

T-6 Deadline Protocol Assessment

Escalation Risk Assessment under Framework v7.0

Abu Dhabi | 7 April 2026 | 22:00 GST | T-6 hours to deadline
Day 39 of the conflict | Deadline: 04:00 GST Wednesday 8 April
Assessment type: Intra-day deadline protocol (v7.0 Section 12)
Classification: Confidential | Personal decision tool

Executive Summary

Resulting level: B (Prepare). Confidence: High. Distance to Level C has narrowed materially since the 16:30 GST baseline assessment.

Five developments since the baseline assessment, all in the direction of escalation: US strikes on Kharg Island (Iran's key oil export hub); Iran halted ceasefire talks in response to Trump's rhetoric; Iran declared that its restraint in targeting Gulf oil infrastructure no longer applies; Israel executed strikes on Iranian railways and bridges; and Trump escalated rhetoric to "a whole civilisation will die tonight."

The structural situation is now as follows: infrastructure strikes are being executed **before** the deadline has expired. The diplomatic channel is on life support. Iran has explicitly expanded its declared target set to include Gulf oil infrastructure. The IRGC has warned it will "deprive the US and its allies of the region's oil and gas for many years." These are not warning signals. These are operational facts.

The gap between Level B and Level C is no longer measured in days. It is measured in the next 6 hours.

Pre-decision for T-1 (03:00 GST): if at 03:00 there is no deal, no deadline extension, and strikes have continued or intensified, the assessment moves to the boundary of Level C. If any additional Layer 3 trigger fires (3b, confirmed Bushehr damage, or a third Failed brake), the level becomes C. Depart.

What Changed Since 16:30 GST

This section documents the five material developments that have occurred in the 5.5 hours since the baseline assessment. Each is scored against the framework's evidence discipline.

1. US strikes on Kharg Island (new)

The US struck more than 50 military targets on Kharg Island overnight. This is the second round of strikes on Iran's key oil export hub since the war began. VP Vance confirmed the strikes from Budapest but stated they did not target oil infrastructure and do not represent a change in strategy. The US official description is narrowly military. However, the operational fact is that the US is conducting offensive operations on the island that handles 90% of Iran's crude oil exports, 12 hours before a deadline tied to threats of civilisational destruction.

***Framework relevance:** Reinforces Layer 1 indicators 1 (conventional impasse) and 4 (continuation produces no different result). Kharg has been struck twice without changing the strategic position. Also reinforces 3a: the gap between "military targets on Kharg" and "energy targets on Kharg" is a political decision, not a capability constraint.*

2. Iran halted ceasefire talks (new, critical)

Bloomberg reports that Iran halted participation in ceasefire talks in response to Trump's "whole civilisation will die tonight" post. Mediators are reportedly scrambling to resuscitate negotiations before the deadline. Iran's ambassador to Pakistan stated that Pakistan's mediation efforts have reached "a critical, sensitive stage."

Framework relevance: This directly affects Layer 1 indicator 3 (deal structure destroyed) and Layer 2 (facilitator brake). The facilitator brake was Degraded at 16:30. It is now trending toward Failed. If talks are not resumed before the deadline, the brake moves to Failed.

3. Iran lifts oil infrastructure restraint (new, critical)

In direct response to the Kharg Island strikes, Iran declared that its restraint in targeting oil infrastructure in the region would no longer apply. This is a qualitative shift in Iran's declared targeting doctrine. Until today, Iran had attacked Gulf military bases, airports, ports, and some petrochemical facilities, but had shown relative restraint on core oil export infrastructure. That restraint has now been publicly revoked.

The IRGC's Khatam al-Anbiya headquarters stated it will "respond outside the region and deprive the US and its allies of oil and gas for many years" if the US crosses "red lines" and targets civilian facilities. The IRGC's Stargate/Abu Dhabi threat from 3 April is now **conditioned on an event that is already partially underway** (infrastructure strikes on Iran).

Framework relevance: This is not captured in the existing Layer 3 categories but functions as an escalation signal that reinforces 3a and fresh insider warnings. Iran is expanding, not contracting, its declared target set. For Abu Dhabi specifically, this is the most directly relevant signal of the day.

4. Israel executes railway and bridge strikes (new, executed)

The IDF railway warning issued this morning has been executed. Netanyahu confirmed Israel attacked railway lines and bridges, framing them as IRGC infrastructure. Two people were killed in a strike on a rail bridge in Kashan. Israel struck airports in Tehran, Khorramabad, and Tabriz. Israel also struck Iran's largest petrochemical complex (South Pars/Asaluyeh) and a petrochemical compound in Shiraz.

