

Trump demands unconditional surrender from Iran as war enters second week

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President Donald Trump declared Friday that there will be “no deal with Iran except UNCONDITIONAL SURRENDER,” the most extreme formulation yet of American war aims, one that signals the intention to wage permanent war until Iranian society is destroyed.

In a phone interview with *Axios*, Trump defined what he meant: “Unconditional surrender could be that [the Iranians] announce it. But it could also be when they can’t fight any longer because they don’t have anyone or anything to fight with.” In other words, surrender is not a diplomatic act but the physical annihilation of a country’s capacity to resist—the reduction of a nation of 90 million to rubble.

The statement comes as the White House is considering the direct deployment of US troops on the ground in Iran.

NBC News reported Friday that “President Donald Trump has privately expressed serious interest in deploying U.S. troops on the ground inside of Iran.” According to NBC, “Trump has discussed the idea of deploying ground troops with aides and Republican officials outside the White House while outlining his vision for a post-war Iran.”

A headline in *The Telegraph* reported: “US ‘ready’ for boots on ground.” The *Washington Post* wrote that the US Army has abruptly cancelled a major training exercise for the headquarters element of the 82nd Airborne Division, the rapid-deployment force capable of deploying anywhere in the world within 18 hours. The headquarters staff was ordered to remain at Fort Bragg rather than travel to Fort Polk, Louisiana. One official told the *Post*: “We’re all preparing for something—just in case.”

The scale of the destruction inflicted on Iran after seven days of bombing is immense and accelerating. Iran’s Red Crescent Society reported that the death toll

has risen to 1,332, with more than 6,500 wounded. More than 3,600 civilian sites have been damaged.

The Shahid Hamedani Elementary School in eastern Tehran was struck Friday, the fourth school hit since the bombing campaign began—the latest in a series of attacks on educational institutions that began with the massacre of more than 165 girls at the Shajareh Tayyebeh school in Minab on the first day of the war.

On Friday, Reuters reported that US military investigators believe American forces were likely responsible for the Minab school bombing. NBC News reported that the Trump administration told members of Congress in a closed-door briefing that the US military was targeting the area where the school was located and that Israel was not responsible. The administration offered no alternative explanation.

Iran remains under a near-total internet blackout—connectivity at roughly 1 percent of normal levels—for a seventh consecutive day. The Iranian rial has collapsed to a historic low of more than 1,660,000 to the dollar on the open market. Hospitals, pharmacies, and banks continue to operate without reliable communications. The economy, already ravaged by decades of sanctions that had driven food prices up more than 100 percent before the war, is in free fall.

Trump spent Friday morning meeting with the chief executives of the seven largest American defense contractors—RTX/Raytheon, Lockheed Martin, Boeing, Northrop Grumman, BAE Systems, L3Harris Technologies, and Honeywell—at the White House. Lockheed Martin stated afterward: “We have agreed to quadruple critical munitions production. As a result of President Trump’s leadership, we began this work months ago with Secretary Hegseth and Deputy Secretary Feinberg.”

Trump boasted that they had agreed to “quadruple

production of the ‘Exquisite Class’ weaponry,” without defining the term, and noted that the US possesses “a virtually unlimited supply of Medium and Upper Medium Grade Munitions” currently being dropped on Iran.

The meeting took place as oil surged above \$90 a barrel. West Texas Intermediate crude rose more than 12 percent on Friday alone and posted a weekly gain of more than 35 percent—a record since WTI futures began trading in 1983. Brent crude settled at \$92.69. Traders warned that \$100 oil was imminent if the war continues.

Bloomberg reported that Iran destroyed a \$300 million AN/TPY-2 radar at Muwaffaq Salti Air Base in Jordan, a critical component of the US THAAD missile defense architecture in the Gulf. Its destruction leaves American air defense in the region relying on Patriot batteries, which are already contending with depleted interceptor stocks.

US media has devoted significant attention to statements that Russia is providing Iran with targeting data on US military positions across the region, including the locations of American ships and planes. This is presented as “interference” in the conflict, while the massive and illegal bombardment of Iran by the US and Israel is treated as legitimate.

The report on Russian intelligence sharing is being treated in Washington not as a reason for restraint but as a pretext for further escalation—and potentially for widening the war to include direct confrontation with Russia, a nuclear-armed power. The *Wall Street Journal* headline read: “Russia Secretly Sharing Location of U.S. Targets With Iran.” The editorial boards of both the *Journal* and the *Washington Post* used the report to demand a harder line, with the *Journal* declaring that Russia and Iran are “working together to threaten U.S. troops.”

Israel has seized upon the war to launch a massive new offensive against Lebanon. On Thursday, the Israeli military issued an unprecedented blanket evacuation order for the entire Dahiyeh district of Beirut, home to hundreds of thousands of people, and ordered the evacuation of more than 100 villages and towns in southern Lebanon and the Bekaa Valley. Israeli troops have crossed into southern Lebanon in a ground incursion.

Since March 2, Israeli strikes on Lebanon have killed

at least 217 people and wounded more than 798. Israeli Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich declared that Dahiyeh “will look like Khan Younis”—the Gaza city that has been virtually leveled.

In Gaza, Israel shut every border crossing on March 1, halting all food, fuel, medicine, and humanitarian aid to more than two million people. World Central Kitchen warned it would run out of supplies within a week. In some areas of Gaza City, residents have access to as little as two liters of drinking water per day.

Reuters published an exclusive investigation Friday revealing that Israel has been holding talks with Iranian Kurdish insurgent groups for approximately a year, coordinating plans to seize Iranian border towns. Three sources told Reuters that the initial goal is the capture of the towns of Oshnavieh and Piranshahr in western Iran. The militias are believed to have between 5,000 and 8,000 fighters armed with light weapons.

Trump told Reuters it would be “wonderful” if the Kurds crossed the border. Israeli warplanes have been bombing western Iran to clear the path for a Kurdish ground offensive—a deliberate effort to dismember the country along ethnic lines and trigger the collapse of the Iranian state from its periphery.

Not a single faction of the American political establishment, however, opposes the war. The procedural objections raised by the Democrats are a fig leaf designed to provide political cover while the party’s leadership endorses the destruction of an entire country.

Both houses of Congress voted this week to give Trump a free hand. The Senate defeated a war powers resolution 47–53 on Wednesday. The House rejected its own measure 212–219 on Thursday, with four Democrats crossing the aisle to vote with Republicans. Democrats have issued procedural criticisms of Trump’s launching of the war, while supporting its objectives.



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