COMMS WATCH

Communications Infrastructure • Spectrum • Electronic Warfare • Public Safety Comms

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⚠ PREPAREDNESS CONDITION: PREP-CON 3 - ELEVATED
Incident probable, trend STABLE. Drivers and full reasoning in the CONDITION RATIONALE section below.

COMMUNICATIONS CONDITION: COMCON 4 - PARTIALLY DEGRADED (CONUS)
Communications environment partially degraded. Drivers and full reasoning in the CONDITION RATIONALE section below.

Publication Date	23 May 2026
Reporting Period	16 May - 23 May 2026
PREP-CON Assessment	PREP-CON 3 - ELEVATED (Brown)
COMCON Assessment	COMCON 4 - Partially Degraded (AA26-097A active Day 46, Hormuz GNSS jamming sustained, CVE-2026-20182 Cisco SD-WAN escalated to Emergency Directive 26-03 with confirmed active exploitation, HF recovered post-storm to quiet baseline). COMCON held at 4 on sustained Hormuz GNSS denial and active CI cyber retaliation profile, not on space weather.
Solar Flux (SFI)	declining post-SC25-peak; flare activity low-to-moderate (24-MAY sweep) | Kp Index: quiet - greatest expected 3-hr Kp is 3 over 24-26 MAY; no G1+ geomagnetic storm expected (SWPC 3-day forecast, 24-MAY) | SWPC Outlook: Geomagnetic conditions quiet; SWPC 3-day forecast shows greatest expected 3-hr Kp of 3 over 24-26 MAY with no G1 (Minor) or greater storm expected. The 15-17 MAY G2 storm has fully ended and HF has recovered. Coronal holes CH1369/CH1370 may bring unsettled-to-active intervals 26-29 MAY. A 24-MAY Type II radio emission (estimated shock velocity 579 km/s) was logged but no Earth-directed CME of concern is in the forecast. Standing risk: 35 percent chance of R1-R2 (Minor-Moderate) radio blackouts over 24-26 MAY, driven by flare activity rather than geomagnetic storming. Separately, 2 MeV electron flux has exceeded 1000 pfu since 16-MAY (24-MAY max 3762 pfu) - an elevated satellite-charging hazard, not an HF-propagation factor.
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CONDITION RATIONALE | WHY PREP-CON 3 AND COMCON 4

This section carries the full reasoning behind the two condition banners above. The banners state the posture; the rationale below states why.

PREP-CON 3 - ELEVATED

PREP-CON 3 (ELEVATED) is sustained this cycle on three converging drivers, with the trend assessed STABLE - elevated, but neither escalating to PREP-CON 2 nor relaxing to PREP-CON 4.

Driver 1 - Iran / Hormuz: the Iranian blockade of the Strait of Hormuz is sustained (operator day-count pending confirmation per SOP 0.110-C). Iran continues to control and toll transit; the GNSS-denial footprint across the strait and Gulf is sustained with no contraction signal (see EW-001, SAT-002).

Driver 2 - critical-infrastructure cyber: AA26-097A Iranian APT activity against Rockwell/Allen-Bradley PLCs continues, and CVE-2026-20182 (Cisco Catalyst SD-WAN, CVSS 10.0) has escalated to CISA Emergency Directive 26-03 with confirmed in-the-wild exploitation. The retaliation profile is assessed as elevated.

Driver 3 - ceasefire fragility: the regional posture remains fragile rather than settled, which keeps practitioner posture at ELEVATED rather than allowing a step down.

Net: PREP-CON 3 holds. The drivers are sustained, not worsening; no current-cycle development warrants a move to PREP-CON 2.

COMCON 4 - PARTIALLY DEGRADED (CONUS)

COMCON 4 (PARTIALLY DEGRADED) is held this cycle on two drivers, with a third factor explicitly NOT contributing.

Driver 1 - Hormuz GNSS denial: sustained GPS/GNSS jamming and spoofing across the strait and Gulf degrade the satellite-navigation and timing environment for any Gulf-exposed asset (see SAT-002, EW-001). This is the primary COMCON driver.

Driver 2 - critical-infrastructure cyber: AA26-097A Iranian APT activity and the CVE-2026-20182 SD-WAN Emergency Directive (threat actor UAT-8616 plus 10-plus exploiting clusters) constitute an active retaliation profile against network infrastructure.

NOT a driver this cycle - space weather: the 15-17 MAY G2 geomagnetic storm has ended and HF propagation has recovered to a quiet baseline. COMCON is explicitly NOT held up by space weather this issue; the elevated 2 MeV electron flux is a satellite-charging hazard tracked in SWX-001, not a COMCON driver.

Net: COMCON 4 holds on the Hormuz GNSS and cyber drivers. A move to COMCON 5 (Normal) would require resolution of the Hormuz denial; a move to COMCON 3 would require a new, broader service-affecting degradation not present this cycle.

INFRASTRUCTURE STATUS | AT A GLANCE

Click any ID or system name to jump to the full entry. Footer-level systems (TERR-002, SAT-003, PS-002) have no standalone entry this cycle and are tracked here only.

ID	SYSTEM	STATUS	CYCLE NOTE
SAT-001	Starlink - Theater Degradation	AMBER	Sustained theater degradation (Iran/Ukraine). CONUS nominal. 10,300+ sats operational.
SAT-002	GPS / GNSS - Hormuz	RED	GNSS denial sustained; crews navigating on radar only. Event count pending operator JMIC snapshot.
SAT-003	DirecTV / DISH / EchoStar / SiriusXM	GREEN	Subscriber service nominal. EchoStar S-band thread tracked in REG-002.
SAT-004	Cell-Satellite Integration (DTC)	GREEN	No new delta. 11-MAY FCC SCS auth holds; BB8/9/10 launch mid-June is next gate.
SAT-005	AMSAT / Amateur Satellite	GREEN	Hamvention concluded. ISS crossband active. FO-29 linear transponder returned to service.
SWX-001	Space Weather	AMBER	Geomagnetic quiet; HF recovered. 2 MeV electron flux elevated since 16-MAY - satellite-charging hazard.
NET-003	Submarine Cables - Gulf Corridor	AMBER	2Africa, SeaMeWe-6 Gulf installs still delayed. No new US-nexus fault this window.
TERR-001	FirstNet / AT&T	GREEN	Network nominal. Satellite layer de-risked by 11-MAY FCC SCS auth; no new delta.
TERR-002	Backbone / BGP	GREEN	NSTR this cycle. 14-JAN-2026 Verizon outage still under FCC inquiry.
EW-001	Iranian EW Posture (PRIMARY)	RED	GPS denial + SATCOM jamming sustained. Drives SAT-001, SAT-002, NET-003.
PS-001	9-1-1 / PSAP Infrastructure	GREEN	Nominal nationally. NG911 reliability FNPRM finalization expected late summer.
PS-002	FCC Enforcement - Pittsburgh	AMBER	KD3ASC NOV + Allegheny EMS interference investigation both still open. No disposition.
REG-001	FCC Enforcement Authority	GREEN	New NOVs/NAL this window (13-21 MAY). SCOTUS decision still expected by end of June.
REG-002	FCC Space & Spectrum	GREEN	No new delta. 11-MAY SCS auth holds; Space Modernization NPRM advancing.

ID	SYSTEM	STATUS	CYCLE NOTE
REG-003	Pending Legislation & Rulemaking	AMBER	NEW. CIRCIA final rule due May 2026; spectrum bills and FCC proceedings pending.
IPAWS-001	IPAWS / EAS / WEA	GREEN	Fully operational. FCC modernization NPRM in deliberation; rules expected mid-2026.

Legend: **GREEN** = nominal, no cycle-level concern • **AMBER** = elevated, sustained threat or unresolved structural issue • **RED** = degraded, active service-affecting condition this cycle.

SECTION 1 | COMMS WATCH BRIEF

Five storylines define the communications environment this cycle.

First - a maximum-severity Cisco SD-WAN vulnerability has escalated into an Emergency Directive. CVE-2026-20182, the CVSS 10.0 authentication bypass in Cisco Catalyst SD-WAN Controller and Manager disclosed 14-MAY, has been escalated by CISA to Emergency Directive 26-03 with a federal remediation deadline of 17-MAY. Cisco Talos attributes the confirmed in-the-wild exploitation to a sophisticated threat actor it designates UAT-8616, and reports that 10-plus additional, distinct threat clusters began exploiting Cisco SD-WAN flaws after public proof-of-concept code became available. Post-compromise activity observed includes SSH key insertion, NETCONF configuration modification, and privilege escalation. Because the SD-WAN Controller is part of the central control plane, a compromise affects routing and fabric configuration, not a single endpoint. Practitioner posture: any organization running Cisco Catalyst SD-WAN should treat patching as already overdue against the 17-MAY directive deadline.

Second - CISA KEV cadence remained high through the window. Two further KEV tranches landed inside the reporting period: 20-MAY added seven vulnerabilities, including CVE-2026-41091 (Microsoft Defender elevation of privilege) and CVE-2026-45498 (Microsoft Defender denial of service); 21-MAY added two more, CVE-2026-34926 (Trend Micro Apex One on-premise directory traversal) and CVE-2025-34291 (Langflow origin validation error). The Reuters-reported proposal to shorten the standard FCEB KEV remediation deadline toward three days remains under evaluation and is not yet adopted; the SD-WAN Emergency Directive is a separate, faster track. AA26-097A Iranian APT exploitation of Rockwell/Allen-Bradley PLCs continues, active across water, energy, and government facility sectors.

Third - HF propagation has recovered from the 15-17 MAY geomagnetic storm. The G2 (Moderate) storm covered in Issue 4 has ended. The SWPC 3-day forecast confirms quiet geomagnetic conditions, with the greatest expected 3-hr Kp at 3 over 24-26 MAY and no G1 or greater storm expected. Operational implication: HF is no longer the degraded bearer it was last weekend, and ARES/RACES net controllers can plan normal band usage. Two qualifiers for the week ahead: a standing flare-driven R1-R2 radio-blackout risk (brief daytime HF fade-outs), and coronal holes CH1369/CH1370 that may bring unsettled-to-active intervals 26-29 MAY (see Section 2).

Fourth - FCC enforcement produced fresh actions, with the SCOTUS authority question still pending. The Enforcement Bureau issued new actions inside the window: a 21-MAY Notice of Apparent Liability proposing a 14,000 dollar penalty against Stealth Communications; a 14-MAY Notice of Violation to Rondaradio, Inc.; 13-MAY Notices of Violation to Centro Cristiano De Vida Eterna and Texas Youth Organization; and a 13-MAY consent decree settling an unauthorized-service matter with a carrier. The Supreme Court decision in FCC v. AT&T / Verizon v. FCC, argued 21-APR, is still expected by end of June; post-argument signals continue to lean toward the FCC preserving its forfeiture-order process.

Fifth - the Hormuz negative arc is sustained but stable at an elevated baseline. Iran continues to control and toll Hormuz transit; the GNSS denial footprint, SATCOM jamming, and the blocked cable-repair-access overlay all persist with no material improvement and no material escalation identified this window. The submarine-cable build-out delay for 2Africa and SeaMeWe-6 remains in effect with no new US-nexus cable fault. The direct-to-device positive arc (11-MAY FCC SCS authorization for AST SpaceMobile, mid-June BB8-10 launch) likewise holds with no new movement this week. Net practitioner posture: PREP-CON 3 and COMCON 4 both sustained, held by the Hormuz GNSS denial and the active CI cyber retaliation profile, not by space weather.

No major backbone or BGP routing events identified this reporting window. Backbone NSTR.

SECTION 2 | PROPAGATION CONDITIONS

Solar Flux Index (SFI): declining post-SC25-peak; flare activity low-to-moderate | **Kp Index:** quiet, greatest expected 3-hr Kp of 3 over 24-26 MAY | **SWPC 3-Day Outlook:** Geomagnetic conditions are quiet. The SWPC 3-day forecast shows the greatest expected 3-hr Kp at 3 over 24-26 MAY with no G1 (Minor) or greater geomagnetic storm expected; the 15-17 MAY G2 storm has fully ended and HF has recovered. Coronal holes CH1369 and CH1370 may bring unsettled-to-active intervals 26-29 MAY. Operator alert: a 24-MAY Type II radio emission (estimated shock velocity 579 km/s) was logged, but no Earth-directed CME of concern appears in the forecast. Standing flare-driven risk: roughly a 35 percent chance of R1-R2 (Minor-Moderate) radio blackouts over 24-26 MAY, which produce brief daytime HF fade-outs on the sunlit side rather than sustained storm degradation.

