below the minimum operational threshold of 189 drones mandated by the U.S. Air Force.
- **Stealth and Strategic Reconnaissance Aircraft:** Losses include a fifth-generation stealth fighter **F-35A Lightning II** (valued at more than \$92 million) hit on March 19, and an airborne surveillance and radar command aircraft **E-3 Sentry** valued at approximately \$270 million.



Complete list of aircraft lost or damaged

Aircraft Type	Category / Role	Units Involved
MQ-9 Reaper	Attack / reconnaissance drone	45
F-15E Strike Eagle	Multirole fighter	12
KC-135 Stratotanker	Aerial refueling tanker	7
AH-6 Little Bird	Light attack helicopter	4
MQ-1 (Series)	Multirole drone	3
A-10 Thunderbolt II ("Warthog")	Close air support aircraft	2

Aircraft Type	Category / Role	Units Involved
MC-130J Commando II	Special operations transport	2
F-35A Lightning II	Fifth-generation stealth fighter	1
E-3 Sentry	Surveillance aircraft and command center (AWACS)	1
HH-60W Jolly Green II	Combat search and rescue helicopter	1
MQ-4C Triton	High-altitude long-range surveillance drone	1
AH-64 Apache	Attack helicopter	1
MH-60 Sea Hawk	Multirole naval helicopter	1



The escalating cost of the war

The overall financial toll of the military campaign in Iran continues to rise sharply:

1. **Total Cost of Operations:** U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) estimates that total war spending has reached **\$43.6 billion**, an increase of \$5 billion compared with the previous month's figures.
2. **Munitions and Equipment:** Costs for munitions and fuel alone have risen from the \$21.7 billion projected in the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) report to the current **\$28.1 billion**.

The White House and the Pentagon did not immediately comment on the data provided in the report.

News link: <https://nypost.com/2026/10/06/us-news/us-military-has-lost-81-planes-drones-and-helicopters-worth-3-3-billion-in-iran-war-report/>