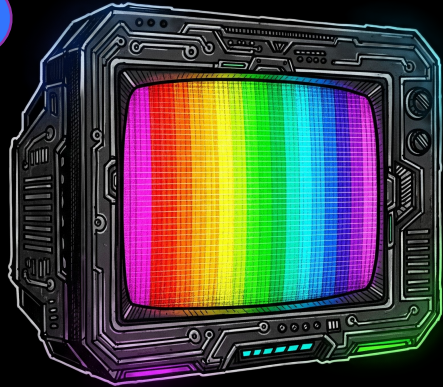




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# YouTube Narrative Report on US-Israeli War with Iran

# METHODOLOGY

- We identified **303,045 videos** with a total of more than **16 billion views** from **117 countries**. Each video mentions the U.S.-Israeli war with Iran. Videos were posted to YouTube between **February 10th, 2026** and **April 14th, 2026 (a 63 day window)**.
- We used multi-modal AI to watch each video and identify narratives about the U.S.-Israeli war with Iran.
- We classified each observed narrative as “positive / supportive” or “negative / oppositional” towards the war.
- Key Metric “Ratings Points” - a proprietary metric that measures relative reach and frequency of a given narrative or creator within the study.

# Stages of the War

## STAGE 1: Feb 10-Feb 27 - Pre-War Attention Spike

- Initial coverage of Iran-US nuclear peace talks and threats of “possible limited strikes” drove a large amount of attention.
- YouTube narratives globally are **4.1x times more negative** than positive, while US narratives are 1.3x more negative than positive (aka, a 4.1x global and 1.3x US neg-to-pos view ratio) during this time.

## STAGE 2: Feb 28-March 23 - Initial strikes

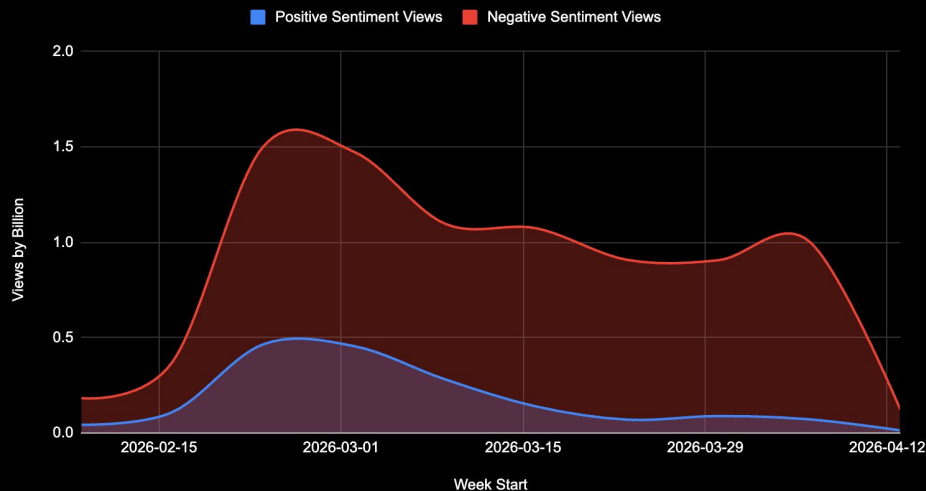
- Positive coverage of the war spikes, then begins to drop off while negative attention is sustained by international and national coverage of flight delays, the human toll of war, and gas prices.
- A Positive surge: Feb 23 - March 09 - Driven almost entirely by viral Fox News clips, international and national coverage featuring Trump and White House officials declaring the war as morally necessary.
  - Global narratives have a **3.8x neg-to-pos view ratio**, and US narratives have a 1.7x neg-to-pos view ratio.

## STAGE 3: March 24 - April 14 - Negativity Cements

- Positive attention drops off sharply, while negative attention is sustained by varied sources, including late night television, political creators on both sides of the aisle, and continuous news reporting critical of the war.
- Global narratives have a **12.3x neg-to-pos view ratio** and US narratives have a 2.6x neg-to-pos view ratio.