BAND	STATUS	CONDITIONS
80m / 75m	GOOD	Regional NVIS at seasonal baseline following the end of the 15-17 MAY storm. Primary ARES/RACES net band operational for short-haul (under 300mi) and standard regional circuits. Nighttime range and noise floor nominal.
60m	GOOD	EMCOMM channel 5330.5 kHz USB operational at normal reliability. Suitable for short-haul state and regional EMCOMM.
40m	GOOD	Reliable primary EMCOMM band. 200-700 mile NVIS paths nominal; longer skip at seasonal performance with no storm-driven absorption in play.
20m	GOOD	DX and cross-country daytime paths nominal. Daytime workhorse band for longer-haul circuits.
17m	FAIR	Useable for DX in daylight; performance follows the declining post-SC25-peak solar-flux trend, not storm effects.
15m	FAIR	Daytime DX useable but flux-limited. Not a primary EMCOMM band.
10m	POOR	Flux-limited. Sporadic-E may produce isolated short-skip openings into the summer season but is not plannable. Plan around 40m/20m as primary.
⚠ POLAR / TRANS-POLAR (all bands) - GOOD: Polar paths recovered; no active absorption event. Quiet geomagnetic conditions support polar and high-latitude circuits. Note the late-week coronal-hole watch (26-29 MAY) for any planned trans-polar operation, and the standing R1-R2 daytime radio-blackout risk on sunlit paths.		

Operational implication: HF has recovered from the 15-17 MAY G2 storm and conditions are quiet across all bands. ARES/RACES net controllers can plan normal HF band usage; missed-check-in rates should be at baseline. Two qualifiers for the coming week: first, a roughly 35 percent daily chance of R1-R2 radio blackouts can cause brief, sudden HF fade-outs on the sunlit side, so net controllers should not mistake a short flare-driven dropout for an equipment fault; second, coronal holes CH1369 and CH1370 may produce unsettled-to-active geomagnetic intervals 26-29 MAY, which would modestly degrade higher-latitude and longer-skip HF late in the week. Standard multi-bearer discipline applies regardless: VHF/UHF, DMR (Pennsylvania TG 31420), Winlink, and L-band MSS (T-Satellite, Verizon Skylo, Iridium) remain the resilient backup stack for any activation.

SECTION 3 | SATELLITE & SPACE WEATHER

SAT-001	Starlink Service Degradation - Middle East / Eastern Ukraine Theaters	CONTINUED
TRACK	SATELLITE COMMS / ELECTRONIC WARFARE	
DELTA SINCE ISSUE 4	= NO MATERIAL CHANGE: Theater degradation in conflict-adjacent zones (Iraq, Syria, occupied eastern Ukraine, Iranian-controlled Hormuz littoral) continues at the Issue 4 level. No constellation-level failure and no new SpaceX theater-specific status announcement this window. ~ CHANGED: Constellation count rolled forward to exceed 10,300 active satellites in LEO (was 10,296 in Issue 4); routine growth, not an operational change.	

WHY THIS CYCLE

Starlink is the de facto primary connectivity layer for journalists, NGOs, maritime operators, and tactical formations across the Middle East and Ukraine corridors. A degraded Starlink in theater pushes fallback traffic onto Inmarsat/Iridium L-band and onto Iranian-controlled cellular - a measurable shift in adversary visibility into operator communications. OSINT attribution remains stable: Iranian-supplied EW assets (Samen-1 GPS jammers, Mersad-family SATCOM jamming) in Iraq/Syria, and Russian Krasukha-4/Tirada-2 systems in eastern Ukraine. CONUS impact remains negligible; this is a theater-specific degradation, not a domestic resilience issue.

ANALYST ASSESSMENT

The pattern remains consistent with targeted uplink jamming rather than constellation-level failure. Disruption is assessed as VERY LIKELY to continue for the duration of the sustained Hormuz blockade environment (see EW-001); confidence MODERATE, as attribution rests on OSINT geolocation rather than direct technical confirmation. The V1/V2 constellation relevant to the theater is separate from the V3 architecture (mid-2027 target, S-band). Commercial users should plan Starlink as one layer in a multi-bearer strategy, with L-band MSS (Inmarsat/Iridium) as the EW-resilient backup for safety-of-life traffic.

ALTERNATIVE HYPOTHESES

Alt-Hyp 1 - Theater degradation is upstream / constellation-side rather than RF jamming.

Likelihood: Unlikely **Confidence:** MODERATE

WHAT WOULD SUPPORT	Geographic concentration of disruption reports inside known Iranian/Russian EW envelopes; absence of corresponding outage tickets in CONUS; SpaceX status page shows no constellation-level event; the Iranian state-driven RF-denial pattern inside Iran during the 2025-2026 protests is established and recurring.
WHAT WOULD DISCONFIRM	No new constellation incidents reported this cycle; Starlink launch cadence continues to grow normally; SpaceX firmware hardening continues. If degradation were upstream, CONUS users would see intermittent degradation too.
CURRENT STATUS	**Rejected as the lead explanation; RF interference remains the most-supported account. Retained as a watch item against any CONUS degradation signal.**

Alt-Hyp 2 - Theater Starlink degradation is partly self-imposed by SpaceX geofencing or policy throttling rather than purely adversary RF jamming.

Likelihood: Unlikely **Confidence:** MODERATE

WHAT WOULD SUPPORT	SpaceX has previously restricted Starlink service by geography for policy and sanctions-compliance reasons; a deliberate service posture in conflict zones would produce a degradation pattern that tracks borders rather than emitter locations; SpaceX does not publish theater-level service-policy decisions, so the possibility cannot be excluded from outside.
WHAT WOULD DISCONFIRM	Reported degradation correlates with known Iranian and Russian EW emitter envelopes rather than national borders; intermittent rather than clean on/off behavior is more consistent with jamming than with a policy block; no SpaceX announcement or sanctions action this cycle indicates a new geofencing posture.
CURRENT STATUS	**Assessed unlikely and secondary to RF jamming, but retained because SpaceX policy decisions are opaque from OSINT; a sudden clean service cutoff aligned to a border would be the indicator to revisit.**

COLLECTION GAPS - WHAT THIS ANALYSIS CANNOT SEE

- No direct technical telemetry from SpaceX on theater uplink-jamming events; attribution is OSINT-geolocation-based.
- Terminal-level disruption reports are uneven across the theater; absence of a report from a given area is not confirmation of service.
- Iranian and Russian EW order-of-battle in-theater is inferred, not directly observed this cycle.

SOURCES	The War Zone | C4ISRNET | Bellingcat OSINT | SpaceX Starlink Status | KeepTrack - DTC constellation status

SAT-002	GPS/GNSS Spoofing & Jamming - Hormuz Corridor & Arabian Gulf	CONTINUED

TRACK	SATELLITE COMMS / GPS-GNSS / ELECTRONIC WARFARE
DELTA SINCE ISSUE 4	**= NO MATERIAL CHANGE:** GNSS interference across the Hormuz corridor and Arabian Gulf remained sustained through the 16-23 MAY window with no material reduction and no material escalation. Three confirmed interference zones, AIS spoofing, and radar-only navigation by affected crews all continue as in Issue 4. **~ CHANGED:** The cumulative interference-event count is carried forward rather than restated; the current authoritative figure is pending the operator JMIC/UKMTO snapshot (SOP 0.92) and is flagged in COLLECTION GAPS.

WHY THIS CYCLE

Hormuz GNSS denial is the longest-running active EW campaign affecting a maritime chokepoint through which roughly 20 percent of global crude transits, and it remains among the largest sustained civilian GNSS-denial events on record. Its operational implications cross four sectors simultaneously - maritime navigation, aviation routing, energy SCADA timing, and financial transaction timing - so PTP/NTP fallback discipline is no longer optional for any Gulf-exposed asset. Windward data continues to document AIS positions erroneously placing ships over airports, a nuclear power plant, and dry land, and Bloomberg reporting documents crews navigating Hormuz on radar only after GPS failure. The denial is now an institutionalized Iranian capability operating under the blockade overlay, not a transient combat-tempo effect. Domestic CONUS GPS infrastructure is not affected this cycle.

SALUTE - Size / Activity / Location / Time / Equipment / Unit

SIZE	Three distinct, geographically tight GNSS-interference zones across the Hormuz approaches and Arabian Gulf; footprint sufficient to affect a maritime chokepoint carrying roughly 20 percent of global crude.
ACTIVITY	Sustained GPS jamming and AIS spoofing; Iranian Navy guiding non-coordinated tankers through the strait, combining EW denial with naval coercion (denial-then-pilot pattern).
LOCATION	Zone 1: Qatar territorial waters. Zone 2: international shipping lanes to Iraq/Kuwait en route to Hormuz. Zone 3: within the Hormuz Traffic Separation Scheme.
TIME	Continuous since 28-FEB; sustained without interruption through the 16-23 MAY reporting window.
EQUIPMENT	Samen-1-class GPS jammers and Mersad-family SATCOM jamming systems (see EW-001 for the full EW order-of-battle); effects consistent with deliberate state-operated emitters.
UNIT	Iranian state EW elements operating in coordination with IRGC Navy maritime-control activity; attribution assessed HIGH confidence.

ANALYST ASSESSMENT

Comms-relevant exposure surfaces cross four sectors: maritime logistics (AIS corruption, collision risk, dark operations), energy (SCADA timing disruption), aviation (CDU anomalies, reroutes, EASA CZIB 2026-03 in force), and financial infrastructure (GPS-synchronized transaction timing). The sustained Iranian EW posture (see EW-001 primary) has not reduced GNSS denial in the strait this window. It is ALMOST CERTAIN that the denial continues for the duration of the blockade; confidence HIGH, corroborated across maritime, aviation, and OSINT reporting. Practitioner implication: maintain the SAT-002 watch through any reopening of Hormuz and do not relax PTP/NTP fallback posture. Domestic watch: no confirmed CONUS GPS-infrastructure spillover; watch for any geographic expansion of the jamming footprint toward eastern Mediterranean air corridors.

ALTERNATIVE HYPOTHESES

Alt-Hyp 1 - GNSS interference is principally space-weather or solar driven rather than deliberate Iranian EW.

Likelihood: Almost no chance **Confidence:** HIGH

WHAT WOULD SUPPORT	A natural-cause account would predict similar event clusters in other comparable maritime corridors and a correlation with SWPC space-weather indicators.

WHAT WOULD DISCONFIRM	Three distinct, geographically tight interference zones aligned with Iranian territorial reach; Iranian Navy guiding non-coordinated tankers consistent with an intentional denial-then-pilot pattern; the effect persists across all solar conditions including quiet periods; no comparable clusters in the Panama Canal, Malacca, Bab-el-Mandeb, or Suez corridors; the 15-17 MAY G2 storm has ended and quiet conditions this window do not produce localized AIS-on-airport spoofing signatures.
CURRENT STATUS	**Rejected. Deliberate Iranian state EW remains the assessed cause at HIGH confidence.**

Alt-Hyp 2 - The interference is predominantly defensive allied GNSS jamming, not Iranian denial, with allied emitters causing most of the civilian effect.

