

# Growing threat that Trump will provoke war with Iran to further coup plot

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As President Donald Trump's attempted coup d'état unfolds in Washington, the threat that the White House will provoke a catastrophic new war in the Middle East grows by the hour.

The Pentagon has concentrated immense firepower in the Persian Gulf in preparation for a military confrontation with Iran that could engulf the whole region, and indeed the world.

Sunday saw the extraordinary reversal of an order for the USS Nimitz carrier strike group to return to its home base in the United States. Instead, it was sent back to the Persian Gulf on the personal order of Trump following a White House meeting with his newly installed defense secretary, Christopher Miller.

An ex-special forces colonel, Miller replaced Mark Esper after the November 3 election as part of a wholesale purge of the civilian leadership at the Pentagon. Esper had provoked Trump's ire by publicly opposing the invocation of the Insurrection Act and deployment of regular army troops to suppress anti-police violence protests last summer. Miller and his new deputy, Ezra Cohen, are part of a fascistic pro-Trump and fanatically anti-Iranian cabal that has been slotted into top positions at the Defense Department.

The Nimitz, carrying 90 fighter jets and accompanied by a flotilla that includes guided-missile destroyers, has been joined in deployment to the Gulf by the nuclear submarine USS Georgia, which is armed with cruise missiles and escorted by its own squad of warships.

These naval deployments have been supplemented over the past month with three overflights of the Persian Gulf by pairs of nuclear-capable B-52 Stratofortress heavy bombers, in what amount to dry runs for a devastating aerial bombardment of Iran.

The increasingly crowded and perilous waters of the Persian Gulf are also the apparent destination of an Israeli Dolphin class submarine that sailed through the Suez

Canal late last month and a South Korean destroyer that has been dispatched following Iran's seizure of a South Korean tanker. Iranian authorities charged that the tanker was leaking toxic chemicals. The incident has taken place amid a dispute between Tehran and Seoul over \$7 billion in Iranian assets held by South Korea, formerly a major importer of Iranian oil. South Korea is now submitting to Washington's "maximum pressure" sanctions campaign barring both oil and financial transactions with Iran.

Any clash between Iranian naval forces and the South Korean warship could trigger a war with the US, a military ally pledged to defend South Korea against any "external armed attack."

For its part, Israel has seized upon Iran's decision to resume enriching uranium to 20 percent levels at its underground Fordo facility to threaten war. While the increased enrichment is part of a series of measures taken by Iran in response to Washington's unilateral abrogation of the 2015 nuclear accord between Tehran and the major powers, and Europe's failure to challenge Washington's sanctions regime, Tel Aviv has insisted that it is a preparation for producing nuclear weapons.

Israeli Defense Minister Benny Gantz, referring to the rising tensions surrounding the political crisis in the US, told reporters: "I don't know if the situation will erupt. An eruption of the situation is a function of what will happen in these events. I must add that the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] and the rest of the Israeli security forces are on alert and are well aware of what is happening in this front."

Iran has charged that Israel is deliberately seeking to instigate a military confrontation before Trump leaves office. On Saturday, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said, "New intelligence from Iraq indicate[s] that Israeli agent-provocateurs are plotting attacks against Americans" to provide Trump "with a fake casus belli."

Pentagon chief Christopher Miller's rationale for

ordering the carrier Nimitz to reverse course and head back into the Gulf was alleged threats “against President Trump and other US government officials.”

The claim of Iranian “threats” was put in the context of January 3rd’s one-year anniversary of the US assassination of top Iranian leader Qassem Suleimani, who was targeted with a US drone strike shortly after arriving at Baghdad’s international airport for an official state visit.

The anniversary saw major demonstrations in Iraq, where marchers demanded the withdrawal of all US troops from the country, as well as protests elsewhere in the region. Despite Washington’s warnings of Iranian retaliatory attacks on the anniversary—providing a pretext for a US war of aggression—none materialized. Tehran reportedly asked pro-Iranian Shia militias in Iraq, whose own leader, Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, was killed in the same strike that claimed the life of Suleimani, to refrain from attacks on US forces and facilities on Iraqi soil.

In a Tehran press conference on Tuesday, Gholamhossein Esmaili, spokesman for the Iranian judiciary, told reporters that Iran has asked Interpol to issue a “red notice” for the arrest of President Trump and 47 other US officials responsible for the assassination of Suleimani. Previously, Interpol stated that it is not authorized to intervene in issues of a political or military character.

The threat of a US war in the Persian Gulf as part of a coup plot in the US is being taken very seriously by former senior British military commanders interviewed by the *Independent*. Maj. Gen. Jonathan Shaw, a former assistant chief of defense staff and British commander in Iraq, told the British daily that amid the mounting concerns over the coup attempt in Washington, “the possibility that Trump might launch an attack on Iran receives less attention, yet there are worrying indicators we should also take this threat seriously.”

He continued, “The first concerning sign is that the incoming Biden defense team have had their briefings by the Pentagon curtailed. Denying access to the incoming team breaks all the rules of party politics and good governance and threatens a dangerous discontinuity in defense over the handover period. But if you are planning on action that you know your successor would not approve of, then isn’t this exactly what you do?”

General Shaw added: “If a concerted attack on Iranian facilities were ordered, the tools are there to do the job. B-52 bombers, with supporting tankers and fighter escorts; the USS Nimitz carrier strike force. The USS

Georgia transited the Straits of Hormuz into the Gulf, thus increasing both its potency and its vulnerability in the shallows, and the Israelis sending a Dolphin class attack submarine through the Suez Canal to join the US forces, albeit not in the Gulf itself. All Trump has to do is say the word.”

Gen. Sir Richard Barrons, the former chief of Joint Forces Command, told the newspaper that in addition to Trump, there are elements within the US military command that want a war with Iran. “The US military is divided to an extent on this. There is a section which is quite hawkish about Iran and see it as a threat. They are almost quasi-messianic in their attitude in this,” he said.

Clearly representative of this layer is Gen. Michael Flynn (ret.), Trump’s criminally convicted first national security adviser, who last month discussed with him the prospect of imposing martial law to overturn the election.

The joint statement by all 10 living secretaries of defense, Republicans and Democrats alike, published Sunday by the *Washington Post*, declaring that the Pentagon has no role in determining the outcome of the US presidential election, was an unmistakable indication that plotting to employ the military for just such a purpose is well advanced.

A war on Iran, with the potential for mass casualties among the tens of thousands of US troops deployed in the region, could provide Trump with the pretext for imposing martial law and refusing to surrender the White House.

While even the British generals recognize this threat, President-elect Joe Biden and the Democrats have raised no alarm, instead merely insisting that their being locked out of the Pentagon undermines a seamless handover of the US war machine. What they want to avoid, above all, is working people in the United States becoming conscious of the danger and taking the road of an independent struggle against it.



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