# Globally: Video Views Were Consistently Negative Throughout the Study

Views on the Iran War X Sentiment X Week

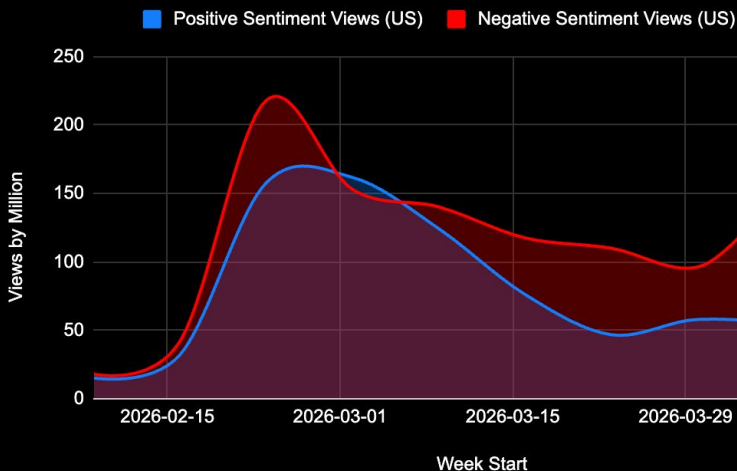


- The negative sentiment spike on 2/23 precedes the initial strikes on Iran on 2/28. It is driven by intl. [coverage of peace talks](#) and threats of “possible limited strikes” by President Trump.
- The positive sentiment spike on 2/23 is driven by extensive Fox News coverage of rising tensions with Iran, stressing the perceived moral necessity of striking Iran to liberate its people.
- The middle negative spike on 3/15 is driven by scathing international narratives and coverage, mainly from India and Indonesia, stressing [flight delays](#), the aftermath of strikes, and even [imagery of destruction](#) from Fox.
- The final negative sentiment spike is driven by US late night TV creators.



# Among Only U.S. Creators: Sentiment Briefly Nets More Positive Than Negative Attention And Presents a More Mixed Overall Picture

US Only: Views on the Iran War X Sentiment X Week



- There is one week (03/02 to 03/09) where positive narratives outpace negative. Views in this period are driven by over a dozen viral Fox News clips.
- Fox's clips suggest Iran's capabilities are "wiped out," the [US is dominating](#) the conflict, and that [regional](#) allies [are mobilizing](#) against Iran.
- The first negative sentiment spike is driven by no individual creator, but rather a plurality of negative coverage, such as MeidasTouch suggesting the war is [backfiring](#), and Tucker Carlson's "[You've Been Lied to About the War in Iran](#)," a video villainizing Israel.
- The second negative sentiment spike is driven by [MeidasTouch](#), [SNL](#) and [Jimmy Kimmel](#) emphasizing Trump's "insane" conduct and alleging the occurrence of "war crimes."

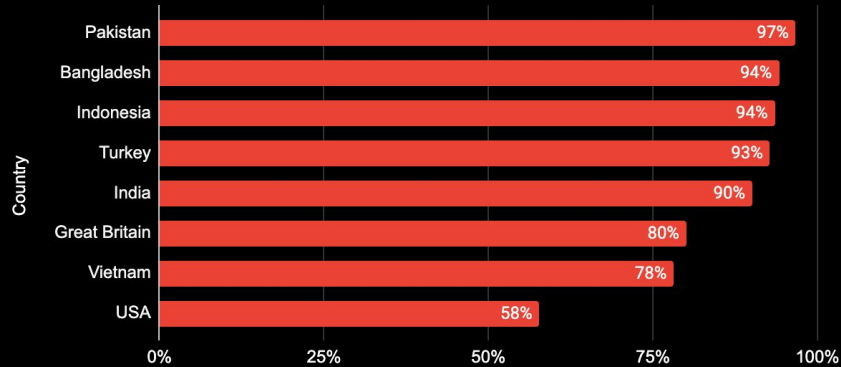


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# Over 95% of 117 Nations' YT Views of the Iranian War Skewed Negative.

## However, US Coverage is Notably More Mixed than Average (A 58-42% negative-to-positive view split.)

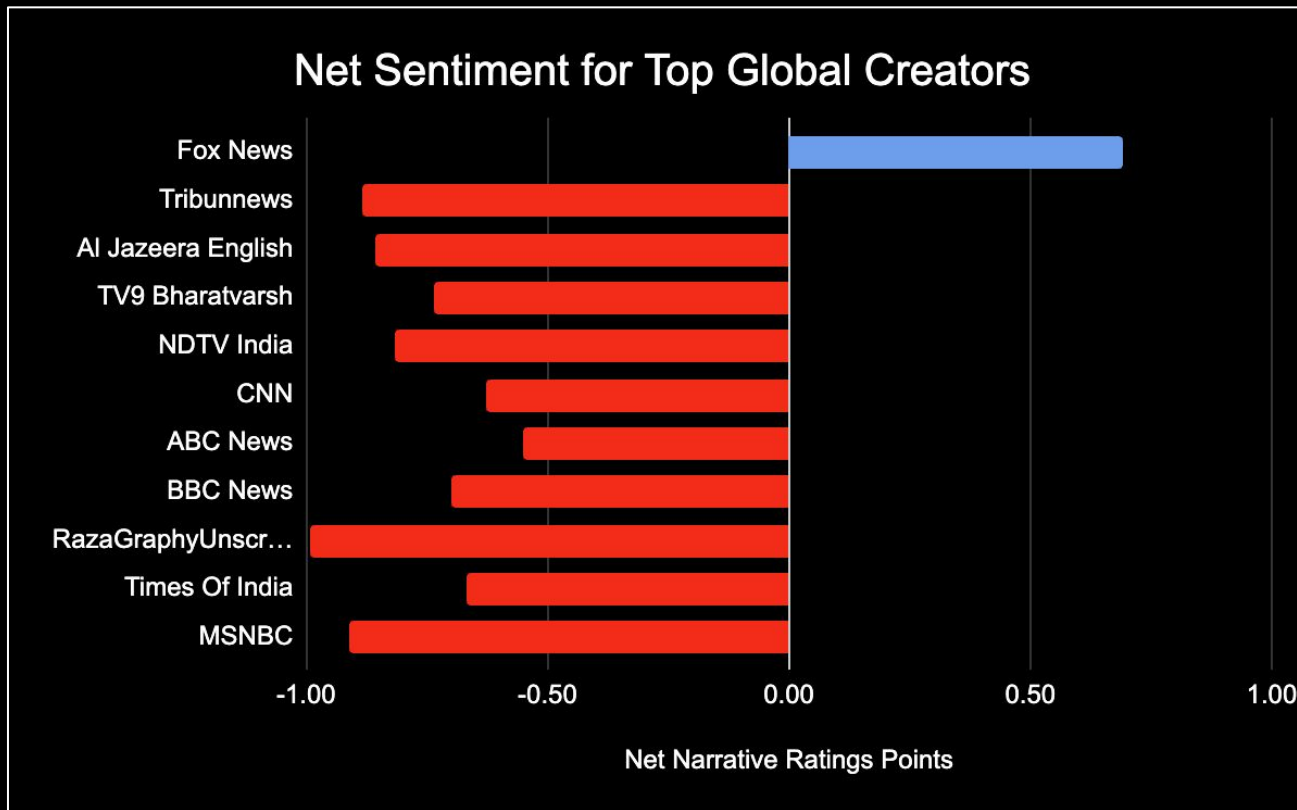
Negative YT View % on the US-Israeli War with Iran in the Highest-Viewed Nations



