

Trump says “likely be more” US troop deaths to achieve “ultimate victory” against Iran

Andre Damon
9 March 2026

As the criminal US-Israeli war on Iran entered its second week, the Trump administration vowed to continue the bombardment and refused to rule out sending ground troops or implementing a military draft—even as it has failed to overthrow the Iranian government or compel surrender.

“We have won in many ways, but not enough. We go forward more determined than ever to achieve ultimate victory that will end this long-running danger once and for all,” US President Donald Trump declared at the House Republican policy retreat at his Doral resort in Florida on Monday.

Asked if the war would end this week, he said flatly: “No.” Hours earlier, in a desperate effort to calm oil and stock markets, Trump had told CBS News that the war “is very complete, pretty much” and that US forces are “very far ahead of schedule.”

Trump has acknowledged that more American troops will die. “And sadly, there will likely be more before it ends,” he said in a Truth Social address on March 1 after the first three US service members were killed. “That’s the way it is. Likely be more.”

Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth, in a “60 Minutes” interview aired Sunday, stated the administration’s war aims with unvarnished brutality. “This is only just the beginning,” Hegseth declared. “The only ones that need to be worried right now are Iranians that think they’re gonna live.” Asked about limits on the operation, he said: “You don’t tell the enemy, you don’t tell the press, you don’t tell anybody what your limits would be on an operation.” On Monday, the Pentagon’s official social media account posted an image of a launched missile with the words “No Mercy” and the caption: “We have Only Just Begun to Fight.”

The administration is taking increasingly desperate

and escalatory actions amid its failure to achieve its stated aims. In January, the administration sought to exploit mass protests as the vehicle for regime change; when that failed, it turned to the targeted assassination of Iran’s leadership, killing Ayatollah Ali Khamenei on the first day of the war. Iran’s Assembly of Experts appointed Mojtaba Khamenei, the son of the slain supreme leader, on Monday in defiance of Israeli threats to kill any successor.

The administration has adopted the Gaza model: the genocidal destruction of Iranian society itself, reducing the country to rubble until it physically cannot resist. Trump made this clear when he said that his demand for “unconditional surrender” is “where they cry uncle or when they can’t fight any longer and there’s nobody around to cry uncle.”

Even supporters of the war acknowledge it is increasingly unlikely that the White House will succeed in overthrowing the Iranian government. *Wall Street Journal* columnist Walter Russell Mead wrote Monday that “air superiority, even supremacy, hasn’t prevented Iran from putting massive political and economic pressure on Washington by choking off the Middle East’s oil flow to the world.” He predicted the most likely outcome is “an in-between scenario in which the U.S. largely clears the Gulf but the current regime survives.”

The State Department issued evacuation notices to American diplomatic personnel across the region on Sunday and Monday, pulling nonessential staff and families from posts in Saudi Arabia and Adana, Turkey—a tacit admission of the growing threat from Iranian retaliatory strikes. White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt, asked on Fox News about a military draft, refused to rule it out: “President Trump wisely does not remove options off of the table. It’s not part of

the current plan right now, but the president, again, wisely keeps his options on the table.” NBC News had previously reported that Trump has “privately expressed serious interest” in deploying US ground troops inside Iran.

The war has triggered a financial crisis. The S&P 500 fell 2 percent last week, its worst week of 2026, and turned negative for the year. Oil prices posted their largest weekly gain on record, with Brent crude surging from roughly \$70 before the war to above \$92 by Friday, a nearly 30 percent increase in a single week. Traders warned that \$100 oil was imminent.

Commercial shipping through the Strait of Hormuz—through which 20 percent of global oil flows—has nearly ceased. The US economy shed 92,000 jobs in February. Gold surged past \$5,100 an ounce as central banks worldwide accelerated their flight from dollar-denominated assets. Trump’s claim to CBS that the war is “very complete” was a desperate effort to calm these markets—oil prices briefly fell to under \$90 after his remarks before surging again.

Meanwhile, the scale of civilian destruction continues to accelerate. Iran’s Deputy Health Minister Ali Jafarian told *Al Jazeera* on Sunday that 1,255 people have been killed—including 200 children—and more than 12,000 wounded, with victims ranging in age from eight months to 88 years. Twenty-nine clinical facilities have been damaged and 10 forced to shut down. The Iranian Red Crescent Society reported that 9,669 civilian buildings have been damaged across the country, including 7,943 residential units, 65 schools, and 32 medical centers. Strikes have hit more than 200 cities since February 28.

Videos from Tehran showed “black rain” falling on the city after March 8 strikes on four fuel storage facilities, with oil from the Shahrān depot leaking into residential streets. At least four tanker drivers were killed. Iran remains under a near-total internet blackout for a 10th consecutive day.

According to the *Washington Post*, the US military expended \$5.6 billion in munitions in just the first 48 hours of the assault on Iran—a rate of consumption that prompted the Trump administration to rush a request for an additional \$28 billion in munitions as part of a supplemental spending bill. Stocks of Patriot interceptors, Tomahawk cruise missiles, and THAAD components are being depleted faster than they can be

replaced—production timelines stretch years into the future—even as Trump browbeat contractors at the White House into pledging to “quadruple production.”

The war against Iran is part of a broader strategy aimed ultimately at China. Republican Senator Lindsey Graham, appearing on Fox News Sunday, stated the calculus openly: “Venezuela and Iran have 31 percent of the world’s oil reserves. We’re going to have a partnership with 31 percent of the known reserves. This is China’s nightmare.” Graham boasted: “When this regime goes down, we are going to have a new Middle East, and we are going to make a ton of money.”

Graham declared: “Cuba’s next, they’re gonna fall, this communist dictatorship in Cuba, their days are numbered.” Trump himself brandished a “Free Cuba” hat and declared, “Stay tuned. The liberation of Cuba is upon us. Iran is going down and Cuba is next.”

The Democratic Party has systematically enabled Trump’s criminal war of aggression against Iran. Democratic House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries, appearing on “Meet the Press” Sunday, endorsed the assassination of the Iranian head of state: “Certainly as it relates to the Ayatollah, he was a bad actor and I’m not going to shed any tears as a result of his departure.”

Asked whether Democrats would block war funding, Jeffries refused: “We’ll cross that bridge when we get to it in terms of if the administration makes a request to Congress to consider additional funding.”



To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

[wsws.org/contact](https://www.wsws.org/contact)