

US military buildup in Middle East against Iran largest since 2003

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The Trump administration is assembling the largest concentration of American military force in the Middle East since the 2003 invasion of Iraq, placing the United States on the brink of a massive illegal war against Iran that could last weeks or months and engulf the entire region.

Robert Pape, a professor of political science at the University of Chicago and one of the foremost analysts of American air power, wrote on X Saturday: “This represents 40-50% of the deployable US air power in the world. Think air power on the order of the 1991 and 2003 Iraq war. And growing. Never has the US deployed this much force against a potential enemy and not launched strikes.”

The *Jerusalem Post* and the *Media Line*, in an article published Saturday, reported that there are “now four American carrier strike groups either in the wider Middle East or moving toward it. That alone changes the equation. In the surrounding waters, roughly a dozen guided-missile destroyers are spread out, some near the Strait of Hormuz, others operating closer to the Red Sea.” These publications are the only outlets to report that four carrier strike groups are involved in the buildup.

Col. Richard Kemp, a former commander of British forces in Afghanistan, told the *Media Line*: “As I understand it, this is the biggest military buildup in the Middle East since 2003.” He described the current scale as greater than the 12-day war in June 2025. “It could run into weeks,” he said. “It could well be a fairly long, sustained bombing campaign against Iran.” Of the force now assembled, he said: “It’s needed in order to sufficiently damage the regime. Not a token strike.”

Brig. Gen. Amir Avivi, founder of the Israel Defense and Security Forum, said the strategic objective had

shifted beyond Iran’s nuclear facilities. “Now we are talking about taking down the regime. It is something completely different,” he told the *Media Line*. “I think in two weeks it could be done.”

The *New York Times* reported Sunday that the USS Gerald R. Ford, the world’s largest warship, was “steaming south of Italy in the Mediterranean Sea” and would soon be off the coast of Israel. The USS Abraham Lincoln carrier strike group is already operating in the Arabian Sea. The *Times* reported that US President Donald Trump discussed plans for strikes in a White House Situation Room meeting on Wednesday attended by Vice President JD Vance, Secretary of State Marco Rubio, Joint Chiefs Chairman Gen. Dan Caine, CIA Director John Ratcliffe and Chief of Staff Susie Wiles.

According to the *Times*, Trump has told advisers that if diplomacy or an initial targeted attack does not force Iran to capitulate, “he will consider a much bigger attack in coming months intended to drive that country’s leaders from power.”

Targets under consideration include the headquarters of Iran’s Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, nuclear sites and the ballistic missile program. Gen. Caine, who told Trump there was “a high likelihood of success” before the Venezuela operation, has not been able to deliver the same reassurances about Iran, “in large measure because it is a far more difficult target.”

Politico reported Thursday that the buildup had already cost an estimated \$350 million to \$370 million and that costs are mounting rapidly. It noted that 17 US warships now sit in the region, a significant portion of the roughly 68 warships deployed around the globe. The *Wall Street Journal* reported that sailors aboard the Ford have been at sea for eight months, with morale deteriorating and crew members considering leaving

the Navy.

The military escalation takes place amid a deepening political crisis within the United States. On Thursday, the Supreme Court ruled 6-3 in *Learning Resources, Inc. v. Trump* that the International Emergency Economic Powers Act does not authorize presidential tariffs, striking down the central pillar of Trump's trade war. Trump responded by calling the justices a "disgrace to our nation" and immediately imposing new tariffs under a different statute. It was the most significant judicial rebuke of presidential power in decades.

Edward Luce of the *Financial Times* commented: "Past performance suggests he could lash out in other ways. Given his instinct for unfiltered discretion, the Supreme Court's ruling could lead to overcompensation in other spheres. US military action is the one area where the executive branch can almost always count on judicial forbearance."

A war against Iran, a country of 90 million people that has not attacked the United States, would constitute a war of aggression, the "supreme international crime" as defined at the Nuremberg trials.

The Democratic Party continued its silence over the weekend. As the Ford steamed toward the eastern Mediterranean and the administration weighed plans for "targeting individuals" and "leadership change," no leading Democrat issued any significant statement opposing the impending attack.

This silence is the continuation of a pattern documented throughout the buildup. Democratic Senator Mark Warner of Virginia endorsed the military threat, saying he thought it was "appropriate the president has all the options on the table." Democratic Representative Josh Gottheimer of New Jersey explicitly opposed a bipartisan resolution by Representatives Thomas Massie and Ro Khanna that would have prohibited the use of military force against Iran without congressional authorization, declaring that "Congress must not limit our ability to protect Americans and our allies."

Democratic Senator John Fetterman of Pennsylvania went on Newsmax to pledge his support for bombing Iran, saying of last year's strikes: "I absolutely was fully supportive and was cheering for that Midnight Hammer."

Neither House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries,

Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, Bernie Sanders, nor Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez made any statements over the weekend on the US threats against Iran. The Democrats funded every weapon now being assembled for the attack.

The \$901 billion National Defense Authorization Act passed the House in December, with 115 Democrats voting yes. In the Senate, the vast majority of Democrats voted in favor. In January, 149 House Democrats voted for \$839 billion in defense appropriations.

The war drive against Iran is the latest expression of the global eruption of US imperialism. Having seized the president of Venezuela and installed a puppet regime, having threatened to seize Greenland and the Panama Canal, the Trump administration is now preparing to wage aggressive war against a nation of 90 million people to impose regime change and seize control of the Middle East's resources and strategic chokepoints.

The Democratic Party's complicity in these preparations exposes once again that both parties represent the interests of the same ruling class, and that no faction of the political establishment opposes the escalating global war.



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