Likelihood: Very unlikely **Confidence:** MODERATE

WHAT WOULD SUPPORT	US and allied forces do employ defensive GNSS jamming in the Gulf, creating a genuinely congested electronic environment; civilian receivers cannot distinguish the originating party of an interference source from the effect alone.
WHAT WOULD DISCONFIRM	The interference pattern includes deliberate AIS spoofing that places vessels over airports and dry land - a denial-and-deception signature characteristic of an offensive campaign, not defensive self-protection jamming; the Iranian Navy is observed piloting non-coordinated tankers through the strait, which requires Iran to control the denial; the footprint is sustained and strait-centred rather than co-located with allied naval assets.
CURRENT STATUS	**Assessed very unlikely as the predominant cause. Allied jamming contributes to the congested environment but the deception signature points to Iranian origin for the campaign.**

COLLECTION GAPS - WHAT THIS ANALYSIS CANNOT SEE

- Cumulative GNSS interference-event count since 28-FEB is pending the operator JMIC/UKMTO snapshot; the figure carried forward is not current-cycle confirmed.
- Latest JMIC/UKMTO advisory number for the strait is pending operator confirmation.
- Interference intensity inside Iranian territorial waters is inferred from vessel-reported effects, not from direct emitter geolocation.

SOURCES	Windward Maritime AI | Lloyd's List Intelligence | EUROCONTROL GNSS NOTAMs | GPSJam.org | USCG NAVCEN GUIDE Tool | Bloomberg Hormuz Siege

SAT-004	Cell-Satellite Integration - FCC SCS Authorization Holds / BB8-10 Mid-June Launch Is Next Gate	CONTINUED

TRACK	SATELLITE COMMS / TERRESTRIAL CELLULAR / PUBLIC SAFETY
DELTA SINCE ISSUE 4	**= NO MATERIAL CHANGE:** No new movement this window. The 11-MAY FCC commercial SCS authorization for AST SpaceMobile holds, and the mid-June BlueBird 8-10 Falcon 9 launch remains the next milestone gate. No further AST disclosure inside 16-23 MAY. **~ CHANGED:** Entry demoted from UPDATED (Issue 4) to CONTINUED. The 11-MAY authorization was the Issue 4 delta; it is now standing context, not fresh news. **= NO MATERIAL CHANGE:** T-Satellite remains commercially operational nationwide (text live, voice beta expanded, data the remaining phase); Verizon/Skylo free satellite texting stable. No change on either.

WHY THIS CYCLE

The FirstNet satellite path resolved its regulatory uncertainty on 11-MAY, and that remains the single most consequential commercial-space event for first-responder direct-to-device in 2026; nothing this week alters it. The three tracks stand where Issue 4 left them. Track 1 (T-Mobile/Starlink): T-Satellite operational nationwide, SpaceX V3 satellites still targeted for mid-2027 via Starship. Track 2 (AT&T/Verizon/FirstNet via AST SpaceMobile): the 11-MAY FCC SCS authorization for up to 248 satellites on 700/800 MHz lowband holds, and AST's 11-MAY 8-K confirmed

BlueBird 8, 9, and 10 on track for a mid-June Falcon 9 launch with phased arrays completed through BlueBird 28. Track 3 (Verizon/Skylo): free satellite texting continues, independent of the AST agreement. For agencies, the next decision-relevant event is the mid-June BB8-10 launch.

ANALYST ASSESSMENT

CHANGE FROM PRIOR: demoted UPDATED to CONTINUED; no scored-judgment change. The FirstNet satellite beta path is assessed LIKELY to reach 2H-2026 enrollment readiness, conditional on a successful mid-June BB8-10 launch; confidence MODERATE - the regulatory and manufacturing risks are retired, but launch-execution risk remains live. Emergency-management implication is unchanged: continue planning for FirstNet satellite beta in 2H 2026 with a 30-60 day slip contingency, confirm T-Satellite device compatibility as the highest-readiness stopgap, and maintain the multi-bearer backup stack (HF, VHF/UHF, LMR, L-band MSS) through end of 2026.

ALTERNATIVE HYPOTHESES

Alt-Hyp 1 - BB8-10 mid-June launch slips materially (Q3 or later) and FirstNet satellite beta slides into 2027.

Likelihood: Roughly even chance **Confidence:** MODERATE

WHAT WOULD SUPPORT	AST has missed multiple prior launch dates; the 19-APR BlueBird 7 lower-orbit incident shows AST is not immune to deployment anomalies; space launch schedules carry a structural slip pattern and any anomaly resets the timeline.
WHAT WOULD DISCONFIRM	AST manufacturing readiness through BB28 confirmed in the 11-MAY 8-K; Falcon 9 has high launch reliability and the current manifest accommodates the slot; the FCC SCS authorization removes one major dependency.
CURRENT STATUS	**Live and unresolved. The mid-June launch is the determining event; treat a 30-60 day slip as a planning contingency.**

Alt-Hyp 2 - BB8-10 launches on schedule but on-orbit commissioning or phased-array performance underdelivers, so the FirstNet satellite beta slips even without a launch slip.

Likelihood: Unlikely **Confidence:** MODERATE

WHAT WOULD SUPPORT	The 19-APR BlueBird 7 lower-orbit incident shows AST has had on-orbit deployment problems distinct from launch; direct-to-device performance to unmodified handsets is technically demanding and beta-readiness depends on demonstrated throughput, not just orbital insertion.
WHAT WOULD DISCONFIRM	AST has reached a 98.9 Mbps peak to an unmodified smartphone with BlueBird 6, demonstrating the core capability; phased arrays are confirmed complete through BlueBird 28; commissioning risk is real but smaller than launch-execution risk.
CURRENT STATUS	**Assessed unlikely but non-trivial; it is the reason the primary judgment keeps a 30-60 day slip contingency even on a successful launch.**

COLLECTION GAPS - WHAT THIS ANALYSIS CANNOT SEE

- No confirmed BB8-10 launch date inside the reporting window; mid-June is AST guidance, not a manifested slot publicly confirmed by the launch provider.
- FirstNet satellite-beta enrollment criteria and timeline are not publicly detailed beyond a 2H-2026 framing.

SOURCES AST SpaceMobile 8-K Q1 2026 - 11-MAY | AST Q1 2026 Investor Deck | T-Mobile T-Satellite | AT&T - FirstNet / AST SpaceMobile | KeepTrack - Starlink DTC constellation

SAT-005 AMSAT / Amateur Satellite Status - Hamvention Concluded, ISS Crossband Active, FO-29 Returned to Service — CONTINUED

TRACK	AMATEUR SATELLITE / EMCOMM / ARISS
DELTA SINCE ISSUE 4	**− REMOVED:** Hamvention 2026 concluded in Xenia, OH on 17-MAY. The Issue 4 travel-coordination item is closed; no implication this cycle.

	~ CHANGED: FO-29 has returned to continuous-operation linear transponder service following the end of its eclipse window, consistent with the JARL command schedule referenced in Issue 4. Entry demoted from UPDATED to CONTINUED. **= NO MATERIAL CHANGE:** Robust activity across ISS FM, AO-7, AO-73, AO-91, AO-123, FO-29, JO-97, QO-100, RS-44, SO-50, and SO-125 through the window; ISS crossband repeater active.

WHY THIS CYCLE

Amateur satellite bearers - LEO FM and the ISS crossband repeater - are GNSS-independent and were not affected by the 15-17 MAY geomagnetic storm to the degree HF was; with HF now recovered, the satellite layer is a standing resilience option rather than a storm-specific workaround. The ISS crossband repeater remains active on 145.990 MHz uplink (PL 67 Hz) / 437.800 MHz downlink, with ISS voice downlink on 145.800 MHz. QO-100 (Es'hail-2) remains the only GEO amateur-radio transponder in orbit, and its footprint does not reach CONUS - there is no GEO amateur-satellite bearer over North America. For ARES/RACES net controllers, amateur satellites remain a useful situational capability, not a primary EMCOMM bearer, given short LEO pass durations and operator-skill requirements.

ANALYST ASSESSMENT

CHANGE FROM PRIOR: demoted UPDATED to CONTINUED; the Issue 4 deltas (Hamvention in progress, FO-29 returning) have both resolved, so there is no fresh current-cycle news. Amateur satellites are a GNSS-independent resilience layer, genuinely useful in the sustained degraded-GNSS environment (see EW-001, SAT-002). For ARES/RACES, the practical step is to keep the ISS crossband repeater in the resilience stack as a situational capability. Upcoming: the 44th AMSAT Space Symposium, 8-11 OCT in Jacksonville, FL.

ALTERNATIVE HYPOTHESES

Alt-Hyp 1 - A follow-on geomagnetic disturbance this period degrades amateur-satellite VHF/UHF passes meaningfully.

Likelihood: Unlikely **Confidence:** MODERATE

WHAT WOULD SUPPORT	Auroral absorption can produce localized 2m/70cm fades during any future high-Kp episode, particularly at high latitudes; coronal holes CH1369/CH1370 may bring unsettled-to-active intervals 26-29 MAY.
WHAT WOULD DISCONFIRM	VHF/UHF satellite frequencies sit above the ionospheric absorption window that drives HF degradation; LEO geometries are short and not polar-path-dependent for CONUS operators; no active storm watch was identified this window and the forecast Kp ceiling is only 3.
CURRENT STATUS	**Assessed unlikely. Service-level loss is not the expected outcome even if late-week conditions become unsettled; retained as a minor watch item for high-latitude operators.**

Alt-Hyp 2 - A command, power, or end-of-life failure on an individual amateur satellite - independent of space weather - removes a bearer from the resilience stack this period.

Likelihood: Unlikely **Confidence:** MODERATE

WHAT WOULD SUPPORT	The amateur satellite fleet includes aging spacecraft (AO-7 dates to 1974); FO-29 has just returned from an extended eclipse-driven outage, showing individual-satellite availability is not guaranteed; command-schedule dependence introduces a single-point failure mode unrelated to propagation.
WHAT WOULD DISCONFIRM	The AMSAT status page shows robust activity across more than ten satellites this window; the ISS crossband repeater - the most operationally useful bearer for EMCOMM - is institutionally maintained and not near end-of-life; loss of any one satellite does not remove the layer.
CURRENT STATUS	**Assessed unlikely to affect the layer as a whole; relevant only to operators dependent on one specific satellite, who should maintain alternatives.**

COLLECTION GAPS - WHAT THIS ANALYSIS CANNOT SEE

- AMSAT status reporting is crowd-sourced; an absence of reports for a given satellite is not confirmation of an outage.
- FO-29 transponder health post-eclipse is reported via the JARL command schedule, not independently telemetered here.

SOURCES	AMSAT Live OSCAR Status | AMSAT News Service | ARISS Contact the ISS | AMSAT-UK

SWX-001	Space Weather - Geomagnetic Conditions Quiet; Sustained 2 MeV Electron Flux Is a Satellite-Charging Hazard	NEW

TRACK	SPACE WEATHER / SATELLITE OPERATIONS / HF PROPAGATION
DELTA SINCE ISSUE 4	**+ ADDED:** NEW ENTRY. Issue 4 carried space weather as an in-progress G2 storm; that event has resolved and the current picture is captured here as a standalone entry separating the three hazard channels. **~ CHANGED:** Geomagnetic conditions returned to quiet - SWPC 3-day forecast greatest expected 3-hr Kp of 3 over 24-26 MAY, no G1+ storm; the 15-17 MAY G2 storm has fully ended and HF has recovered. **+ ADDED:** Operator SWPC alerts received 24-MAY: a Type II radio emission (0850 UTC, estimated 579 km/s shock velocity) and a continued 2 MeV electron-flux alert (above 1000 pfu since 16-MAY, 24-MAY max 3762 pfu).

WHY THIS CYCLE

Space weather affects the communications environment through three distinct channels, and this cycle they are in different states. Geomagnetic storming - the HF-propagation driver - is quiet, which is why Section 2 shows recovered band conditions; the 3-day forecast holds the greatest expected 3-hr Kp at 3 over 24-26 MAY with no G1 or greater storm, and coronal holes CH1369/CH1370 may bring unsettled-to-active intervals 26-29 MAY. Flare-driven radio blackouts remain a standing low-level risk - SWPC assigns roughly a 35 percent daily chance of R1-R2 blackouts over 24-26 MAY - which can cause brief, sudden HF fade-outs on the sunlit side. Energetic electron flux is the satellite-charging channel and is currently elevated: an operator SWPC alert confirms the GOES 2 MeV integral flux above 1000 pfu continuously since 16-MAY, with a 24-MAY maximum of 3762 pfu, a deep-dielectric and surface-charging hazard for satellites in and around the outer radiation belt. A separate operator alert logged a 24-MAY Type II radio emission, which indicates a shock front but is not matched by any Earth-directed CME in the forecast.

