

Trump threatens ground troops, assassinations in escalating Iran war

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8 March 2026

US President Donald Trump is preparing to deploy ground troops against Iran, several press outlets reported this weekend. While presented as short-term special forces operations against Iranian nuclear sites and oil facilities, any such action would represent a massive escalation of the illegal US-Israeli war against Iran.

Trump himself openly threatened the use of ground troops in remarks to reporters Friday aboard Air Force One, returning from a ceremony to receive the bodies of the first six American soldiers killed in the war—likely the first of many.

NBC News reported that Trump “has privately expressed serious interest in deploying U.S. troops on the ground inside of Iran,” discussing the idea “with aides and Republican officials outside the White House” while outlining his aims for a post-war Iran. Axios confirmed that the US and Israel have discussed “sending special forces into Iran to secure its stockpile of highly enriched uranium at a later stage of the war.”

What Trump discusses with the brutal Israeli regime and the fascist Republicans in Congress he will not discuss with the American people as a whole. The White House has not sought authorization from Congress for military action against Iran, let alone a declaration of war, as required by the US Constitution.

But the American people have heard this before. The rhetoric of “limited” operations and “special forces” is the same lie the ruling class has told before every major ground war of the past 75 years.

The “military advisers” sent to Vietnam became 550,000 troops. The “shock and awe” campaign in Iraq, launched based on the lie of weapons of mass destruction, was declared over in 2011—only for U.S. troops to return in 2014, where they remain to this day. Afghanistan’s “limited” mission stretched across 20 years. Now, barely one week into a war launched without congressional authorization on fabricated pretexts, seven American soldiers are already dead, and the administration is laying the groundwork for a ground invasion of a country three times the size of Iraq with a population of over 90 million.

The deep unpopularity of this war cannot be overstated. Trump won in 2016 and 2024 by posturing as an opponent of “endless wars”—a fraud now exposed for all to see. Workers instinctively understand that their sons and daughters will be

sent to die while gas prices soar, social programs are gutted to fund the war machine, and the specter of a draft looms over an entire generation. This is why the administration speaks in euphemisms about “boots on the ground” while Lindsey Graham assures the public “this is not Iraq.” It is Iraq—and Vietnam, and every other war waged by American imperialism at the expense of working people at home and abroad.

At the same time, Trump is increasingly making the genocidal character of this war explicit. In remarks to the Guardian, he elaborated on his demand for “unconditional surrender,” stating, “I said unconditional. It’s where they cry uncle or when they can’t fight any longer and there’s nobody around to cry uncle—that could happen too.”

Neither the corporate media nor the Democratic Party raised any objection to this language, which confirms the US goal of mass extermination. On Saturday, Trump reiterated that the US military would do “whatever it takes” to achieve his objectives.

Trump conducts himself as a dictator at home, dispatching armed and masked immigration thugs into major cities, while ordering the US military to destroy a country of over 90 million people. In a demonstration of the Nazi-like “big lie” technique, Trump told reporters that Iran was to blame for the air strikes that destroyed a girl’s elementary school near the Strait of Hormuz, killing at least 175 children. “They have no accuracy whatsoever,” he said. “It was done by Iran.” This brazen lie is contradicted even by the tame US media, which has cited Pentagon officials confirming the school was incinerated by US warplanes attacking an adjacent naval base.

Trump and Netanyahu stepped up their murderous threats after the Iranian Assembly of Experts elected Mojtaba Khamenei, the second son of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, to succeed his father as supreme leader. The elder Khamenei was assassinated in the first hours of the war when Israeli bombs, aided by CIA targeting, struck a leadership compound in Tehran. Trump declared even before the selection that he would have final approval over any new Iranian ruler, in effect promising to murder anyone who took the position without his permission. The Israeli government said Mojtaba Khamenei would be placed at the top of its targeting list.