\*Of the 117 countries with YT videos we collected, only four lean positive on the war: Bulgaria, Israel, Malta and Finland.

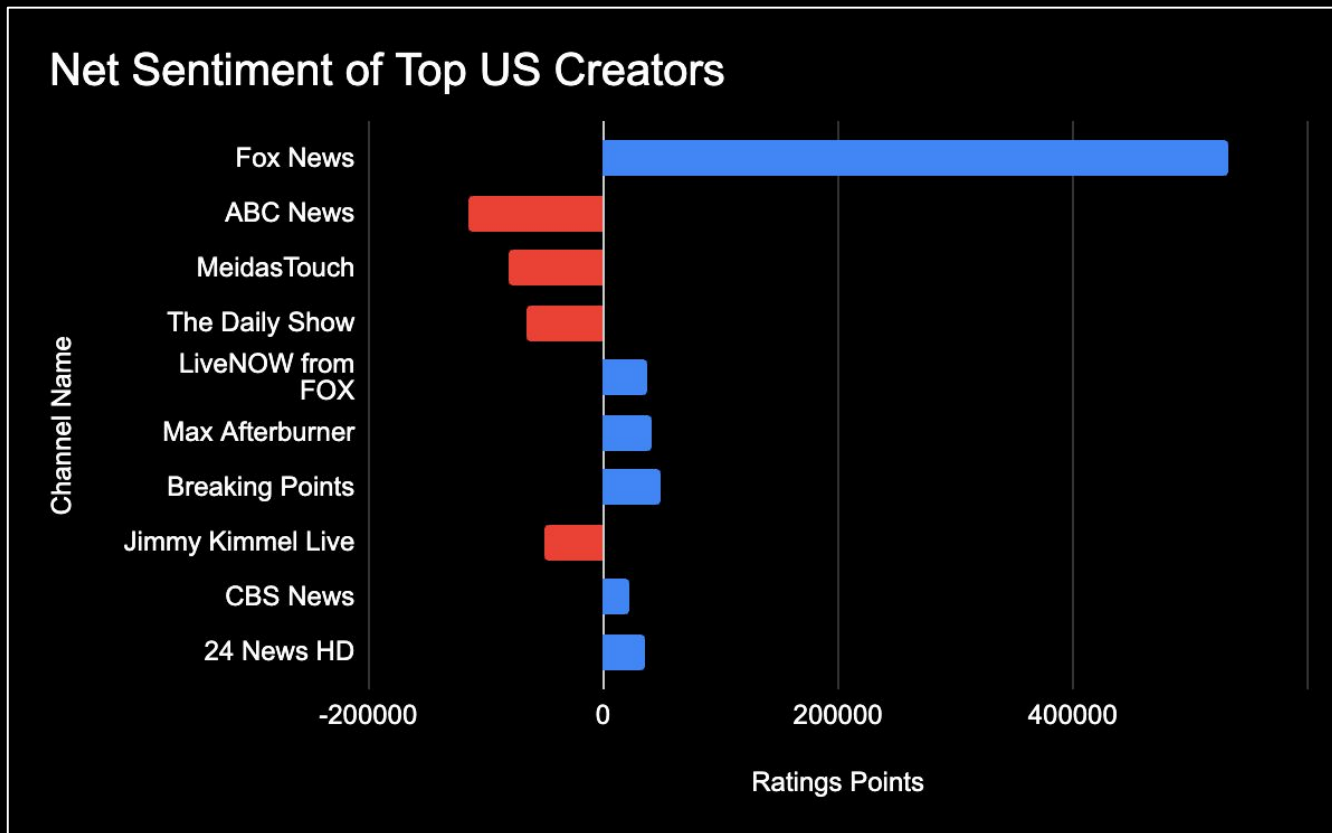
# Globally: Top Creators on the Iran War by Net Sentiment

Fox News is the only top mixed sentiment channel that skews positive - other channels skew, on average, nearly 90% negative



# Domestically: Top Creators on the Iran War by Net Sentiment

Conservative and liberal influencers and news outlets dominate coverage.