ANALYST ASSESSMENT

The three forward judgments diverge by channel. Geomagnetic conditions are assessed LIKELY to hold quiet through 25-MAY, with unsettled-to-active intervals a ROUGHLY EVEN CHANCE for 26-29 MAY as the CH1369/CH1370 streams arrive; confidence MODERATE, since coronal-hole timing is well-modeled but arrival windows carry one-to-two-day uncertainty. The 24-MAY Type II emission is assessed UNLIKELY to translate into a significant Earth-directed disturbance, given the absence of a corresponding Earth-directed CME in coronagraph reporting; confidence MODERATE. The elevated 2 MeV electron flux is LIKELY to persist for several days given its sustained run since 16-MAY; confidence MODERATE. Practitioner split: satellite operators should maintain a charging-anomaly watch, while for HF and terrestrial comms the picture is benign apart from the standing flare-blackout risk.

ALTERNATIVE HYPOTHESES

Alt-Hyp 1 - The 24-MAY Type II emission reflects an Earth-directed CME that will produce a G1 or greater geomagnetic storm within 1-3 days.

Likelihood: Unlikely **Confidence:** MODERATE

WHAT WOULD SUPPORT	A Type II emission confirms a shock front, and an estimated 579 km/s velocity is consistent with a CME-driven disturbance; source-region connectivity to Earth cannot be ruled out from the alert text alone.
WHAT WOULD DISCONFIRM	SWPC 3-day forecast shows no G1+ storm and quiet Kp through 26-MAY; independent solar reporting identified no Earth-directed CME in the preceding 24 hours; the recent flare-productive active region was rotating onto or behind the west limb, a geometry that favors non-Earth-directed ejecta.

CURRENT STATUS	**Assessed unlikely. If a CME signature is later confirmed at L1 (DSCOVR density/IMF jump), Section 2 band conditions would need a downward revision; treated as a watch item.**

Alt-Hyp 2 - The CH1369/CH1370 coronal-hole streams arrive stronger or earlier than forecast and produce a G1 or greater storm inside the 26-29 MAY window, degrading HF.

Likelihood: Unlikely **Confidence:** MODERATE

WHAT WOULD SUPPORT	Coronal-hole high-speed streams are recurrent and their geoeffectiveness is harder to forecast precisely than their timing; the SWPC outlook already flags unsettled-to-active intervals for 26-29 MAY, so the conditions are trending the right direction for an underforecast; solar-rotation timing carries a one-to-two-day uncertainty.
WHAT WOULD DISCONFIRM	The SWPC 3-day forecast explicitly holds the greatest expected Kp at 3 with no G1 storm; coronal-hole streams typically drive unsettled-to-active conditions rather than full storming; no enhanced solar-wind structure has been observed at L1 that would indicate an imminent escalation.
CURRENT STATUS	**Assessed unlikely within the issue window; it is the reason Section 2 carries the late-week coronal-hole watch rather than declaring conditions settled through month-end.**

COLLECTION GAPS - WHAT THIS ANALYSIS CANNOT SEE

- CME trajectory cannot be confirmed from Type II shock velocity alone; coronagraph (LASCO/STEREO) confirmation is the determining evidence and was not in hand at build time.
- Electron-flux forecast horizon is short; persistence beyond a few days is an estimate, not a modeled projection.
- Coronal-hole stream arrival timing (CH1369/CH1370) carries a one-to-two-day uncertainty.

SOURCES	NOAA SWPC 3-Day Forecast | NOAA SWPC Alerts/Watches/Warnings | SWPC Coronal Mass Ejections | SIDC Solar Bulletin | Solar Terrestrial Activity Report

NET-003	Submarine Cable Integrity - Gulf Install Delay Sustained, No New US-Nexus Fault This Window	CONTINUED

TRACK	UNDERSEA CABLE / INTERNET INFRASTRUCTURE
DELTA SINCE ISSUE 4	**= NO MATERIAL CHANGE:** No new fault this cycle. The sweep for 16-23 MAY identified no new US-nexus submarine cable cut and no new Gulf-corridor fault. No direct US consumer or business internet impact identified. **~ CHANGED:** Entry demoted from UPDATED to CONTINUED. The Issue 4 delta was the 04-MAY TeleGeography report; with no new fault or operator notice this window, the entry is carried as a standing structural watch. **= NO MATERIAL CHANGE:** The Iran war continues to delay Gulf-segment installation of the 2Africa and SeaMeWe-6 cable systems, with no announced restart timeline.

WHY THIS CYCLE

Submarine cable infrastructure carries roughly 99 percent of intercontinental data, and roughly 18 percent of global Asia-Africa-Europe traffic transits the 17 Red Sea cables. Any sustained Gulf-corridor degradation translates to higher latency, capacity constraints, and routing detours that can ripple into CONUS cloud-service performance for enterprises with Middle East dependencies. Both Hormuz and the Red Sea remain off-limits to commercial cable-repair vessels under the active blockade overlay (see EW-001 primary), so any Gulf-corridor fault would go unrepaired for the duration of hostilities, and previous Red Sea repairs have taken up to six months even without active denial. The primary risk mechanism is accidental: GPS-degraded vessel traffic in shallow cable corridors raises anchor-drag and grounding probability (see SAT-002 mechanism). The build-out delay is a structural exposure, not a tactical disruption, and for CONUS practitioners cloud-region failover remains the practical mitigation.

ANALYST ASSESSMENT

CHANGE FROM PRIOR: demoted UPDATED to CONTINUED; no scored-judgment change. US-nexus direct consumer and business internet connectivity is not at near-term risk; the exposure sits on cloud and enterprise

services routed through Gulf corridors. Forward judgment: a new Gulf-corridor cable fault during the blockade is a ROUGHLY EVEN CHANCE over the coming months given GPS-degraded vessel traffic in shallow cable corridors, and if one occurs, repair within 60 days is VERY UNLIKELY given vessel-access denial; confidence MODERATE. Practitioner implication: organizations with significant Middle East cloud-region dependency - US Defense, NGOs, energy majors - should reconfirm multi-region active-active failover posture, particularly toward EU and Asia-Pacific cloud regions.

ALTERNATIVE HYPOTHESES

Alt-Hyp 1 - Gulf cable installs resume within 60 days as regional access denial de-escalates.

Likelihood: Unlikely **Confidence:** MODERATE

WHAT WOULD SUPPORT	Some diplomatic motion exists around the broader regional talks; cable operators have strong commercial incentive to push for restart approvals.
WHAT WOULD DISCONFIRM	Iran retains operational control of Hormuz with no announced timeline for blockade lift; previous Red Sea cable-repair episodes have taken up to six months even without active denial; the sustained AA26-097A cyber posture points to continued, not de-escalating, regional tension.
CURRENT STATUS	**Assessed unlikely. The structural delay is expected to persist; a restart announcement would be a leading indicator of regional stabilization and is a defined watch trigger.**

Alt-Hyp 2 - A Gulf-corridor cable fault has already occurred but is not yet publicly reported, so the no-new-fault assessment reflects a reporting lag rather than an intact corridor.

Likelihood: Unlikely **Confidence:** MODERATE

WHAT WOULD SUPPORT	Cable-fault detection and attribution depend on operator and TeleGeography reporting, which lags the physical event; GPS-degraded vessel traffic in shallow cable corridors creates a continuous anchor-drag hazard; operators have commercial and security reasons not to announce a fault immediately.
WHAT WOULD DISCONFIRM	No latency or capacity anomaly consistent with a Gulf-corridor fault has been observed on the routes that would be affected; internet-measurement platforms (Kentik, Cloudflare Radar) show no corresponding routing shift this window; a fault on a major system would produce observable performance effects before any formal announcement.
CURRENT STATUS	**Assessed unlikely; the absence of routing and latency anomalies is the strongest evidence against an unreported fault. Reporting lag remains a watch consideration.**

COLLECTION GAPS - WHAT THIS ANALYSIS CANNOT SEE

- No operator-side visibility into 2Africa / SeaMeWe-6 install-restart planning; restart timeline is unknown.
- Cable-fault detection in the Gulf corridor depends on operator and TeleGeography reporting; a minor fault could precede public notice.

SOURCES TeleGeography - Hormuz Cable Analysis | Submarine Networks | SubTel Forum | TeleGeography Submarine Cable Map

SECTION 4 | TERRESTRIAL INFRASTRUCTURE

TERR-001	FirstNet / AT&T - $2B Upgrade Agreement Active / Satellite Layer De-Risked, No New Delta This Window	CONTINUED
TRACK	TERRESTRIAL CELLULAR / FIRSTNET / PUBLIC SAFETY	
DELTA SINCE ISSUE 4	**= NO MATERIAL CHANGE:** Operational status NOMINAL. No network-wide outages or interoperability failures identified 16-23 MAY. Band 14 spectrum preemption active across enrolled agencies.	

	~ CHANGED: Entry demoted from UPDATED to CONTINUED. The 11-MAY FCC SCS authorization that drove the Issue 4 update is now standing context, not new movement. **= NO MATERIAL CHANGE:** The 31-MAR $2B NTIA-AT&T contract restructuring remains in effect; the House Energy and Commerce Committee continues advancing FirstNet reauthorization through 2037. No new legislative movement this window.

WHY THIS CYCLE

FirstNet is the dedicated nationwide public-safety broadband network, so any structural change in its underlying spectrum, satellite layer, or contract terms directly affects first-responder communications resilience for all 30,000-plus enrolled agencies and 6 million-plus users. Two standing items frame the cycle. The 31-MAR $2B NTIA-AT&T contract restructuring - a $1B cost reduction to FirstNet and $1B in new network and coverage investment (gap-closure, 5G public-safety core, mobile deployable units) - remains in effect, with reinvestment direction sitting with the FirstNet Authority Board. And the 11-MAY FCC SCS authorization for AST SpaceMobile (up to 248 satellites, 700/800 MHz lowband, in coordination with AT&T, Verizon, FirstNet; see SAT-004) remains the single most consequential positive event for FirstNet satellite resilience since the 2017 award. Neither moved this week.

ANALYST ASSESSMENT

CHANGE FROM PRIOR: demoted UPDATED to CONTINUED; no scored-judgment change. Forward judgment: FirstNet satellite resilience is LIKELY to advance on its 2H-2026 path, conditional on the mid-June BB8-10 launch; confidence MODERATE, launch-execution risk live. Emergency managers with FirstNet enrollment should (1) continue NOT to decommission backup comms on the assumption that any specific satellite layer arrives on a specific date in 2026; (2) confirm T-Satellite device compatibility as a stopgap satellite text/911 capability, still the highest-readiness public-safety DTC layer today; and (3) watch the AST BB8-10 mid-June launch campaign closely as the next milestone gate. Cross-reference: SAT-004.

ALTERNATIVE HYPOTHESES

Alt-Hyp 1 - AT&T pursues multi-LEO direct-to-device and AST SpaceMobile becomes one of several satellite layers rather than the primary.

Likelihood: Likely **Confidence:** MODERATE

WHAT WOULD SUPPORT	CEO Stankey's direct on-record statement on the Q1 earnings call; AT&T already has an existing Amazon Leo arrangement for business connectivity; carrier-side diversification is consistent with prior AT&T spectrum-strategy patterns; the FCC SCS regime supports multiple constellation authorizations.
WHAT WOULD DISCONFIRM	AST has the dominant first-mover regulatory position and the 700/800 MHz coordination is AST-specific; AT&T continues to publicly promote AST as the FirstNet satellite partner; switching costs and integration complexity are non-trivial.
CURRENT STATUS	**Assessed likely and treated as the expected trajectory. A diversified bearer set reduces single-vendor risk and does not change near-term posture guidance.**

Alt-Hyp 2 - FirstNet network operations encounter a near-term interoperability or coverage problem that matters more to first responders this year than the satellite-layer milestone.

