

Washington preparing military strikes against Iran

Keith Jones**10 February 2026**

The US military is poised to attack Iran after a massive, weeks-long redeployment of warships, bombers and personnel to the region.

The forces arrayed against Iran, a historically oppressed country that has been subjected to decades of American imperialist aggression, include:

- An “armada,” bristling with Tomahawk cruise missiles, F-35 and F-18 fighter jets, and EA18 growler electronic-war planes, led by the USS Abraham Lincoln, the world’s largest aircraft carrier, is now deployed in the Arabian Sea off Iran’s southern coast;
- Two destroyers stationed in the Persian Gulf at the strategically critical Strait of Hormuz, and three more warships further north off the coast of Qatar;
- Fleets of additional fighter jets and surveillance planes, air-defence batteries and 40,000 troops at more than two dozen, heavily-armed bases across the region;
- And, almost certainly, one or more nuclear-submarines. (Information on the whereabouts of the Pentagon’s nuclear-submarine strike force is highly classified.)

Key US allies are also readying for war. Israel, which last June waged an illegal, unprovoked 12-day war on Iran in conjunction with the United States, has placed its military forces on “high alert.” As of last weekend, Britain has deployed six F-35 stealth fighters to Cyprus, where they have joined a fleet of Typhoon fighter jets active in operations in Iraq and Syria.

With the Trump administration on the verge of setting the entire Middle East ablaze, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has advanced his impending trip to Washington by one week. He will now meet with Trump this Wednesday to discuss their joint project to subjugate Iran. According to the *Jerusalem Post*, high-level Israeli sources have said that Netanyahu will tell “the Americans we will strike alone if Iran crosses the red line we set on ballistic missiles.”

On Sunday, Netanyahu’s far-right government made legal changes to facilitate Israeli property purchases and settlements in the Occupied West Bank in a step his fascist finance minister, Bezalel Smotrich, boasted was meant to “kill the idea of a Palestinian state.”

The military build-up and Washington’s moves to further tighten the enforcement of crushing economic sanctions are key elements in a multi-track strategy aimed at subjugating Iran and installing, whatever the precise composition of its leading personnel, a regime that will place Iran’s energy resources at the service of US

imperialism and break Tehran’s strategic ties with China and Russia.

Since late last year, America’s fascist, would-be dictator President Donald Trump has repeatedly threatened to attack Iran, invoking various pretexts, from eliminating its civilian nuclear program to “defending” protesters from Iranian state repression.

Trump has boasted that the US naval force now menacing Iran is far larger than that Washington deployed last month off Venezuela before attacking the South American country, kidnapping its president, Nicolás Maduro and proclaiming it was seizing the country’s oil resources.

Trump has also vowed that a US attack on Iran would be far bigger and more lethal than what it and Israel mounted on Iran eight months ago, which killed more 1,000 people, the vast majority of them civilians. Trump and his aides have also suggested that a second US attack on Iran could involve a “decapitation strike” even larger than that with which Israel initiated in the June 2025 war, and could potentially target Iran’s 86-year-old Supreme Leader, the Ayatollah Khamenei.

As it did following last June’s war, Iran’s crisis-ridden, Shia clergy-led bourgeois nationalist regime has responded to the escalating imperialist aggression by appealing to the Trump administration for talks. Tehran has indicated it is ready to make major concessions on its civil nuclear program in exchange for an easing of economic sanctions. These concessions reportedly include shipping out of the country virtually all of Iran’s enriched uranium and maintaining only the bare bones of a civilian nuclear program, so as to assert Iran’s sovereign right to do so under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Washington, however, keeps upping its demands. It calculates that the Islamic Republic has been severely weakened.

With the assistance of the European imperialist powers, Washington has largely succeeded in crashing the Iranian economy, fueling mass deprivation and anger with the regime, as it places the burden of the confrontation with imperialism on Iran’s workers and toilers.

The protests that shook Iran from late December through mid-January came to be increasingly dominated by right-wing, petty-bourgeois forces calling for the return of the blood-soaked, US-sponsored Pahlavi monarchy. Nevertheless, the scale of the state repression, its arbitrary character, the fact that Tehran has not restored internet contact with the world, and a continuing wave of mass arrests speak to the regime’s social isolation and ever-

diminishing popular support.

Further compounding its crisis are the reversals that Tehran's allies across the region have suffered over the past two years, including in Syria, Lebanon and Israel/Palestine. Since October 2023, Washington and its Israeli attack-dog have dramatically escalated their drive to create a "New Middle East" under unbridled American imperialist domination, through aggression, war and, in Gaza, outright genocide.