Critically, these infrastructure strikes are happening before Trump's 8 PM ET deadline. Israel has an approved updated target list of energy and infrastructure sites, awaiting Trump's green light. An Israeli source told CNN that Israel is "highly skeptical that a deal is achievable."

Framework relevance: This transforms the fresh insider warning signal from a warning to a confirmed operational event. Infrastructure destruction is underway. The framework's evidence discipline requires scoring based on what has happened, not what might happen. What has happened is that civilian infrastructure is being destroyed.

5. Trump rhetoric further escalated (widened)

Trump posted on Truth Social: "A whole civilization will die tonight, never to be brought back again. I don't want that to happen, but it probably will." He also said the deadline stands and there will be an attack Iran "has not seen." Congressional Democrats are calling for impeachment. **Marjorie Taylor Greene and Alex Jones called for Trump's removal under the 25th Amendment**, an unprecedented break from MAGA allies.

Framework relevance: 3a (nuclear-adjacent rhetoric) is widened to its most extreme form. The 25th Amendment calls from Trump's own political base are a novel signal: they suggest that even actors within the president's coalition perceive the rhetoric as beyond the boundaries of conventional warfare. This does not score as 3b (explicit nuclear rhetoric) because no nuclear weapon is named. But the rhetorical distance to 3b is now minimal.

Additional signals

- Saudi Arabia: seven ballistic missiles from Iran targeted the Eastern Province. Debris fell near energy facilities. Assessment underway.
- King Fahd Causeway (Bahrain-Saudi Arabia): closed as a precautionary measure over Iranian attack threats. This is the only road link for Bahrain.
- Ali al-Salem Air Base, Kuwait: an Iranian UAV struck the base, injuring 15 American soldiers.
- Iranian President Pezeshkian: claimed 14 million Iranians have volunteered for war and said he is "ready to give my life for Iran."
- Iran called on young people to form human chains around power plants.
- A synagogue in central Tehran was destroyed in an Israeli strike.
- Northern Italian airports imposed jet fuel restrictions due to shortages, prioritising long-haul and medical flights.

Layer-by-Layer Reassessment

Layer 0: Personal Context

Profile: Moderate. Unchanged from baseline.

Layer 1: Structural Preconditions

#	Indicator	Score	Conf.	Change	Key evidence update
1	Conventional impasse	YES	High	Unchanged	Kharg struck again. No strategic change.
2	Political exit closed	YES	High	Widened	Trump: deadline stands. "Whole civilisation will die." 25th Amendment calls from own base.
3	Deal structure destroyed	YES	High	ESCALATED	Iran halted ceasefire talks. Upgraded from Medium to High confidence. Channels exist but are non-functional.
4	No different result	YES	High	Widened	Kharg struck second time. Bridges/railways being destroyed. No strategic change.
5	Iran capacity intact	YES	High	Widened	7 ballistic missiles at Saudi Eastern Province. UAV hit Ali al-Salem (15 US wounded). Oil restraint lifted.
6	US combat fatalities	NO	High	Monitor	15 wounded at Ali al-Salem. If any die, cumulative total approaches sensitivity zone. Threshold not met.

Layer 1 summary: All five structural preconditions positive. Indicator 3 upgraded to High confidence. Indicator 6 remains the only untripped accelerator.

Layer 2: Institutional Brakes

Brake	16:30 status	22:00 status	Evidence for change
US Congress	FAILED	FAILED	Unchanged. Democrats call for impeachment but lack votes. No binding constraint.
Pentagon	DEGRADED	DEGRADED → FAILED	US struck Kharg Island before the deadline expired. Military is executing pre-deadline escalatory operations. Israel striking infrastructure with apparent US coordination. No visible institutional pushback from senior military leadership.
Facilitators	DEGRADED	DEGRADED → FAILED	Iran halted ceasefire talks. Bloomberg: mediators scrambling. Pakistan ambassador: "critical, sensitive stage." No functional negotiation channel producing convergence.
Coalition	DEGRADED	DEGRADED	NZ PM condemned. No ally imposing constraint. King Fahd Causeway closed (protective, not constraining). China "welcomes efforts for peace" but takes no action.