Actions by the Pentagon demonstrate the vast escalation underway. The aircraft carrier USS George H. W. Bush has set

sail from Norfolk toward the war zone, expected to reach the eastern Mediterranean in 10-12 days. A third carrier in the region will allow US Central Command to maintain and even increase the saturation bombing of Iran.

The Army's 82nd Airborne Division, an elite paratrooper unit, canceled a planned training operation, "fueling speculation within the Defense Department that soldiers specializing in ground combat and a range of other missions may be sent to the Middle East as the conflict with Iran widens," the *Washington Post* reported. There were suggestions in the media that the 4,500-strong Immediate Response Force could be deployed against Kharg Island, the offshore oil facility handling 90 percent of Iran's exports—either to destroy it or seize it outright.

The US military, for all the power of its weaponry, cannot conquer Iran, a country with a greater population and larger area than Iraq and Afghanistan combined, and one with a long history of resistance to imperialist intervention. The "strategy" of the Trump White House, if it can be called that, is to kill as many Iranians as possible, destroy the country's infrastructure, and exterminate not only the leadership of the Islamic clerical dictatorship but all of Iran's scientists, engineers, and technically trained professionals—sending the country back to pre-industrial conditions. That is the meaning of the calls for making it impossible for a nation of 90 million to "project power" outside its own borders.

The American working class must oppose the course of mass murder and destruction of an advanced society and culture on which the US government has embarked. But workers and young people must recognize that no amount of protest or pressure on the Democratic Party will stay Trump's hand. The Democratic Party, like the Republican, is a party of big business. It defends the global interests of American imperialism and supports the goals of the war against Iran, whatever its quibbling about Trump's refusing to seek congressional authorization.

Appearing on CNN Sunday, Senator Chris Murphy of Connecticut, a leading Democratic Party spokesman on foreign policy, expressed agreement with Secretary of State Marco Rubio on the issue of preventing Iran from developing a nuclear weapon. He merely suggested that since knowledge "can't be bombed out of existence," there had to be a "diplomatic agreement."

While acknowledging that "the American people don't want this war," and that the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq had proven disastrous, Murphy proposed no action to stop it. He called the mass murder of schoolchildren on the first day of the war a "mistake," adding, "I just think [it] speaks to the fact that we don't have serious people right now making decisions at the White House."

But no leading Democrat has suggested that Congress block funds that will be required to continue the war. They tamely

accepted the defeat last week of resolutions in both the House and Senate to enforce the War Powers Act and require Trump to seek congressional approval of war. The leaders of the so-called "left" wing of the Democratic Party, Senator Bernie Sanders and Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, did not even bother to speak in the perfunctory "debate" on the US war on Iran.

The Democratic Party, while quibbling over procedure, parrots the talking points of the Trump administration and facilitates this genocidal war. The vote last week on a War Powers resolution was a political charade from the start—designed not to stop the war, but to provide a fig leaf for the Democrats' support of it. Their public posture is to complain about process while repeating the same anti-Iran propaganda used to justify aggression and assassination.

The introduction of ground troops would have massive consequences not only for Iran, but for the entire world and for American society itself. A land war against a country of 90 million people cannot be fought without the total subordination of American society to war, requiring the erection of a ferocious police state to suppress domestic resistance to an unfolding catastrophe.

Yet the very recklessness of this escalation is producing growing anger and opposition. Millions of workers and young people do not want another imperialist bloodbath, and the longer the war continues, the more explosive its economic, social and political consequences will become.

The decisive question is whether this opposition is organized and given conscious political direction. The working class is the only social force that can stop the war. The catastrophic economic consequences of the conflict, and its direct connection to the developing dictatorship within the United States, will demonstrate to millions the necessity of forcing an end to the war, dismantling the US war machine and bringing down the Trump administration.

This requires that opposition take the form of an organized, politically conscious movement—socialist in its program and internationalist in its perspective—mobilizing the immense power of the working class against imperialist war and the capitalist system that produces it.



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