On the part of Washington, the "negotiations" that were initiated with Tehran last Friday as the US military encircles Iran and primes for war are very much a probing operation. They are aimed at extorting concessions and exacerbating and leveraging divisions within the Islamic Republic's clerical-bourgeois political establishment and military-security forces. The talks can also serve as a cover for the decision to go to war. Last June, Trump encouraged the Iranians to believe that he was intent on pursuing negotiations after he had already given the green light to the Israeli attack that launched last June's war.

Trump claimed that last Friday's talks, which were held in Muscat, Oman, rather than US/NATO ally Turkey at Iran's insistence, were "very good." He added, "Iran looks like it wants to make a deal very badly." He said that there would be further negotiations this week.

But the very same day, Trump signed an executive order targeting countries that trade with Iran in defiance of Washington's unilaterally imposed sanctions with tariffs. He also imposed additional sanctions on shipping companies and vessels allegedly involved in transporting Iranian oil, with the aim of further choking its oil exports, the lifeblood of its economy.

Moreover, Trump and his administration continue to signal that a military strike on Iran could be imminent.

White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt was insistent Thursday that the impending talks with Tehran in no way represent a pulling back from the threat of a military strike. "While these negotiations are taking place, I would remind the Iranian regime," said Leavitt, "that the president has many options at his disposal aside from diplomacy as the commander-in-chief of the most powerful military in the history of the world."

To further underline this, Trump's lead negotiators in Oman, US Special Envoy Steve Witkoff and his son-in-law Jared Kushner, made a visit to the USS Lincoln the next day, reportedly at the invitation of the head of the US military's Central Command, Admiral Brad Cooper.

While Friday's talks were apparently restricted to Iran's nuclear program, which Trump has vowed to entirely dismantle, his administration has outlined a series of demands that would effectively constitute Iran's unilateral disarmament, leaving it defenceless and powerless before US and Israeli threats. Chief among these demands are: cessation of all support for Hezbollah, Hamas, the Houthis of Yemen and other allies in the so-called "Axis of Resistance"; and a drastic reduction in Iran's ballistic missile capacity, including a legal ban on it possessing missiles capable of reaching Israel.

Trying to put the best face on developments, Tehran has joined Trump in claiming the outcome of Friday's talks was positive. Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Araghchi told Iranian state

television, "There is an understanding on continuing the talks. ... If this process continues, I think we will reach a good framework for an understanding."

Iran, according to a "regional diplomat" said to be familiar with the talks, reportedly called for "immediate sanctions relief, including banking and oil, and the moving of U.S. military assets away from Iran," in exchange for greatly scaling back its nuclear program and the resumption of regular International Atomic Energy Agency inspections.

Publicly, the Iranian regime has insisted that any negotiations must be restricted to its nuclear program. But it has also hinted that in the event of sanctions relief, it might be prepared to enter broader negotiations. For decades, a significant faction of the regime—of whom the current president, Masoud Pezeshkian, is a representative—has advocated for a rapprochement with the European imperialist powers and Washington, including by opening up the Iranian economy to Western investment. The so-called "hardline" Principlist faction and the leadership of the Islamic Revolutionary Guards have generally opposed this, arguing instead for an orientation to China and Russia. Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei has tried to balance between the two factions.

Washington, however, has time and again rejected Tehran's overtures. It has never reconciled itself to the loss of the Shah's tyrannical monarchial-dictatorship. The massive erosion of American imperialism's relative economic might and world position only make it more aggressive and determined to return the Iranian people to neo-colonial subjugation, so as to plunder its resources and strategically weaken its rivals. China is Iran's largest export market and accounts for more than 90 percent of its oil exports.

In the face of the menacing US military deployment, Tehran has issued warnings that should Iran come under US attack, it will respond far differently from last year. After the US openly joined the war, attacking Iran's nuclear facilities, including with the world's most powerful non-nuclear bomb, Tehran mounted a solitary token retaliatory attack, which it signaled to Washington well in advance. As intended, the attack caused no casualties or substantive damage.

Many of Washington's regional allies have expressed fear of a regional war, the impact this would have on their economies and restless populations. Left unsaid is the prospect that a US-Iran war could draw in not only regional powers but the great powers as well because it will mark a major new stage in the US-led drive to repartition the Middle East, the world's principal oil-exporting region and one lying at the pivot of Asia, Africa and Europe.



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