# Overall: Narrative Ratings on the War Show Over 4x More Negative NRPs than Positive

Iranian Resistance and Global Opposition Each Comprise 16% of all Narrative Ratings Points in this study.

	Total Narrative Ratings Points	2026-02-16	2026-02-23	2026-03-02	2026-03-09	2026-03-16	2026-03-23	2026-03-30	2026-04-06
<b>All Narratives</b>	<b>5,030,748,283</b>	<b>218,094,318</b>	<b>837,434,343</b>	<b>736,606,576</b>	<b>1,071,706,255</b>	<b>603,193,364</b>	<b>512,713,900</b>	<b>554,928,916</b>	<b>496,070,611</b>
<b>Negative (Oppositional) Narratives</b>	<b>3,803,159,745</b>	<b>143,444,625</b>	<b>542,995,426</b>	<b>425,147,171</b>	<b>867,942,643</b>	<b>465,575,226</b>	<b>437,397,555</b>	<b>473,405,787</b>	<b>447,251,312</b>
Iranian military defiance and resistance against US-Israeli aggression	961,741,745	50,369,835	132,652,000	83,418,582	225,157,586	124,099,485	95,207,005	94,667,114	156,170,138
Global opposition emphasizing catastrophic economic and geopolitical consequences	903,374,407	52,837,637	269,399,275	55,626,713	164,465,794	63,262,939	103,570,256	147,768,005	46,443,788
Focus on Civilian Casualties and Humanitarian Impact	549,400,575	0	27,444,356	107,303,347	207,636,256	48,708,711	59,034,616	51,979,843	47,293,446
Criticism of US-Israeli motives and influence in pushing for war	385,359,494	17,269,588	50,263,836	50,464,696	14,885,024	80,377,769	67,611,050	83,502,358	20,985,173
Public and Popular Opposition, Protests, and Satire	215,731,062	0	49,399,918	64,614,967	22,040,723	19,594,741	32,760,949	0	27,319,764
Political and Legislative Opposition in the US and Allies	205,765,881	0	0	288,037	47,704,750	24,588,274	9,596,894	24,753,686	98,834,240
Fear of large-scale regional and global military escalation leading to World War III	197,351,447	13,757,368	0	39,939,273	75,534,012	52,433,181	0	15,687,613	0
US Military Weakness and Logistical Failures	182,924,349	0	3,558,374	23,256,749	18,831,308	33,926,649	51,037,885	35,988,949	16,324,435
Propaganda and Media Framing to Generate Excitement	133,154,675	0	0	234,807	91,687,190	10,490,448	4,602,840	1,207,841	24,931,549
Diplomatic efforts and advocacy for peaceful resolution	68,356,110	9,210,197	10,277,667	0	0	8,093,029	13,976,060	17,850,378	8,948,779
<b>Positive (Supportive) Narratives</b>	<b>1,227,588,538</b>	<b>74,649,693</b>	<b>294,438,917</b>	<b>311,459,405</b>	<b>203,763,612</b>	<b>137,618,138</b>	<b>75,316,345</b>	<b>81,523,129</b>	<b>48,819,299</b>
Moral and Strategic Justifications for War	743,154,949	67,627,854	159,998,899	164,373,188	147,627,146	79,972,645	62,620,529	38,909,330	22,025,358
High-Profile Political and Military Endorsements	369,206,748	7,004,591	123,079,931	114,122,809	48,308,504	36,851,359	10,715,146	17,958,020	11,166,388
Emphasis on Joint Israeli-American Cooperation and Alliance	59,865,556	0	6,087	22,888,003	7,035,714	18,591,917	0	5,008,795	6,335,040
Popular and Diasporic Support for the War	25,668,970	0	10,264,036	10,075,405	0	1,577,234	0	3,201,393	550,902
Rhetoric of Moral and Strategic Superiority in Defense of Israel	14,990,962	0	0	0	0	0	159,221	14,831,741	0
Religious and Prophetic Justifications	2,347,097	17,248	1,089,964	0	792,248	0	13,588	434,049	0
Economic and Strategic Stability Justifications	12,354,256	0	0	0	0	624,983	1,807,861	1,179,801	8,741,611