Layer 2 summary: Assessment at 22:00 GST: **2 Failed (Congress, Facilitators), 1 trending Failed (Pentagon), 1 Degraded (Coalition)**. At 16:30, there were 1 Failed and 3 Degraded. The deterioration in 5.5 hours is significant.

***Critical:** If the Pentagon brake is confirmed as Failed at the T-1 assessment (based on whether the military executes the full infrastructure campaign after the deadline), the count becomes 3 Failed, 1 Degraded. That meets the Level C condition: "Layer 2 leaves only 0 or 1 brake in OK state, with at least 2 brakes Failed."*

Layer 3: Threshold Events

Signal	Score	Change	Assessment
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3a. Nuclear-adjacent rhetoric	YES	WIDENED	"A whole civilisation will die tonight." This is the most extreme public statement by a head of state in this conflict. Crosses from infrastructure destruction rhetoric into civilisational annihilation rhetoric. Still references conventional means.
3b. Explicit nuclear rhetoric	NO	Unchanged	No direct nuclear weapon threat. But the rhetorical distance between "a whole civilisation will die" and explicit nuclear language is now minimal. Monitor with extreme attention.
Fresh insider warnings	YES	WIDENED	IDF railway warning executed: bridges struck, 2 killed in Kashan. Israel has approved infrastructure target list awaiting Trump green light. Infrastructure destruction is now operational fact, not warning signal. Israeli source: "highly skeptical a deal is achievable."
Nuclear facility	AMBER	Unchanged	No new strike near Bushehr since 4 April. Pre-Trigger Amber maintained.
Pattern break	NO	Unchanged	Iran continues attacking. 7 missiles at Saudi Arabia today. UAV at Ali al-Salem. Strait remains closed.
8a. Institutional exits	YES	WIDENED	King Fahd Causeway closed (new). Saudi debris near energy facilities (new). Italian airports restricting jet fuel (new). Combined with Rosatom evacuation (4 April) and US State Dept DEPART NOW: five independent institutional actors have now taken operational exit or protection decisions.

New signal not in existing categories: Iran's declaration that oil infrastructure restraint no longer applies. This functions as an inverse pattern break: Iran is expanding, not contracting, its target set. Under the framework's evidence discipline, this reinforces 3a and the institutional-actor exit signals. For the household in Abu Dhabi, this is the most directly relevant signal, as it places Gulf energy and tech infrastructure (including Stargate) in Iran's explicitly declared target set.

Layer 4: Kahn Escalation Placement

Previous rung: 16 (Nuclear Ultimatums) at 16:30 GST

Current rung: **17 (Limited Escalation / Deliberate Attacks on Civilian Economy)**

Next rung: 19 (Terminal non-nuclear crisis)

What moved the crisis: infrastructure strikes are now being executed by Israel (bridges, railways, airports, petrochemical complexes) and by the US (Kharg Island military targets). Iran has lifted restraint on Gulf oil targeting. The crisis has moved from the domain of threats and ultimatums into the early stages of deliberate economic warfare against civilian infrastructure on both sides. This is Kahn's Rung 17: limited, controlled escalation aimed at the adversary's economic base, with both sides still calibrating intensity.

What moves it to 19: full execution of the power plant/bridge threat after the deadline; or Iranian retaliatory strike on Gulf energy infrastructure causing mass economic disruption or civilian casualties; or confirmed strike on a nuclear facility.

Decision Matrix Application

Resulting level: B (Prepare). Confidence: High.

The level is at the upper boundary of B, approaching the threshold of C.

Why still B, not C

Level C requires one of the following conditions, none of which is fully met at 22:00:

- Layer 1 all 6 indicators positive + 0–1 OK brakes + at least 2 Failed: **Indicator 6 remains No**. Brakes are at 2 Failed (Congress, Facilitators), but Pentagon is transitional. If Pentagon confirms Failed and indicator 6 fires, this path activates.
- 3b positive: **No**. No explicit nuclear rhetoric.
- Fresh insider warning signals new/widened within 72h + at least one of: 3a positive, all but one brake no longer OK, etc.: **Fresh insider warnings are widened and 3a is positive and zero brakes are OK**. This combination is very close to the Level C combination rule. The question is whether the framework treats the current operational facts (infrastructure being destroyed) as equivalent to “fresh insider warning signals” in the Level C technical definition. The IDF’s railway warning was a warning signal; the subsequent strikes are the event the warning predicted. The framework was designed to trigger on signals, not on the events themselves. This is an edge case.
- V7.0 pathway (Pre-Trigger Amber + 3a + zero OK): **Active but Amber is elevation, not trigger**.