Likelihood: Unlikely **Confidence:** MODERATE

WHAT WOULD SUPPORT	The $2B restructuring directs significant new investment specifically into gap-closure and deployable units, which is an implicit acknowledgement that terrestrial coverage gaps remain operationally significant; large network changes carry integration risk; terrestrial reliability, not satellite, is what first responders depend on today.
WHAT WOULD DISCONFIRM	FirstNet operational status is NOMINAL this window with no network-wide outage or interoperability failure identified; Band 14 preemption is functioning across enrolled agencies; the network is mature and the restructuring is incremental investment, not a disruptive re-architecture.
CURRENT STATUS	**Assessed unlikely in the near term; raised because it is the correct counterweight to satellite-milestone focus - terrestrial reliability remains the load-bearing capability and warrants continued watch.**

COLLECTION GAPS - WHAT THIS ANALYSIS CANNOT SEE

- FirstNet Authority Board reinvestment decisions on the $1B coverage tranche are not yet public; which underserved areas see priority upgrades is unknown.
- AT&T multi-LEO partnership terms beyond the existing Amazon Leo arrangement are not publicly detailed.

SOURCES	NTIA Press Release 31-MAR-2026 | StateScoop - FirstNet $2B Deal | AT&T - FirstNet Artemis II | AST SpaceMobile 8-K Q1 2026 - 11-MAY | FirstNet Authority | APCO International

SECTION 5 | ELECTRONIC WARFARE WATCH

EW-001	Iranian EW Posture - GPS Denial and SATCOM Jamming, Hormuz Theater	CONTINUED

TRACK	ELECTRONIC WARFARE / SATELLITE
DELTA SINCE ISSUE 4	**= NO MATERIAL CHANGE:** No new escalation this window. The Iranian EW posture is sustained at an elevated baseline; GPS denial and SATCOM jamming across the Gulf continue at high tempo with no material change. **~ CHANGED:** Entry demoted from UPDATED to CONTINUED. There is no fresh current-cycle escalation, so the entry is carried as a standing watch. **= NO MATERIAL CHANGE:** The US-led escort initiative remains paused; the underlying EW environment remains active.

WHY THIS CYCLE

The Iranian EW posture is the operational mechanism behind the Hormuz GNSS denial (SAT-002), the SATCOM degradation (SAT-001), and the cable repair-access denial (NET-003); all three downstream effects will persist as long as the EW posture does. For US Defense, Navy, USCG, and US-flagged commercial maritime, this is the active EW environment in which any transit will occur - position-spoofing and SATCOM jamming have become institutionalized capabilities, not surge employments. Commercial SATCOM providers (Inmarsat, Iridium, Starlink) continue reporting varying disruption levels in affected zones. For CONUS, spillover risk remains the watch item, not the current state.

SALUTE - Size / Activity / Location / Time / Equipment / Unit

SIZE	Theater-wide EW footprint across the Persian Gulf and approaches; GPS-denial capability assessed as capable of disrupting commercial aviation and maritime navigation within a 200-300nm radius of employment sites.
ACTIVITY	Sustained GPS/GNSS denial and SATCOM jamming; IRGC asserting maritime control under the blockade overlay, issuing transit-coordination demands and threatening action against non-coordinated vessels. US/allied forces also employ defensive GNSS jamming, producing a congested electronic environment.
LOCATION	Persian Gulf, Hormuz maritime approaches, Gulf of Oman, and Iraqi airspace.
TIME	Continuous since 28-FEB; sustained at high tempo through the 16-23 MAY window with no contraction signal.
EQUIPMENT	Samen-1-class GPS jammers and Mersad-family SATCOM jamming systems; effects consistent with deliberate, fixed and mobile state-operated emitters.
UNIT	Iranian state EW elements operating in coordination with IRGC Navy maritime-control activity; attribution assessed HIGH confidence across maritime, aviation, and OSINT reporting.

ANALYST ASSESSMENT

CHANGE FROM PRIOR: demoted UPDATED to CONTINUED; no scored-judgment change. Iranian GPS-denial capability remains assessed as capable of disrupting commercial aviation and maritime navigation within a 200-

300nm radius of employment sites. Forward judgment: the EW posture is VERY LIKELY to remain in place for the duration of the Hormuz blockade, and a near-term reduction is UNLIKELY absent a blockade settlement; confidence HIGH on the sustained-posture judgment, as the EW driver is well-corroborated across maritime, aviation, and OSINT reporting. Energy-sector operators with GPS-synchronized SCADA timing in the Gulf region should maintain NTP fallback as a standing configuration. Cross-reference: SAT-002 for operator impact detail, NET-003 for cable repair-access implications.

ALTERNATIVE HYPOTHESES

Alt-Hyp 1 - Iran escalates the EW posture from civilian denial to active spoofing of US-flagged military assets.

Likelihood: Unlikely **Confidence:** MODERATE

WHAT WOULD SUPPORT	Iran has demonstrated GNSS spoofing capability; precedent exists for state-versus-state EW escalation; regional diplomacy remains fragile and could collapse on any number of triggers; the sustained AA26-097A Iranian cyber posture indicates continued aggressive intent.
WHAT WOULD DISCONFIRM	The US naval blockade of Iranian ports remains as deterrent leverage; Iranian leadership has incentive to maintain ambiguity that allows blockade economics to function without triggering new US kinetic action; the observed pattern targets commercial maritime traffic, not military.
CURRENT STATUS	**Assessed unlikely. A shift to military-asset spoofing would be a material escalation that could trigger a renewed US kinetic response; treated as a high-consequence watch item.**

Alt-Hyp 2 - The GNSS denial footprint contracts as a confidence-building measure during regional talks.

Likelihood: Unlikely **Confidence:** MODERATE

WHAT WOULD SUPPORT	Diplomatic motion exists around the broader regional talks; GNSS denial is a low-cost concession Iran could offer cheaply; easing it would not relinquish the naval-coercion lever.
WHAT WOULD DISCONFIRM	GNSS denial is integral to Iran's strait-control and tanker-piloting model and provides leverage at near-zero cost; no advisory narrowing has been observed; the sustained interference tempo through mid-May shows no contraction signal.
CURRENT STATUS	**Assessed unlikely. A measurable fall in interference-event counts and narrowing aviation/maritime advisories would be the leading indicators; none observed this window.**

COLLECTION GAPS - WHAT THIS ANALYSIS CANNOT SEE

- Cumulative GNSS interference-event count and the latest JMIC/UKMTO advisory number are pending the operator snapshot.
- Iranian EW emitter locations and the fixed-versus-mobile split are inferred from effects, not directly geolocated this cycle.
- Intent behind IRGC transit-coordination demands (revenue, coercion leverage, or escalation signaling) is not directly observable.

SOURCES	C4ISRNET | The War Zone | Bellingcat | EUROCONTROL NOTAMs | GPSJam.org | UKMTO / JMIC Advisories

SECTION 6 | PUBLIC SAFETY COMMS & 9-1-1 SERVICES

PS-001	9-1-1 / PSAP Infrastructure - Nominal This Cycle / FCC NG911 Reliability Rules Near Finalization	CONTINUED
TRACK	PUBLIC SAFETY COMMS / 9-1-1 / PSAP	

DELTA SINCE ISSUE 4	**= NO MATERIAL CHANGE:** 9-1-1 operational status nominal. No confirmed nationwide or multi-state 9-1-1 outage identified 16-23 MAY; carrier network status nominal per Downdetector and carrier status pages. **= NO MATERIAL CHANGE:** FCC inquiry into the 14-JAN-2026 Verizon ~10-hour software-caused outage remains open with no final finding; NG911 reliability rulemaking still expected to finalize late summer 2026. No docket movement this window.

WHY THIS CYCLE

9-1-1 service availability is the most direct measure of comms-layer service to the public. The 14-JAN Verizon 10-hour outage - multiple metros, roughly 173,000 Downdetector reports at peak - is the largest single 9-1-1-relevant carrier event since 2020 and remains under FCC inquiry; the NG911 reliability rulemaking expected late summer 2026 is the regulatory response. The proposed rules expand the definition of Covered 911 Service Provider (C9SP) to capture IP-era routers and ESInet operators, add physical-diversity requirements, expand network-monitoring expectations, establish backup-power requirements for IP environments, and propose an interstate ESInet interoperability framework. For state 911 authorities and PSAPs, the expanded C9SP definition will pull IP-era providers into direct FCC reliability obligations they did not previously face. The FCC 30-minute PSAP outage-notification rule remains in force from 15-APR-2025.

ANALYST ASSESSMENT

CHANGE FROM PRIOR: no scored-judgment change; PS-001 carried as CONTINUED. The NG911 reliability rulemaking remains the most consequential regulatory development for PSAP operations: if finalized as proposed, it would extend direct FCC reliability obligations to IP-era providers currently outside the 2013 rules, require physical-diversity failover in critical paths, and standardize interstate ESInet interoperability. Practical implication: PSAPs and state 911 authorities should inventory C9SP relationships now, because the expanded definition will capture providers who did not previously consider themselves C9SPs, exposing contract assumptions to regulatory scrutiny. Agencies in elevated-threat jurisdictions should confirm 10-digit non-emergency backup numbers are published and drilled and verify Text-to-911 is active for their coverage area.

ALTERNATIVE HYPOTHESES

Alt-Hyp 1 - The NG911 reliability rule is materially weakened in the final version due to industry pushback, leaving the C9SP expansion narrow.

Likelihood: Roughly even chance **Confidence:** LOW

WHAT WOULD SUPPORT	Carrier-side industry opposition to expanded coverage is well-resourced; the 21-APR SCOTUS oral argument on FCC authority creates uncertainty the agency may manage by softening contested provisions; final-rule publication is still months away.
WHAT WOULD DISCONFIRM	The 14-JAN Verizon outage provides political cover for the agency to hold firm; bipartisan public-safety advocacy supports the expanded scope; FCC Chair public statements have emphasized the consumer-protection rationale.
CURRENT STATUS	**Genuinely uncertain. PSAPs should plan for the expanded C9SP definition while tracking the final rule, since the practical inventory step is worthwhile under either outcome.**

Alt-Hyp 2 - The next significant 9-1-1 disruption originates with an IP-era ESInet or NG911 vendor before the new reliability rule takes effect, exposing the regulatory gap the FNPRM is meant to close.

Likelihood: Roughly even chance **Confidence:** LOW

WHAT WOULD SUPPORT	The 14-JAN Verizon outage and the July 2025 Pennsylvania Comtech-vendor NG911 outage both show IP-era providers are already a live source of 9-1-1 disruption; those providers currently sit outside the 2013 reliability rules; the final rule is not expected until late summer 2026, leaving a months-long gap.
WHAT WOULD DISCONFIRM	No multi-state 9-1-1 outage was identified this window; NG911 transitions are uneven across states, so a single vendor failure may stay localized; the existing 30-minute PSAP outage-notification rule provides some operational mitigation even without the new reliability framework.
CURRENT STATUS	**Genuinely uncertain and LOW confidence - outage timing is not predictable. It strengthens, rather than competes with, the primary recommendation that PSAPs inventory C9SP relationships now.**

COLLECTION GAPS - WHAT THIS ANALYSIS CANNOT SEE

- FCC final NG911 rule text is not yet published; the proposed-versus-final scope of the C9SP expansion is not knowable until release.
- FCC inquiry findings on the 14-JAN Verizon outage are not public; root-cause detail is not independently confirmed.