# Top Negative Narrative Clusters on US-Israeli War with Iran

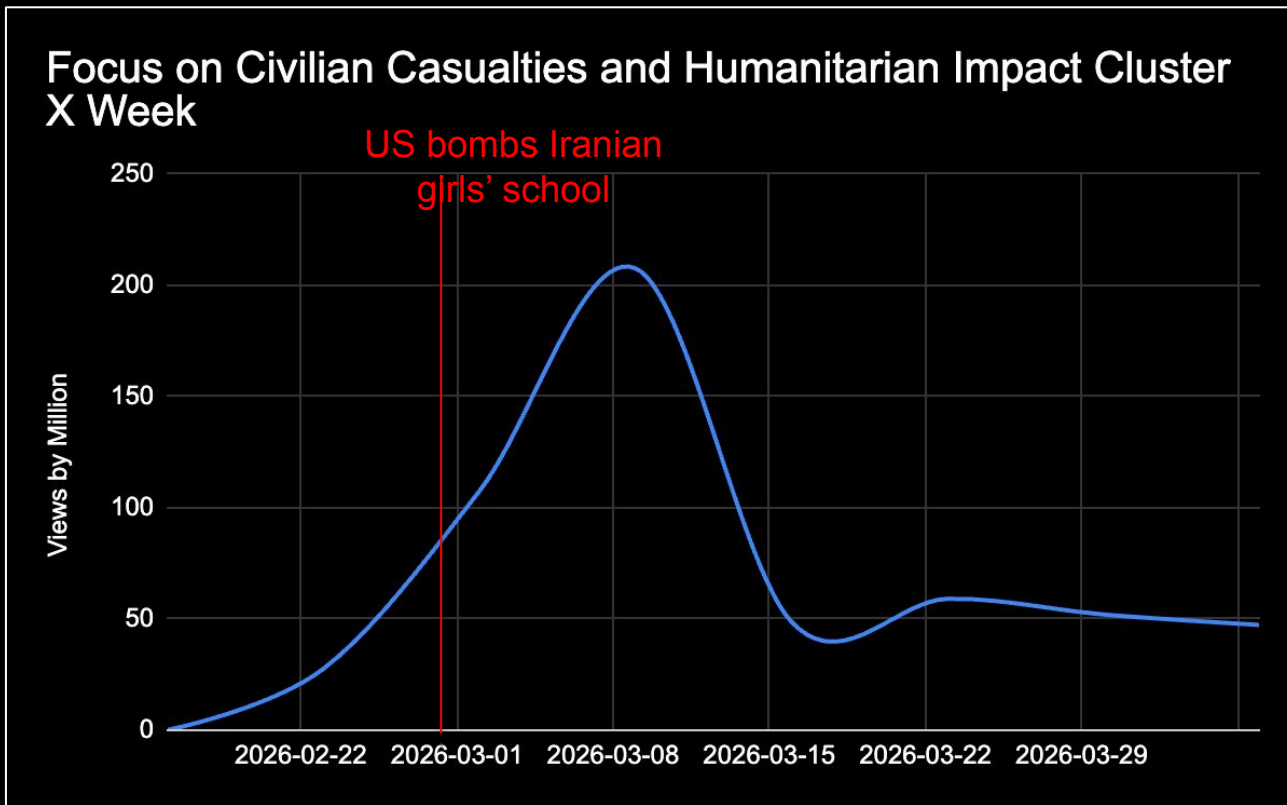
- **#1 - Iranian military defiance and resistance against US-Israeli aggression:** This cluster centers around Iran's military readiness, including missile tests, naval drills, and rhetoric from Iranian leadership emphasizing defiance and threats to sink US and Israeli warships. It also highlights Iranian strategic alliances with Russia, China, and regional groups such as the Taliban, projecting a narrative of strong military resistance and preparedness that challenges the feasibility and wisdom of a war. **(25% of all negative NRPs.)**
- **#2 - Global opposition emphasizing catastrophic economic and geopolitical consequences:** This cluster highlights widespread fear and opposition to the Israeli-American war on Iran by focusing on the catastrophic global economic fallout (including oil price spikes due to closure of the Strait of Hormuz), potential regional destabilization, and the risk of escalating into a larger global conflict involving Russia, China, and other powers. It includes narratives warning of prolonged warfare, humanitarian crises, and global market collapses, promoting a negative perception of the war. **(23% of all negative NRPs.)**
- **#3 - Focus on Civilian Casualties and Humanitarian Impact:** This cluster highlights the tragic human cost of the conflict, especially focusing on attacks resulting in the deaths of children and civilians, destruction of schools, hospitals, and residential areas. It features narratives condemning the humanitarian consequences, evoking sympathy and fear, and promoting opposition by emphasizing the war's brutality and disregard for innocent lives.



