

# In FT interview, Trump announces intention to launch ground invasion of Iran

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In an interview published Sunday in the *Financial Times*, US President Donald Trump announced his “preference” to “take the oil” from Iran—a massive expansion of the US war of aggression that would only be possible through a ground invasion of the country.

Trump’s statement of his intent to massively expand the war was announced one day after what organizers said were as many as 8 million people took to the streets across all 50 states in the third round of “No Kings” demonstrations—which would make them the largest single-day protests in American history. Despite efforts by the organizers to downplay opposition to the war in Iran, the demonstrations expressed the overwhelming popular opposition to it.

The *Financial Times* interview, conducted by Edward Luce, was published as the Pentagon ordered thousands of additional troops to the region. Trump compared the planned seizure of Iran’s oil to Venezuela, where the US intends to control the oil industry “indefinitely” following its capture of President Nicolás Maduro. “To be honest with you, my favourite thing is to take the oil in Iran,” Trump said, “but some stupid people back in the US say: ‘why are you doing that?’ But they’re stupid people.”

Such a move would involve seizing Kharg Island, through which most of Iran’s oil is exported. Trump told the *Financial Times*: “Maybe we take Kharg Island, maybe we don’t. We have a lot of options.” He added: “It would also mean we had to be there for a while.”

The *Wall Street Journal* reported separately Sunday that Trump is actively making plans for a military operation to extract nearly 1,000 pounds of uranium from Iran—“a complex and risky mission that would likely put American forces inside the country for days or longer.”

*Washington Post* reported Sunday that the Pentagon is preparing for “weeks of ground operations in Iran.” The *Post* reported that any operation “would fall short of a full-scale invasion and could instead involve raids by a mixture of Special Operations forces and conventional infantry troops.” One official told the *Post* the objectives would take “weeks, not months.” Another said “a couple of months.”

The *Post* cited a former senior defense official, who said: “We’ve looked at this. It’s been war-gamed. This is not last-minute planning.” On the seizure of Kharg Island, the official said: “Seizing it is not difficult. Protecting your guys once they are there is.”

Michael Eisenstadt of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, a retired Army officer, told the *Post*: “I just wouldn’t want to be in that small place with Iran’s ability to rain down drones and maybe artillery.” A poll by the Associated Press and NORC Center for Public Affairs Research found that 62 percent of Americans strongly oppose the use of ground troops in Iran. Only 12 percent are in favor.

Trump claimed he could take Kharg Island “very easily,” saying Iran has “no defense” on the island. The military’s own assessments contradict this. CNN reported that Iran has fortified the island with an estimated 30,000-40,000 personnel, air defense systems, underground trenches, land mines along the coastline and swarms of first-person-view kamikaze drones. Harrison Mann, a former Army major and Defense Intelligence Agency analyst, told *Democracy Now* that the operation would be “close to a suicide mission,” warning that US troops “could really end up being trapped there.” Joe Kent, Trump’s own former counter-terrorism chief, said: “I just think that would be a disaster. It would essentially be giving Iran a bunch of hostages on an island that they could barrage with

drones and missiles.”

Republican Senator Lindsey Graham compared the planned operation to Iwo Jima, one of the bloodiest battles of World War II, and said: “We did Iwo Jima, we can do this. My money’s always on the Marines.” Iran’s parliament speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf said Sunday that the US was “secretly planning a ground invasion” while publicly talking about negotiations, according to Reuters.

More than 50,000 US troops are now deployed across the Middle East, according to the *New York Times*. The 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU)—2,500 Marines and 2,500 sailors—arrived in the region on Friday. Another 2,200 Marines from the 11th MEU are en route aboard the USS Boxer. Roughly 2,000 paratroopers from the 82nd Airborne Division have been ordered to the region. The *Wall Street Journal* and Axios reported that the Pentagon is drawing up plans to send another 10,000 troops to the region.

In Lebanon, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu ordered Sunday the expansion of what he called the “security zone” in southern Lebanon. More than 1,238 people have been killed and 3,500 wounded since Israel launched its assault on March 2, according to Lebanon’s Health Ministry, including 124 children. More than 1.2 million people have been displaced. Israeli forces have reached a tributary of the Litani River. *PBS NewsHour* reported that three journalists were killed Saturday in a targeted Israeli airstrike on a marked press vehicle in Jezzine.

After 30 days of war, the civilian death toll in Iran continues to climb. The human rights group Hengaw, using field documentation, reported at least 6,530 killed through Day 25, including 640 confirmed civilians. The Human Rights Activists News Agency (HRANA) documented at least 1,551 civilian deaths, including 236 children. Iran’s Red Crescent reported more than 81,000 civilian sites damaged, including 61,000 homes and nearly 500 schools. Between 3.2 and 4 million Iranians have been internally displaced. A near-total internet blackout has sealed off 90 million people from the outside world for 30 days.

Brent crude surged above \$115 a barrel on Sunday, up 59 percent this month, according to Reuters, the steepest monthly jump on record, exceeding gains during the 1990 Gulf War. Gasoline in the United States has risen to \$3.98 a gallon, up nearly \$1 since the

war began. Goldman Sachs estimated in a report cited by *Fortune* that the war is costing the US economy 10,000 jobs per month.

On the Sunday talk shows, no Democrat on any of the four major programs used the words “war crime” or “international law” in connection with the Iran war. Last weekend, former Democratic National Committee (DNC) Chair Donna Brazile declared on *ABC’s Sunday* news program: “Democrats understand that Iran has posed a threat, not just to the region, the Gulf, but to the world itself.”

The entire Democratic leadership—Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries, Minority Whip Katherine Clark and Democratic Caucus Chair Pete Aguilar—voted for the \$839 billion military budget that funds the war.



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