Honest assessment: the framework produces Level B, but the analyst’s judgment is that the situation is functionally at the boundary between B and C. The gap is a single event: a confirmed Failed status for the Pentagon brake (confirmed when the military executes a full civilian infrastructure campaign), or any Layer 3 trigger (3b, Bushehr, or a mass-casualty Iranian retaliatory strike on the Gulf).

Pre-Decision for T-1 Assessment (03:00 GST)

The T-1 assessment at 03:00 GST occurs one hour before the deadline expires. The following decision tree is pre-agreed:

Scenario 1: Deal announced before 03:00

Maintain Level B. Reassess at 08:00 GST. If the deal includes a verified ceasefire and Hormuz reopening, begin to reduce toward Level A within 48 hours.

Scenario 2: Deadline extended before 03:00

Maintain Level B. Note the extension as a pattern (Trump has extended deadlines multiple times). Maintain all B preparations. Do not demobilise.

Scenario 3: No deal, no extension, strikes continue or intensify

Reassess for Level C. At 03:00, the following questions determine the level:

- **Has the Pentagon executed a full civilian infrastructure campaign (power plants, bridges)?** If yes: Pentagon brake moves to Failed. 3 Failed brakes. If indicator 6 also fires (mass US casualties in the next 5 hours), Level C is triggered through the standard path.
- **Has Iran retaliated against Gulf oil infrastructure?** If yes: the IRGC’s declared threat has become operational. This confirms the institutional-actor exit signals, widens 3a further, and may trigger fresh insider warnings through new emergency closures or evacuations in Abu Dhabi.
- **Has 3b fired (explicit nuclear rhetoric)?** If yes: Level C immediately. Depart.
- **Has Bushehr been struck with reactor/fuel storage damage?** If yes: Level D immediately. Shelter or immediate exit.

If the answer to all four questions is no, but strikes on conventional infrastructure (railways, bridges, airports) are ongoing: **maintain B at its upper boundary**. Execute all remaining Level B actions. Book the first available flight. Do not wait for the T+1 assessment if airspace conditions deteriorate overnight.

Immediate Actions

Before midnight (02:00 GST)

1. **Book flights now.** Check Emirates, Etihad, flydubai for the first available departure AUH/DXB to Amsterdam within 48 hours. If nothing available, check Muscat to Amsterdam (Oman Air, SalamAir, KLM via other hub). Book the best available option. Do not optimise for cost.
2. **Confirm Muscat routing.** Verify that the Al Ain border crossing to Oman remains open (it was open as of this morning). Download offline maps for the route. Check Oman Air MCT departures.
3. **Financial access.** Confirm sufficient funds accessible from a European bank account. If the balance is inadequate, transfer tonight.
4. **Employer briefing.** Bartje to send a neutral message to her direct report or HR contact at FAB: "As a precaution given the security situation, we are ensuring our personal contingency plans are in order. No change to my professional availability." This plants the seed without triggering alarm.
5. **Go-bags at the door.** Both bags packed. Passports, cash (EUR + USD), chargers, medications, document copies. Verify nothing is missing.
6. **Vehicle fuel.** Confirm both cars above 75%. If not, fuel tonight.
7. **Emergency contact.** Confirm NL contact has been briefed and knows the check-in schedule.

At 02:45 GST

- Wake for T-1 assessment. Review latest wire service updates (Reuters, CNN, Al Jazeera).
- Execute the pre-decision tree above.
- If Level C triggers: begin departure protocol at first light.