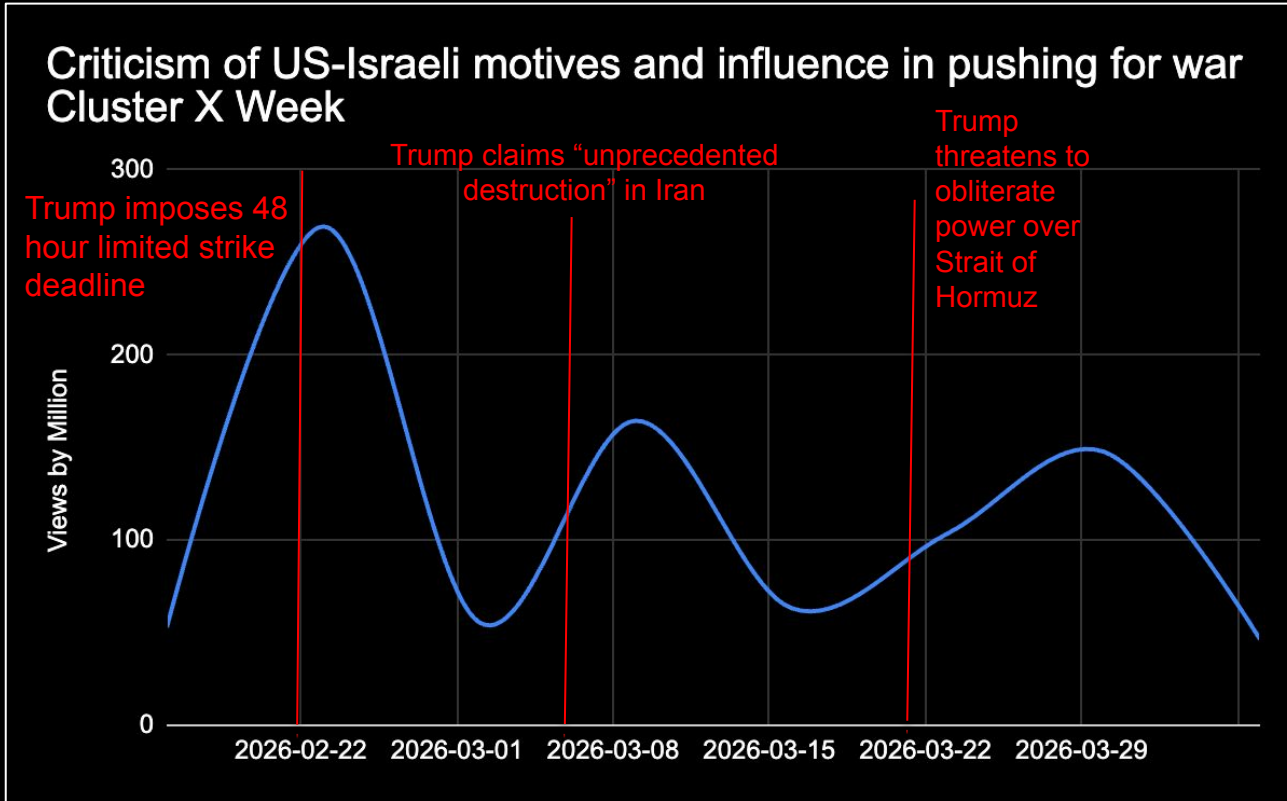
# Top Positive Narrative Clusters on the US-Israeli War with Iran

- **#1 - Moral and Strategic Justifications for War:** Videos emphasizing the Iranian regime as a brutal, hostile, irrational, or destabilizing force, highlighting human rights abuses, nuclear ambitions, and regional threats; framing military conflict as necessary, justified, and a path to regime change, freedom for the Iranian people, and regional stability (**60% of all positive NRPs.**)
- **#2 - High-Profile Political and Military Endorsements:** Videos featuring statements or appearances by prominent figures such as Donald Trump, JD Vance, Lindsey Graham, General H.R. McMaster, Mike Pompeo, and Israeli leaders expressing explicit support for military intervention, regime change, or praising past successful strikes against Iran; these endorsements frame the conflict as both feasible and necessary (**30% of all positive NRPs.**)
- **#3 - Emphasis on Joint Israeli-American Cooperation and Alliance:** Many videos highlight the close cooperation, coordination, and unified military efforts of the US and Israel against Iran, showcasing joint operations, political alignment, and shared strategic objectives to promote a positive perception of the alliance.

# Spotlight: Civilian Casualties Narrative Cluster X Week



# Spotlight: Criticism of US-Israeli Influence in War X Week



# Creator Deep Dive: Fox News X Content Share

**Fox as a % of Total Views (All Geos)**

	Pos	Neg	Total
<b>Stage 1</b>	9.91%	0.79%	0.64%
<b>Stage 2</b>	22.64%	1.32%	1.04%
<b>Stage 3</b>	50.81%	0.53%	0.49%
<b>Total</b>	24.58%	0.98%	4.87%