SOURCES	FCC NG911 Reliability FNPRM | Beyond Telecom Law - NG911 Rules 02-APR | FCC Network Outage Reporting (NORS) | FCC 9-1-1 Outage Rules | APCO International

SECTION 7 | FCC & REGULATORY PULSE

REG-001	FCC Enforcement - New NOVs and NAL Issued 13-21 MAY; SCOTUS Authority Decision Pending End of June	UPDATED
TRACK	REGULATORY / FCC ENFORCEMENT	
DELTA SINCE ISSUE 4	**+ ADDED:** New FCC Enforcement Bureau actions inside the window: a 21-MAY Notice of Apparent Liability proposing a 14,000 dollar penalty against Stealth Communications; a 14-MAY Notice of Violation to Rondaradio, Inc. (WRLR-LP, WQKA896); 13-MAY Notices of Violation to Centro Cristiano De Vida Eterna and Texas Youth Organization; and a 13-MAY consent decree settling an unauthorized-service matter with a carrier. **~ CHANGED:** Entry headline moves from the 21-APR SCOTUS argument (Issue 4 delta) to the 13-21 MAY enforcement actions (this cycle's delta). The scored judgment on the SCOTUS outcome is unchanged from Issue 4. **= NO MATERIAL CHANGE:** SCOTUS decision in FCC v. AT&T / Verizon v. FCC still expected by end of June; the 08-JAN Marlink Team Telecom consent decree remains the standing landmark national-security enforcement.	

WHY THIS CYCLE

The pace of FCC Notices of Violation and forfeiture actions is a direct indicator of enforcement tempo against unlicensed and non-compliant operation, which affects spectrum integrity for licensed public-safety and amateur users. The pending SCOTUS decision in FCC v. AT&T (No. 25-406) and Verizon v. FCC (No. 25-567), argued 21-APR, will determine whether the FCC can continue using its forfeiture-order process for civil penalties without first going through Article III courts; post-argument summaries indicate the Court appeared skeptical of striking the process down, with Chief Justice Roberts characterizing the carriers' concern as primarily reputational and Justice Kavanaugh observing the carriers had effectively won on the law going forward. A ruling preserving FCC forfeiture authority would resolve the constitutional uncertainty hanging over every FCC Notice of Apparent Liability since the 2024 Jarkesy decision. The TCPA consent-revocation rule remains effective from 11-APR-2026 and the robocall-numbering NPRM remains open.

ANALYST ASSESSMENT

CHANGE FROM PRIOR: headline delta updated to the 13-21 MAY enforcement actions; the SCOTUS-outcome scored judgment is unchanged. Forward judgment: a ruling that dismantles the FCC forfeiture-order process is UNLIKELY, based on the post-argument signals; confidence MODERATE, since oral-argument signals are an imperfect predictor and the decision is still weeks away. The new Notices of Violation continue the established pattern of FCC field enforcement against unlicensed and out-of-compliance operation; none individually rises to a structural shift, but the cadence is consistent with sustained enforcement priority under the current Commission. For ARES/RACES and licensed operators: report unlicensed operation via complaints.fcc.gov. Carriers with foreign-nexus ownership or DOJ mitigation obligations should continue to treat Team Telecom compliance review as a current priority.

ALTERNATIVE HYPOTHESES

Alt-Hyp 1 - SCOTUS rules against the FCC, dismantling the forfeiture-order process and forcing Article III adjudication.

Likelihood: Unlikely **Confidence:** MODERATE

WHAT WOULD SUPPORT	Post-Jarkesy doctrine creates a plausible legal pathway for narrowing FCC authority; the grant of certiorari suggests at least four justices saw a real question; carrier-side litigation incentives are strong.
WHAT WOULD DISCONFIRM	Roberts characterized the carriers' concern as primarily reputational; Kavanaugh's comment implies the Court sees the matter as practically resolved; government concessions on pre-payment requirements may have eliminated the live controversy on which a sweeping ruling would rest.
CURRENT STATUS	**Assessed unlikely. If it occurred, FCC enforcement tempo would slow materially through 2027 as cases route through district courts; treated as a high-consequence watch item pending the end-of-June decision.**

Alt-Hyp 2 - The current Notice-of-Violation cadence reflects a temporary surge rather than a sustained enforcement baseline.

Likelihood: Unlikely **Confidence:** MODERATE

WHAT WOULD SUPPORT	Field-enforcement output naturally varies week to week; a single reporting window is a small sample; staffing and case-timing can bunch releases.
WHAT WOULD DISCONFIRM	The Commission has signaled enforcement as a standing priority; the PIRATE Act framework institutionalizes periodic sweeps; the multi-action week is consistent with the cadence seen across prior COMMS Watch issues rather than an outlier.
CURRENT STATUS	**Assessed unlikely. The cadence is treated as a sustained baseline; a sharp fall in subsequent cycles would be the disconfirming signal.**

COLLECTION GAPS - WHAT THIS ANALYSIS CANNOT SEE

- SCOTUS deliberations are not observable; the end-of-June outcome cannot be predicted beyond oral-argument signal-reading.
- FCC enforcement releases lag the underlying field activity; the 13-21 MAY actions reflect cases opened earlier, so current field tempo is not directly visible.

SOURCES	FCC Enforcement Headlines | FCC Enforcement Orders | Marlink Team Telecom Consent Decree | SCOTUSblog - FCC v. AT&T | FCC Pirate Radio Enforcement

REG-002	FCC Space & Spectrum - SCS Authorization Holds; Space Modernization NPRM Continues, No New Delta	CONTINUED

TRACK	REGULATORY / FCC / SPECTRUM / SATELLITE
DELTA SINCE ISSUE 4	**= NO MATERIAL CHANGE:** No new FCC space or spectrum action inside 16-23 MAY. The 11-MAY FCC commercial SCS authorization for AST SpaceMobile stands as covered in Issue 4 (see SAT-004, TERR-001). **~ CHANGED:** Entry demoted from UPDATED to CONTINUED. The 11-MAY authorization is now standing context, carried for the rulemaking picture rather than as fresh news. **= NO MATERIAL CHANGE:** Space Modernization NPRM (Part 25 to Part 100) continues processing; FirstNet reauthorization through 2037 continues advancing in the House. No docket movement this window.

WHY THIS CYCLE

The 11-MAY SCS authorization for AST is the regulatory keystone for first-responder direct-to-device in 2026; with it, satellite resilience for public safety has a credible 2026 path for the first time since Issue 1. The standing rulemaking context underneath it continues to move. The FCC is processing the Space Modernization NPRM - a Part 25 overhaul to a new Part 100 that would streamline satellite licensing into a licensing assembly line, extend license terms to 20 years, and require space-situational-awareness data sharing - with proposed rules possibly finalized by end of 2026. These proceedings directly affect Starlink, AST SpaceMobile, and other DTC operators whose buildout timelines and spectrum positions are subject to FCC approval; the 09-JAN-2026 authorization of 7,500 additional Gen2 Starlink satellites (15,000 total approved) remains the structural Starlink-side authority, and the EchoStar S-band spectrum

AT&T is acquiring (~$23B, pending FCC approval) is implicated in the Starlink Mobile V3 spectrum strategy. FirstNet reauthorization through 2037 continues advancing in the House.

ANALYST ASSESSMENT

CHANGE FROM PRIOR: demoted UPDATED to CONTINUED; no scored-judgment change. The Space Modernization NPRM trajectory points toward a more permissive, faster licensing regime, and multi-constellation direct-to-device is now an FCC-supported policy trajectory rather than a special-case authorization pattern. FirstNet reauthorization through 2037 provides legislative durability that complements the regulatory de-risking from 11-MAY - the combined picture is structural support for first-responder DTC at both regulatory and statutory levels. Watch triggers: FCC Space Modernization final-rule publication, and any FirstNet reauthorization movement in the Senate.

ALTERNATIVE HYPOTHESES

Alt-Hyp 1 - FCC Space Modernization final rules are materially narrowed and DTC licensing remains case-by-case.

Likelihood: Unlikely **Confidence:** MODERATE

WHAT WOULD SUPPORT	Environmental, orbital-debris, and astronomical-observation interest groups have filed substantive opposition comments; the late-2026 final-rule timing leaves room for political shifts; the SCOTUS FCC v. AT&T decision could constrain FCC rulemaking flexibility depending on its scope.
WHAT WOULD DISCONFIRM	The FCC chair has publicly committed to commercial-space acceleration as a policy priority; the 11-MAY SCS authorization is a concrete data point of that policy in action; carrier and operator support for streamlining is bipartisan and well-coordinated.
CURRENT STATUS	**Assessed unlikely. The assembly-line licensing direction is expected to hold in substance; final-rule publication is the determining event.**

Alt-Hyp 2 - FCC space and spectrum modernization stalls not on rule substance but on litigation or political turnover, leaving DTC operators in regulatory limbo regardless of the NPRM text.

Likelihood: Unlikely **Confidence:** MODERATE

WHAT WOULD SUPPORT	The SCOTUS FCC v. AT&T decision could constrain FCC rulemaking flexibility depending on its scope; environmental, orbital-debris, and astronomy groups have filed substantive opposition that could support litigation; final-rule timing in late 2026 leaves room for political shifts.
WHAT WOULD DISCONFIRM	The 11-MAY SCS authorization shows the FCC is already acting on the modernization agenda without waiting for the full rulemaking; carrier and operator support for streamlining is bipartisan; the FCC chair has made commercial-space acceleration a stated priority, reducing the chance of an internally-driven stall.
CURRENT STATUS	**Assessed unlikely; the SCS authorization is concrete evidence the agency is moving. Litigation risk is the live variable and is tied to the SCOTUS outcome tracked in REG-001.**

COLLECTION GAPS - WHAT THIS ANALYSIS CANNOT SEE

- FCC Space Modernization final-rule text is not published; the proposed-versus-final scope is not knowable until release.
- EchoStar S-band transaction approval timing is pending and not publicly scheduled.
- Senate disposition of FirstNet reauthorization is not yet visible.

SOURCES	AST SpaceMobile FCC SCS auth 11-MAY | FCC Space Modernization NPRM | Morgan Lewis - FCC Space Economy April 2026 | StateScoop - FirstNet Reauthorization

REG-003	Pending Legislation & Rulemaking Watch - CIRCIA Final Rule, Spectrum Bills, FCC Proceedings	NEW
TRACK	REGULATORY / LEGISLATIVE / CYBER / SPECTRUM	
DELTA SINCE ISSUE 4	**+ ADDED:** NEW ENTRY. A dedicated tracker for pending legislation and rulemakings bearing on the communications-infrastructure environment, separate from the specific-proceeding entries REG-001 and REG-002. Established this cycle to close a coverage gap. **+ ADDED:** CIRCIA: CISA's final cyber incident reporting rule for critical infrastructure is on the OMB agenda for May 2026, the month of this issue; appropriations-driven disruption to CISA stakeholder town halls makes a further slip increasingly possible. **+ ADDED:** FCC proceedings: GEO/NGSO satellite spectrum-sharing Report and Order adopted; satellite-broadband spectrum-sharing NPRM (GN Docket 26-78) comments due 21-MAY, replies 22-JUN; robocall Know-Your-Customer FNPRM issued; equipment-authorization national-security (bad-labs) final rule expected May 2026. **+ ADDED:** Spectrum legislation: a cluster of 119th-Congress bills is pending (Spectrum Coordination Act H.R.2171, Government Spectrum Valuation Act S.792, Federal Government Spectrum Inventory Act S.2869, Spectrum Pipeline Act H.R.651). The enacted budget-reconciliation package restored FCC auction authority and left the 6 GHz Wi-Fi band and CBRS open to potential auction.	

WHY THIS CYCLE

Several pending federal actions will reshape the regulatory baseline that communications-infrastructure operators and emergency managers work within, and they are close enough to finalization that practitioners should be tracking them now rather than reacting later. The most consequential for the cyber-heavy posture of this issue is the CIRCIA final rule: once effective, it will require critical-infrastructure operators across sixteen sectors to report covered cyber incidents to CISA within 72 hours and ransom payments within 24 hours, with the draft scope estimated to reach more than 300,000 entities. On the spectrum side, the budget-reconciliation package has already restored FCC auction authority and created a midband pipeline, while leaving the 6 GHz Wi-Fi band and CBRS exposed to potential auction - a direct concern for unlicensed and shared-spectrum users including many public-safety and amateur operations. The FCC proceedings - GEO/NGSO sharing, the satellite-broadband NPRM, the robocall Know-Your-Customer FNPRM, and the equipment-authorization bad-labs rule - each touch the satellite, spectrum, or supply-chain-security threads tracked elsewhere in this issue.

