

US military prepares “sustained, weeks-long” war against Iran

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The US military is preparing for “sustained, weeks-long operations” against Iran if US President Donald Trump orders an attack, Reuters reported Friday, citing US officials. The planned campaign would mark a far larger US assault on Iran than anything previously carried out.

In a sustained campaign, the US military could hit “Iranian state and security facilities, not just nuclear infrastructure,” one of the officials said. The United States “fully expected Iran to retaliate, leading to back-and-forth strikes and reprisals over a period of time.”

Such a war could entail massive loss of life and have incalculable global consequences. It would be illegal under international law and take place in defiance of the popular will, with 85 percent of the American population opposed to a war against Iran, according to a YouGov poll.

Last June, the US launched “Midnight Hammer” in coordination with a 12-day Israeli bombing campaign that together killed over one thousand Iranians. Iran staged a limited retaliatory strike on a US base in Qatar. What is now being planned is qualitatively different—an air and missile campaign targeting the Iranian state itself, with the expectation of extended back-and-forth combat.

The buildup takes place just weeks after the USS Gerald R. Ford, the world’s largest and newest aircraft carrier, took part in the seizure of Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro on January 3. The Ford, which has been at sea for more than 200 days, has now been ordered from the Caribbean to the Middle East, where it will join the USS Abraham Lincoln strike group already in the region. The same carrier used in the kidnapping of the president of Venezuela is being redeployed to wage war against Iran.

Trump, speaking to troops at Fort Bragg, North

Carolina on Friday, said it had “been difficult to make a deal” with Iran. “Sometimes you have to have fear,” he declared. “That’s the only thing that really will get the situation taken care of.” Asked if he wanted regime change, Trump responded: “Seems like that would be the best thing that could happen.”

The Ford strike group includes the guided-missile cruiser Normandy and destroyers Thomas Hudner, Ramage, Carney and Roosevelt. The carrier holds more than 75 military aircraft, including F-18 Super Hornet fighters and E-2 Hawkeye early warning aircraft.

Satellite imagery analyzed by Reuters shows a massive buildup at US bases across the Middle East. At Al-Udeid air base in Qatar, the largest US facility in the region, Patriot missiles have been placed in mobile HEMTT truck launchers, giving them rapid mobility in case of an Iranian attack. The base houses an RC-135 reconnaissance aircraft, 18 KC-135 Stratotanker refueling aircraft, and seven C-17 transport planes.

At Muwaffaq Salti air base in Jordan, images from February 2 show 17 F-15E Strike Eagle fighter-bombers, eight A-10 Thunderbolt close air support aircraft, and four EA-18G Growler electronic warfare jets—where none had been visible weeks earlier. Additional forces have been deployed to Prince Sultan air base in Saudi Arabia, Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean and Dukhan base in Oman. Approximately 112 C-17 Globemaster cargo planes have reportedly arrived or made their way toward the Gulf region.

Iran’s Revolutionary Guards have warned they could retaliate against any US military base in the region. The US maintains bases in Jordan, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates, Oman, Turkey and on Diego Garcia. Ali Shamkhani, an adviser to Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, warned: “We will respond decisively to any adventurism—our

military readiness is high.”

The military buildup coincides with the Munich Security Conference, whose organizers titled their annual report “Under Destruction.” German Chancellor Friedrich Merz opened the conference by declaring: “This order, as flawed as it has been even in its heyday, no longer exists.” He warned that “a divide has opened up between Europe and the United States.”

But while European leaders condemned Trump’s tariffs and threats against allies, they have fully supported the US posture toward Iran. On January 29, the EU unanimously designated Iran’s Revolutionary Guards a terrorist organization—all 27 member states voting in lockstep with Washington’s escalation.

The Munich conference withdrew its invitation to Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, with Germany’s foreign ministry declaring his participation inappropriate. In his place, exiled Crown Prince Reza Pahlavi, son of the Shah overthrown in 1979, was given a platform. Pahlavi called for “humanitarian intervention” and an “equalizing factor”—that is, US military strikes to “neutralize the regime’s instrument of repression.” He told the conference that “help is on the way” from Trump and positioned himself as the leader of a post-regime transition.

Democratic Socialists of America Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez spoke at the Munich Security Conference on the subject of “The Rise of Populism.” In her entire appearance at the conference, she did not say a single word about Trump’s preparations for war against Iran—the most significant military escalation of his presidency.

What she did say is revealing. She warned that Trump is “looking to withdraw the United States from the entire world so that we can turn into an age of authoritarianisms, of authoritarians... where Putin can saber rattle around Europe and try to bully around our own allies there.”

This is not opposition to war; rather Ocasio-Cortez condemned Trump as being insufficiently aggressive against “Putin”—i.e., being insufficiently committed to the war in Ukraine.

The Democrats have been silent as the administration amasses approximately 50,000 troops and the largest concentration of military firepower in the Middle East since the 2003 invasion of Iraq. Their earlier statements on Iran amounted to endorsements of regime change in

response to the emergence of localized protests against the government last month. Senator Mark Warner declared on January 11, “The Iranian regime is awful, and I stand with the Iranian people.” Ocasio-Cortez tweeted that month, “The Iranian government’s violent crackdown on demonstrators is horrific.”

Far from opposing the war buildup, the Democrats have actively funded it. On January 30, the Senate passed the Consolidated Appropriations Act by a vote of 71 to 29, including \$839 billion for the Pentagon—an \$8.4 billion increase over the military’s own budget request. Twenty-three Democrats voted for the bill, including Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, Minority Whip Dick Durbin and Vice Chair Mark Warner. In the House, the bill passed 341 to 88, with 149 Democrats voting yes and only 64 voting no. Republicans on the House Appropriations Committee hailed the legislation as “America First, Fully Funded.”

In the space of weeks, the Trump administration has kidnapped the president of Venezuela, threatened to annex Greenland, backed the Israeli genocide in Gaza and is now preparing a sustained bombing campaign against a country of 88 million people. Each of these operations targets nations whose resources Washington seeks to control as part of its escalating confrontation with China—Venezuela’s oil, Iran’s oil and natural gas and the Strait of Hormuz through which 20 percent of the world’s oil passes daily.

The working class cannot entrust the fight against imperialist war to any faction of the political establishment. The same administration threatening to devastate Iran is attacking immigrants, gutting social programs, and constructing a police state at home. Opposition to war must come from the independent mobilization of the international working class against the capitalist system that produces war, inequality and dictatorship.



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