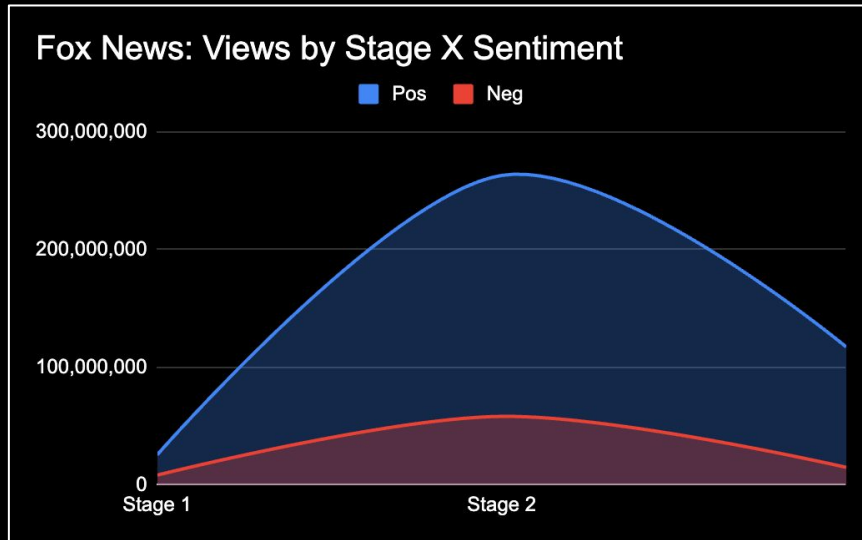
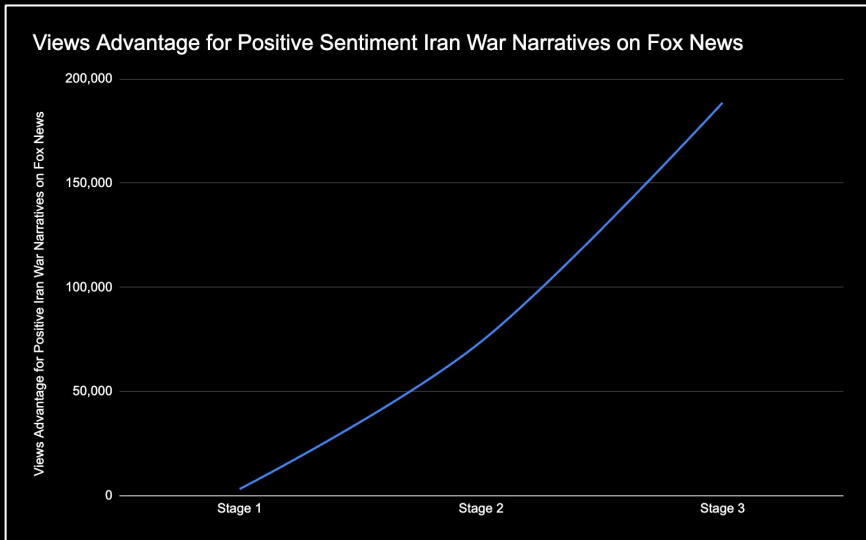
**Fox as a % of All US Views**

	Pos	Neg	Total
<b>Stage 1</b>	12.53%	3.06%	7.08%
<b>Stage 2</b>	72.65%	9.30%	32.46%
<b>Stage 3</b>	70.97%	3.50%	22.20%
<b>Total</b>	55.46%	6.13%	23.59%

- Globally, Fox comprises 25% of all positive narratives, and 51% of positive narratives in stage 3 (percentiles rounded.)
- In the US, numbers are even more stark: Fox comprises 55% of all positive narratives on the war with Iran, and over 70% of positive narratives in both stages 2 and 3.
- Fox comprises less than 1% of global negative narratives, and 6% of US negative narratives.
- But Fox alone comprises 5% of global narratives and 24% of US YouTube narratives on the war with Iran.



# Creator Deep Dive: Fox News X Sentiment



- Fox consistently produced content that is positive on the war, but the overall sentiment of Fox's coverage did *not* become more positive over time. However, audiences for Fox's content began to more strongly prefer watching Fox's content supportive of the war to Fox's content opposing the war. This suggests Fox is successfully pushing its audience rightward on the Iran War (or at least, rightwing audiences are choosing content more supportive of the war over time.)
- Fox's video production and views spiked in stage 2 of our study (the first three weeks of strikes with Iran.) Since then, Fox is both creating less content about the war and driving fewer views on the war.

# Key Takeaways

- The international community is extremely negative on the Israeli-US War with Iran – nearly a 90-10% split in negative to positive narratives in many nations.
- The US is significantly more positive than international videos, but not quite enough to be positive overall - a 60-40% negative to positive narrative split.
  - Positive attention is buoyed almost entirely by Fox News, which comprises 25% of all US YT narratives and 55% of all positive US YT narratives.
  - Negative attention comes from more varied sources, from Late Night TV to political creators on both sides of the aisle (such as MeidasTouch and Tucker Carlson) and news coverage (such as ABC and CNN.)
- Key narrative clusters include: Iranian military defiance, moral justifications for war, global opposition, humanitarian concerns, and high-profile cabinet endorsements.
- GenAI content depicting Trump and Khamenei, humor lampooning the White House, and international and national news coverage were the prominent drivers of attention on Iran. 643 creator-labeled GenAI videos drove 90 mil views.

# A Sampling of Influential Videos



# Moral and Strategic Justifications for War - Intl Mixed Coverage Creator Spotlight: Make AI Great Again



Make AI Great Again - **Trump Waiting Forever to Strike Iran** 🚀 ⏳ 🛌 - 12M views

- This is the most-watched mixed sentiment video for stage #1 (before initial strikes.) It satirizes Trump threatening but waiting to strike Iran by showing him putting a missile in front of Khamenei's cave and then falling asleep on top of it. Then Khamenei comes out of his cave and lights the missile, launching Trump into a US warship, which explodes. This video stresses the conniving nature of the Iranian regime.
- This video surfaces as mixed sentiment because it originally shows Trump sending Khamenei into retreat, then Khamenei doing worse to Trump.
- Similar creators include Global Governance and NoblePresident.