ANALYST ASSESSMENT

CHANGE FROM PRIOR: NEW entry; no prior judgment. Forward judgments by item. The CIRCIA final rule is LIKELY to publish in 2026, though a slip past May is now ROUGHLY EVEN CHANCE given the appropriations-driven disruption to CISA's stakeholder process; confidence MODERATE - the OMB agenda date is firm but the process disruption is documented. The core CIRCIA obligations - 72-hour incident and 24-hour ransom reporting - are VERY LIKELY to survive into the final rule largely intact, since CISA has said the streamlining under consideration addresses scope and burden rather than the core timelines; confidence MODERATE. The spectrum bills are individually LOW-to-MODERATE likelihood of near-term enactment as standalone law, but their substance is LIKELY to advance through must-pass vehicles as the reconciliation precedent showed; confidence LOW, given the unpredictability of legislative vehicles. Practitioner implication: critical-infrastructure operators should build CIRCIA reporting workflows now against the draft obligations rather than wait for the final rule; shared-spectrum users should track the 6 GHz and CBRS auction exposure.

ALTERNATIVE HYPOTHESES

Alt-Hyp 1 - The CIRCIA final rule slips materially past 2026, or is narrowed enough in scope that its near-term compliance impact is far smaller than the draft implies.

Likelihood: Roughly even chance **Confidence:** MODERATE

WHAT WOULD SUPPORT	The rule has already slipped from its October 2025 statutory deadline to May 2026; CISA has explicitly said it is considering reducing scope and burden in response to public comment; an appropriations lapse disrupted the stakeholder town halls, and commentators have noted a further extension is increasingly likely.

WHAT WOULD DISCONFIRM	The May 2026 date sits on the OMB regulatory agenda; CISA has publicly committed to implementing CIRCIA and framed the streamlining as burden-reduction rather than delay; the statutory mandate remains in force and creates pressure to finalize.
CURRENT STATUS	**Genuinely uncertain on timing. The practical guidance does not change either way: building reporting workflows against the draft obligations is the right move whether the rule lands in May or slips.**

Alt-Hyp 2 - The 6 GHz and CBRS auction exposure in the reconciliation package is not exercised, so shared and unlicensed spectrum used by public-safety and amateur operations is preserved in practice.

Likelihood: Roughly even chance **Confidence:** LOW

WHAT WOULD SUPPORT	Auction authority being available is not the same as a decision to auction a specific band; the 6 GHz and CBRS bands have large installed unlicensed and shared user bases that generate strong political resistance to reallocation; the FCC retains discretion over which bands actually go to auction.
WHAT WOULD DISCONFIRM	Industry groups raised specific alarms that the final reconciliation text stripped protections for these bands; spectrum-auction proceeds are a fiscal incentive for reallocation; the budget package created an explicit identification-and-auction pipeline.
CURRENT STATUS	**Genuinely uncertain - this depends on future FCC band-selection decisions not yet made. Shared-spectrum users should treat the exposure as live and track FCC auction-identification proceedings.**

COLLECTION GAPS - WHAT THIS ANALYSIS CANNOT SEE

- The CIRCIA final rule text is not published; the proposed-versus-final scope of covered entities and covered incidents is not knowable until release.
- Legislative vehicle and timing for the spectrum bills are not predictable; standalone-bill status understates the chance their substance moves through must-pass legislation.
- FCC band-selection decisions for any 6 GHz or CBRS auction have not been made; the exposure is structural, not yet a scheduled action.
- This tracker reflects a pending-action sweep current to the build date; rulemaking dockets move continuously and should be reconfirmed at the next cycle.

SOURCES	CISA CIRCIA Rulemaking | CyberScoop - CIRCIA final rule May 2026 | Congress.gov - Spectrum Coordination Act H.R.2171 | CRS - Spectrum Provisions in the Reconciliation Bill | FCC - May 2026 Monthly Actions

SECTION 7B | IPAWS / EAS / PUBLIC ALERTING SYSTEMS

IPAWS-001	IPAWS / EAS / WEA - Operational; FCC Modernization NPRM in Deliberation	CONTINUED
TRACK	PUBLIC ALERTING / IPAWS / EAS / WEA	
DELTA SINCE ISSUE 4	**= NO MATERIAL CHANGE:** IPAWS fully operational. No disruption to the IPAWS-OPEN platform or the EAS national relay chain identified 16-23 MAY; WEA delivery to compatible devices functional. **~ CHANGED:** Entry demoted from UPDATED to CONTINUED. The Issue 4 update framing tied to the 15-17 MAY combined-event weekend has passed; no new IPAWS or FCC-docket delta this window. **= NO MATERIAL CHANGE:** FCC EAS/WEA modernization NPRM (PS Docket 25-224) remains in deliberation, new rules expected mid-2026; FEMA NGWSGP FY2025 funding opportunity remains open.	

WHY THIS CYCLE

IPAWS is the sole nationwide federal alerting backbone, reaching the public via EAS (broadcast/cable), WEA (cellular), NOAA Weather Radio, and IPAWS-OPEN APIs, with more than 1,500 federal, state, local, tribal, and territorial alerting authorities active. NOAA Weather Radio is nominal at the IPAWS-feed layer; AWIPS rolling software updates continue to cause short scheduled NWR transmitter outages, and the current OUT-OF-SERVICE and DEGRADED transmitter roster is tracked in the DTR Weather section, not here. The FCC EAS/WEA modernization NPRM remains in deliberation, with proposals including 5G and AI-driven alerting, multilingual WEA expansion, expanded alert categories (cybersecurity threats, infrastructure outages), alternative distribution via streaming and OTT, and geo-targeting improvements. Any FCC decision about whether to preserve broadcast radio as the primary EAS backbone has direct consequences for resilience under power-grid failure, network exhaustion, and cyber-driven outages.

ANALYST ASSESSMENT

CHANGE FROM PRIOR: demoted UPDATED to CONTINUED; no scored-judgment change. The FCC NPRM remains operationally significant for emergency managers and IPAWS alerting authorities, and the comment record reflects a genuine tension between modernizing EAS/WEA for a mobile-first audience and preserving infrastructure that has proven survivable in widespread network disruptions. Analyst position: the FCC should not phase broadcast radio out of primary EAS-backbone status - it is the only mass-alert mechanism that functions during a power-grid failure when cellular networks have exhausted backup power, requires no device registration or app, is receivable on battery-powered devices, and is anchored by 77 Primary Entry Point stations with hardened power and communications. Forward judgment: the FCC is UNLIKELY to phase out the broadcast backbone in the final rule; confidence MODERATE, as the rulemaking is months from publication and the comment record is genuinely contested. Emergency managers with IPAWS alerting authority should review MDD v2.0 templates and confirm backup CAP drafting capability is trained.

ALTERNATIVE HYPOTHESES

Alt-Hyp 1 - The FCC final rule phases broadcast radio out of primary EAS-backbone status in favor of app-based delivery.

Likelihood: Unlikely **Confidence:** MODERATE

WHAT WOULD SUPPORT	Tech-industry comments in the rulemaking favor mobile-first delivery; the FCC modernization framing emphasizes reaching streaming-only audiences; broadcasters' commercial interest in EAS-required status is sometimes characterized as self-interested.
WHAT WOULD DISCONFIRM	Broadcast resilience characteristics (power-independent, app-free, battery-receivable) are technical realities; the 77 PEP infrastructure represents sunk federal investment with no app-based equivalent; bipartisan public-safety advocacy supports preserving the broadcast backbone; the sustained elevated-threat environment strengthens the resilience-first argument.
CURRENT STATUS	**Assessed unlikely. The broadcast backbone is expected to be preserved in the final rule; final-rule publication mid-2026 is the determining event.**

Alt-Hyp 2 - The operationally significant alerting change this year comes not from the FCC modernization rule but from a CAP-message, WEA-handset, or IPAWS-OPEN technical failure during a real activation.

Likelihood: Unlikely **Confidence:** MODERATE

WHAT WOULD SUPPORT	Alerting failures historically arise from technical and human-factor problems - mis-targeted WEA, CAP construction errors, handset compatibility gaps - more often than from regulatory structure; the modernization NPRM is months from final rules and changes nothing operationally in the interim; the rolling AWIPS updates show the alerting technical base is in constant flux.
WHAT WOULD DISCONFIRM	IPAWS is fully operational this window with no platform or relay-chain disruption identified; the MDD v2.0 templates and the 1,500-plus trained alerting authorities reduce CAP-construction error rates; WEA delivery to compatible devices is functioning.
CURRENT STATUS	**Assessed unlikely in any given window but a real standing risk; it is the basis for the recommendation that emergency managers exercise backup CAP drafting rather than treat the NPRM as the only thing to track.**

COLLECTION GAPS - WHAT THIS ANALYSIS CANNOT SEE

- FCC EAS/WEA modernization final-rule text is not published; the proposed-versus-final treatment of the broadcast backbone is not knowable until release.
- AWIPS rolling-update schedule is not published per transmitter; individual NWR outage timing is visible only after the fact.

SOURCES	FEMA IPAWS | FCC EAS Page | FCC Alerting Modernization NPRM | Radio World - EAS Stakeholder Comments | CRS IPAWS Report

FOOTER | CARRY-FORWARD STATUS (NO STANDALONE ENTRY THIS CYCLE)

Three systems are tracked in the Infrastructure BLUF but did not warrant standalone entries this cycle. Each returns to full entry treatment when activity reaches the operational reporting threshold. The trigger conditions are listed below.

SAT-003 • DirecTV / DISH / EchoStar / SiriusXM

STATUS: Subscriber service nominal. DirecTV-DISH merger remains definitively dead. EchoStar $23B spectrum sale to AT&T pending FCC approval, slated to close mid-2026; the operational thread (EchoStar S-band implications for AT&T / Starlink Mobile V3) is tracked in REG-002.

RETURN-TO-ENTRY TRIGGER: *Any service-affecting outage, an FCC decision on the EchoStar-AT&T transaction, or a material change to Boost Mobile/DISH structure.*

TERR-002 • Backbone / BGP

STATUS: NSTR this cycle. Monitoring via Kentik, RIPE NCC, and Cloudflare Radar shows no BGP route leaks, IXP outages, or sustained submarine cable faults in the 16-23 MAY window. The 14-JAN-2026 Verizon 10-hour cellular outage remains under FCC inquiry and is shaping NG911 reliability rulemaking (see PS-001).

RETURN-TO-ENTRY TRIGGER: *Any large carrier BGP route leak, IXP outage, sustained transatlantic submarine cable fault, or new FCC action on the 14-JAN Verizon outage.*

PS-002 • FCC Enforcement - Pittsburgh PA Investigations

STATUS: Both open items continue with no disposition this cycle: (1) KD3ASC Notice of Violation for inadvertent Part 90 retransmission via BTech UV-Pro Audio Relay; (2) FCC Allegheny County antisemitic broadcast / EMS interference investigation, no arrest as of 23-MAY. Standing operator guidance (disable Audio Relay if Part 90 frequencies are programmed) is now permanent in Section 8 Amateur Radio Corner.

RETURN-TO-ENTRY TRIGGER: *FCC disposition on either case, or any new comparable incident in another jurisdiction that elevates this from local to pattern.*

SECTION 8 | AMATEUR RADIO CORNER

ARES / RACES STATUS

No formal ARES/RACES activation reported for the 16-23 MAY window. The operational headline for the week is propagation recovery: the 15-17 MAY G2 (Moderate) geomagnetic storm has ended and the SWPC 3-day forecast confirms quiet geomagnetic conditions (greatest expected 3-hr Kp of 3 over 24-26 MAY, no G1 or greater storm; see Section 2). Net controllers can plan normal HF band usage; missed-check-in rates should be at baseline. Two qualifiers: a standing flare-driven R1-R2 radio-blackout risk can cause brief daytime HF fade-outs, and coronal holes CH1369/CH1370 may produce unsettled-to-active intervals 26-29 MAY. Standard multi-bearer discipline still applies for any activation: VHF/UHF and DMR as resilient local bearers, Winlink for digital traffic, and L-band MSS (T-Satellite, Verizon Skylo, Iridium) as the GNSS-independent options. Pennsylvania operators: the PEMA ACS state net 3.9935 MHz LSB is the primary statewide HF coordination channel and is back to normal reliability with the storm passed; DMR TG 31420 on the Pennsylvania DMR network remains the backup voice path; York County coordination via W3HZU.