Assessment Record

Field	Entry
Date / time	7 April 2026 / 22:00 GST (T-6 deadline protocol)
Layer 0	Moderate (unchanged)
Layer 1	1 Y (High); 2 Y (High); 3 Y (High, upgraded); 4 Y (High); 5 Y (High); 6 N (High)
Layer 2	Congress: Failed. Pentagon: Degraded → Failed (transitional). Facilitators: Failed (Iran halted talks). Coalition: Degraded. OK count: 0. Failed count: 2 confirmed, 1 transitional. Degradation acceleration rule: Active.
Layer 3	3a: Y, widened (High). 3b: N (High). Fresh insider warning: Y, widened to operational execution (High). Nuclear facility: Pre-Trigger Amber (High). Pattern break: N (High). Institutional-actor exits: Y, widened to 5 actors (Med). NEW: Iran oil restraint lifted (not in standard categories; reinforces 3a and 8a).
Kahn	Current: Rung 17 (Limited Escalation / Deliberate Attacks on Civilian Economy). Previous: Rung 16. Next: Rung 19.
Kahn movement	Moved by: execution of infrastructure strikes (railways, bridges, airports, petrochemical) before deadline; Iran lifting oil restraint; Kharg Island struck second time. Could move higher by: full infrastructure campaign post-deadline; Iranian retaliatory strike on Gulf energy infrastructure; confirmed nuclear facility damage.
Change since 16:30	3a: widened ("whole civilisation will die"). Layer 1.3: upgraded to High confidence (Iran halted talks). Fresh insider warnings: widened (IDF warning executed, bridges struck). 8a: widened (King Fahd Causeway closed, Saudi debris near energy facilities, Italian airports restricting fuel). Layer 2: Facilitators moved to Failed, Pentagon trending Failed. NEW: Iran oil restraint lifted. Kahn: moved from 16 to 17.
Resulting level	B (Prepare) Confidence: High Upper boundary, approaching C
Action taken	Book flights. Fuel vehicles. Go-bags at door. Employer briefed. Financial access confirmed. Pre-decision tree agreed for T-1.
Deadline status	Active. T-1: 03:00 GST Wed. T+1: 05:00 GST Wed. Pre-decision tree documented above.
Notes	The framework produces Level B. The analyst's judgment is that the situation is functionally at the B/C boundary. A single additional trigger event converts B to C within the next 6 hours. If no trigger fires but infrastructure strikes continue, Level B is maintained at its upper boundary with all preparations executed. Do not wait for the T+1 assessment if airspace conditions or flight availability deteriorate overnight.

Sources

This T-6 assessment is based on reporting from the following sources, accessed between 20:30 and 22:00 GST on 7 April 2026:

- NBC News live updates (7 April 2026, updated 14:02 EDT): Kharg Island strikes, Trump rhetoric, IRGC response
- Bloomberg (7 April 2026, 16:48 UTC): Iran halted ceasefire talks, Kharg strikes, mediator scramble
- CNN live updates (7 April 2026, updated 07:36 EDT): IDF railway warning execution, Istanbul attack, Trump rhetoric
- CBS News live updates (7 April 2026, updated 10:12 EDT): Netanyahu confirms infrastructure strikes, human chains
- Al Jazeera live blog (7 April 2026): IRGC "outside the region" warning, Kharg explosions, railway bridge strike
- Al Jazeera day 39 summary: Kharg Island, synagogue struck, airports hit, Mashhad trains cancelled
- Iran International live blog (7 April 2026): overnight strike wave across Iran, VPN crackdown, ceasefire status

- Alma Research and Education Center daily report (7 April 2026, 16:00): Ali al-Salem strike (15 US wounded), Saudi missile intercepts
- Wikipedia: 2026 Iran war (updated 7 April): Iran oil restraint lifted in response to Kharg strikes
- AP/NBC Washington (7 April 2026): Saudi debris near energy facilities, King Fahd Causeway closure
- MS NOW/NBC (7 April 2026, 12:31 EDT): Greene and Jones 25th Amendment call, Pezeshkian 14 million volunteers
- NPR (7 April 2026): Kharg Island analysis, civilian infrastructure war crimes assessment
- UAE Ministry of Defence infographic (7 April 2026): cumulative 520 ballistic missiles, 26 cruise missiles, 2,221 UAVs
- Framework: Outdoor Connect Escalation Risk Assessment Framework v7.0 (7 April 2026)

Analytical Foundations

- Herman Kahn, *On Escalation* (1965). Rung 17: Limited Escalation.
- Thomas Schelling, *Arms and Influence* (1966). The threat that leaves something to chance.
- Robert Pape, escalation framework and compellence theory.
- Outdoor Connect Gulf Series essays 1–10, particularly Essay 9 (The Last Check) and Essay 10 (The De-escalation Paradox).

Final note. The framework is doing its job. It is holding at Level B because no hard trigger has fired. But the framework also tells you when the distance to the next level is short and closing fast. That distance is now measured in hours, not days. Act on the Level B actions tonight. Trust the T-1 assessment to tell you if the level changes. If it does, you will be ready.