# Moral and Strategic Justifications for War - Pos

## Creator Spotlight: Max Afterburner



Max Afterburner -  
**Iran Jet Crash Just Revealed Something INSANE About  
Iran's Military** - 5.3M views

- Rightwing creator Max Afterburner's shorts are 3 of the top 20 positive videos in stage #1 (before strikes), with his two most viral videos outperforming Fox's most viral stage #1 video.
- Max's content emphasizes the US' military and strategic equipment advantage, comparing the US military to "the biggest guy at the bar" and the "biggest aerial hammer" in the Middle East.



# Global opposition and Focus on Civilian Casualties Top Cluster Video - Neg Creator Spotlight: Dhruv Rathee



Iran Israel War | Why is ENTIRE Middle East under Attack? | Dhruv Rathee - 23M views

- Indian activist (based in Germany) Dhruv Rathee records a video showing that his family's vacation was interrupted by bombings and their flights delayed.
- The video emphasizes the devastating human cost, specifically mentioning a school bombing in Minab, Iran, that resulted in the deaths of over 100 children. The content also explores the broader regional instability caused by the conflict, including retaliatory strikes on neighboring countries like the UAE and Bahrain, which damaged civilian infrastructure. Furthermore, the video discusses the severe economic repercussions for India, such as potential oil supply disruptions and rising inflation.

# High-Profile Political and Military Endorsements (Pos) + Public and Popular Opposition (Neg) Creator: Fox News



**Fox News - US launches nearly 900 strikes on Iran in  
RARE daytime operation - 5.9M views**

- The video contains overwhelmingly positive themes narratives on the Israeli-American war on Iran. News anchors describe the military action as "history unfolding," an "unprecedented military operation," and a "devastating blow to Iran's Islamic regime." At 2:10, an anchor refers to the operation as "really quite remarkable." Visual narratives also show "celebrations" breaking out on the streets of Iran, framing the war as a "hope for relief" from the regime. Additionally, the video uses graphics that label targeted Iranian leaders as "eliminated" in a way that suggests a positive strategic victory.
- The video also contains several negative themes and visuals. At 0:05 and 0:21, footage shows explosions and panic in residential urban areas, depicting the war's destructive impact on civilians. At 0:24, an Iranian official explicitly condemns the military action as an "act of aggression." Furthermore, the video reports on widespread retaliatory strikes causing chaos across the region (1:36), reports on mobs storming the U.S. embassy in Baghdad (2:46), and shows footage of "Death to America" protests in Tehran (3:17), all of which reflect themes of resistance, fear, and hatred toward the conflict.



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# Propaganda and Media Framing to Generate Excitement Top Cluster Video - Pos Creator: Beyond Military



**Iran Challenged U.S. Air Force – BIG MISTAKE-**  
Beyond Military - 4M views

- The video depicts a joint Israeli-American military operation against Iran in a positive and exciting light. It showcases advanced weaponry like the B-2 bomber, referred to as the "Freedom Dorito" (00:23), and F-35s successfully neutralizing Iranian threats. The narrative celebrates the technological superiority and tactical success of the US and Israeli forces, highlighting the destruction of Iranian missile sites (07:48, 15:28) and the IDF's efficient response to Iranian missile launchers (11:32). The video's tone is one of military triumph, and it concludes by promoting further content regarding "the war against Iran" (19:42).

# Iranian military defiance, Public and Popular Opposition, Protests, and Satire, and Political and Legislative Opposition Video - US Negative Creator: Jimmy Kimmel



**Jimmy Kimmel Live - Trump Declares Total Victory in Iran, Aims to Make Big Money & JD Vance Calls the Ceasefire Fragile - 3.1M views**

- US negative videos are driven by [Jon Stewart](#) and [Jimmy Kimmel's](#) satirical late night coverage lampooning the war as ill-conceived by officials.
- Jimmy Kimmel mocks President Trump's handling of the situation, referring to it as an "international nightmare" and a "war crime." He uses humor to criticize the political and military motivations behind the conflict, implying that it is driven by personal agendas rather than strategic interests. The video includes segments where the host sarcastically comments on the "ceasefire" and the involvement of other political figures, further highlighting a critical perspective on the ongoing war.

# US Negative News Coverage Top Creator: David Muir



ABC News - ABC World News Tonight with David Muir Full Broadcast - March 23, 2026 (posted 24th) - 1.3M views

- The video provides coverage of the escalating tensions between the U.S. and Iran, including descriptions of U.S. military strikes on Iranian sites and the negative economic impacts in the U.S., such as rising gas prices. The reporting presents these events as concerning, and the narrative emphasizes the growing conflict and its consequences, which can be seen as promoting a negative perception of the war efforts.
- Negative coverage is also driven by coverage of gas price increases and [US casualties](#) (David Muir posted 7 of top ten US negative videos overall.)