HAMVENTION 2026 - CONCLUDED 17-MAY, XENIA OH

Hamvention 2026 concluded on 17-MAY at the Greene County Fairgrounds in Xenia, OH. The principal annual amateur radio convention ran with AMSAT, ARRL, ARES, RACES, and AUXCOMM presences and the usual forum program on emergency communications, DMR, satellite operations, and digital modes. The event coincided with the 15-17 MAY G2 geomagnetic storm, which degraded long-haul HF for operators traveling to and from the event; that condition has since cleared. No safety or operational incident tied to the convention was identified in the sweep. The next major amateur-radio gathering on the calendar is the 44th AMSAT Space Symposium, 8-11 OCT in Jacksonville, FL.

OPERATIONAL REMINDER - PROGRAMMED FREQUENCY DISCIPLINE

- Inhibit transmit on NOAA Weather frequencies (162.400-162.550 MHz) in capable transceivers. With AWIPS rolling updates causing rotating NWR transmitter outages nationwide, many operators are adjacent to areas where WX Radio is the formal all-hazards channel; ensure your rig cannot accidentally key up on it.
- Audio Relay / Cross-Band Repeat - STANDING GUIDANCE: DISABLE if public safety, government, or other Part 90 frequencies are in your receive bank. The pattern of inadvertent retransmission violations is increasing nationally with the proliferation of multi-function HTs (e.g., BTech UV-Pro). FCC Notices of Violation have been issued on this pattern; treat your radio as a transmitter that can leak any frequency it can hear if Audio Relay is enabled.
- Verify your FCC license is current and covers your operating frequencies. License lookup: wireless2.fcc.gov/UlsApp/UlsSearch/searchLicense.jsp. With the elevated-threat posture sustained (PREP-CON 3), operating on an expired license during an emergency response is both a legal and an operational problem.
- T-Satellite / AST SpaceMobile satellite backup: if your agency or household does not yet have satellite messaging capability, T-Satellite (about $10/mo on most modern smartphones, no hardware required) provides text and 911 messaging in CONUS dead zones and remains the most operationally mature DTC option. The 11-MAY FCC commercial SCS authorization for AST SpaceMobile (see SAT-004, TERR-001) de-risks the FirstNet satellite beta path, but the BB8/9/10 launch is still mid-June; do not decommission existing backup comms until the satellite layer is operational.

SECTION 9 | ANALYST NOTES

CROSS-TRACK ASSESSMENT - POSITIVE ARC HOLDS, NEGATIVE ARC STABLE AT AN ELEVATED BASELINE

Since Issue 1, Fortune Favors the Prepared has tracked two long-arc storylines in the communications environment: a negative arc in the Hormuz theater (GPS/GNSS denial, EW posture, blocked submarine-cable repair access, Iranian APT activity against US critical infrastructure) and a positive arc in cell-satellite integration (T-Satellite commercially live, the AST SpaceMobile FirstNet satellite path). This cycle, neither arc moved materially. That is itself the assessment: after the sharp swings of Issue 4, the communications environment has settled. On the positive side, the 11-MAY FCC commercial Supplemental Coverage from Space authorization for AST SpaceMobile holds, and the mid-June BlueBird 8-10 Falcon 9 launch remains the next gate; no new AST disclosure landed inside the 16-23 MAY window. On the negative side, the Hormuz blockade persists, GNSS denial and SATCOM jamming continue at an elevated tempo, and the 2Africa and SeaMeWe-6 Gulf-segment install delay remains in place, but the sweep identified no new escalation and no new US-nexus cable fault. The one genuinely new development this week sits in the cyber domain rather than either long arc: CVE-2026-20182, the CVSS 10.0 Cisco Catalyst SD-WAN authentication bypass, escalated to CISA Emergency Directive 26-03 with confirmed in-the-wild exploitation attributed to threat actor UAT-8616 and at least ten further threat clusters. The practitioner implication is unchanged in direction but firmer in conviction: maintain the multi-bearer backup stack (HF, VHF/UHF, LMR, Winlink, L-band MSS, T-Satellite) without decommissioning anything, treat the FirstNet satellite path as a credible but not-yet-load-bearing 2026 prospect contingent on the mid-June launch, and treat control-plane network infrastructure (SD-WAN controllers, routers, edge appliances) as an active patch priority.

Forward judgment: the elevated-baseline communications environment is very likely to persist through the next several cycles; confidence MODERATE, given the dependence on the unresolved Hormuz blockade and the mid-June launch outcome.

ANALYTICAL NOTE - THE SD-WAN EMERGENCY DIRECTIVE AND CONTROL-PLANE EXPOSURE

The escalation of CVE-2026-20182 to an Emergency Directive is the development most worth a practitioner pause this cycle. An Emergency Directive is a faster and more serious instrument than a routine KEV addition: it carries a compressed federal remediation deadline (17-MAY here) and signals that CISA assesses the exploitation as an active, material threat to the federal enterprise. Two features make this one notable for communications-infrastructure practitioners specifically. First, the affected component is a control-plane element: the Cisco Catalyst SD-WAN Controller governs routing and fabric configuration, so a compromise is not contained to one endpoint but reaches the logic that directs traffic across the fabric. Second, the threat picture is not a single actor. Cisco Talos attributes the initial, limited exploitation to UAT-8616 with high confidence, but reports that ten-plus additional, distinct threat clusters began exploiting Cisco SD-WAN flaws once public proof-of-concept code was available, with post-compromise activity including SSH key insertion, NETCONF configuration modification, and privilege escalation. The practitioner takeaway is twofold: any organization running Cisco Catalyst SD-WAN should treat patching as already overdue against the 17-MAY directive deadline and should hunt for the post-compromise indicators rather than assume patching alone closes the exposure; and more broadly, control-plane appliances (SD-WAN controllers, BGP-speaking routers, ESInet routers, edge security gateways) deserve a higher monitoring priority than their device count suggests, because compromise at that layer is disproportionate to its footprint.

MONITORING PRIORITIES FOR THE COMING WEEK

- Cisco SD-WAN (CVE-2026-20182 / Emergency Directive 26-03): confirm patching across all Catalyst SD-WAN Controller and Manager instances and hunt for UAT-8616 post-compromise indicators (unexpected SSH keys, NETCONF configuration changes, new high-privilege accounts). Watch for any further CISA guidance and for additional threat-cluster activity as PoC-driven exploitation spreads.
- CISA KEV catalog: daily check for new entries. The 20-MAY tranche (seven CVEs, including two Microsoft Defender flaws) and 21-MAY tranche (Trend Micro Apex One, Langflow) are the most recent. The Reuters-reported proposal to shorten FCEB KEV remediation deadlines toward three days remains under evaluation and is not yet adopted; watch for an adoption decision.
- SWPC space weather: the 15-17 MAY G2 storm has ended and HF has recovered; the 3-day forecast shows quiet geomagnetic conditions (greatest 3-hr Kp of 3 over 24-26 MAY). Monitor for two coming-week items: the flare-driven R1-R2 radio-blackout risk, and coronal holes CH1369/CH1370 which may bring unsettled-to-active intervals 26-29 MAY. Separately, 2 MeV electron flux has run above 1000 pfu since 16-MAY (24-MAY max 3762 pfu) - a satellite-charging hazard for spacecraft operators, tracked in Section 3.
- AST SpaceMobile BlueBird 8, 9, 10: launch expected mid-June 2026 on a Falcon 9. This remains the single most important commercial-space milestone for first-responder satellite connectivity in 2026; a successful launch moves the FirstNet satellite beta from prospective to credibly on-track for late-2026 enrollment.
- SCOTUS FCC v. AT&T / Verizon v. FCC: decision expected by end of June 2026. A ruling preserving the FCC forfeiture-order process would stabilize the enforcement track for the remainder of 2026; watch for the opinion.
- Hormuz GNSS denial: monitor GPSJam.org and operator JMIC/UKMTO advisories for any geographic expansion of the jamming footprint or any CONUS-GPS anomaly signature. The cumulative interference-event count and the latest JMIC advisory number should be confirmed against the operator snapshot.
- Submarine cable: watch TeleGeography and operator notices for any new Gulf-corridor cable fault or for a 2Africa / SeaMeWe-6 install-restart announcement, which would be a leading indicator of regional stabilization.
- FCC NG911 reliability FNPRM: final rules expected late summer 2026. State 911 authorities and PSAPs should inventory Covered 911 Service Provider relationships now, as the expanded definition will capture IP-era providers that did not previously consider themselves C9SPs.

ANALYTICAL INTEGRITY & METHODOLOGY

Full methodology. COMMS Watch is produced under the Fortune Favors the Prepared analytical-standards framework, which implements two published, unclassified Intelligence Community analytic-standards authorities: Intelligence Community Directive 203 (Analytic Standards) and Intelligence Community Directive 206 (Sourcing Requirements for Disseminated Analytic Products), both issued by the Office of the Director of National Intelligence. ICD 203 is the authority for the nine tradecraft standards and for the separation of likelihood from confidence; ICD 206 is the authority for source characterization and the source-tier system. The structured techniques used here - Key Assumptions Check, Indicators and Signposts of Change, and Analysis of Competing Hypotheses - follow the CIA Tradecraft Primer. The complete standards are published at fortunefavorstheprepared.com/analytical-standards. The points below summarize how those standards were applied to this issue; the published page is authoritative.

How to read this product

Estimative language. Forward judgments use the ICD 203 likelihood ladder only: almost no chance, very unlikely, unlikely, roughly even chance, likely, very likely, almost certain. Hedge words (might, may, possibly, perhaps) are not used as estimative terms. Likelihood (how probable) and confidence (how sound the underlying evidence) are stated as separate dimensions and are never collapsed into one another.

Confidence levels. Confidence is stated as HIGH, MODERATE, or LOW, and reflects source quality, corroboration, and the presence or absence of collection gaps - not how alarming the finding is. A judgment can be high-likelihood and only moderate-confidence, or the reverse; both are stated.

Entry structure. Each tracked entry carries a DELTA SINCE ISSUE 4 block (what changed - added, changed, removed, or no material change), a WHY THIS CYCLE narrative, an ANALYST ASSESSMENT with the forward judgment, one or more ALTERNATIVE HYPOTHESES, and a COLLECTION GAPS box. Kinetic entries with a definable order of battle (EW-001, SAT-002) additionally carry a SALUTE table.

Alternative hypotheses. Every scored entry states at least two genuine alternative hypotheses - competing explanations, not straw men - each with the evidence that would support it, the evidence that would disconfirm it, and its current status, and each carrying its own likelihood and confidence rating. An alternate with no supporting evidence is a straw man and is rejected; an alternate with no disconfirming evidence is unfalsifiable and is rejected. This is Analysis of Competing Hypotheses applied as a standing rule: the lead judgment has to survive the alternatives, not merely be asserted over them.

Collection gaps. Each entry names what the analysis cannot see. A gap is not a disclaimer; it is a precise statement of where the assessment is inference rather than observation, so the reader can weight it accordingly. Where an operator snapshot is pending (this cycle: the JMIC/UKMTO advisory number and cumulative GNSS event count), the entry says so rather than presenting a carried-forward figure as current.

Sourcing and carryover. Sources are swept fresh each issue; live operational state (space-weather bulletins, NWR rosters, advisory numbers) is pulled current or marked pending, not carried forward. An item is retained from a prior issue only when there is genuine new delta or a standing structural reason; entries with no current-cycle movement are demoted to CONTINUED rather than re-presented as news.

Typography note. Hyphens are used throughout; em and en dashes are not. Quick readability is a primary goal of this product.

Cycle coherence. This is COMMS Watch Vol. 1, Issue 5, reporting period 16-23 May 2026. Space-weather conditions reflect the operator SWPC snapshot and 24-MAY sweep. The cumulative GNSS interference-event count and the latest JMIC/UKMTO advisory number are pending operator confirmation and are flagged as collection gaps in the relevant entries.

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