

Trump calls Iranian response to negotiations “unacceptable,” as Israel continues Lebanon bloodbath

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US President Donald Trump declared Iran’s reply to his negotiation terms “TOTALLY UNACCEPTABLE” on Sunday, threatening renewed military escalation four days before his summit with Chinese President Xi Jinping in Beijing.

In two posts on his Truth Social platform, Trump accused Tehran of “playing games” for “47 years (DELAY, DELAY, DELAY!).” At a Cabinet meeting Sunday morning, he told reporters he was no longer certain Washington wanted a deal at all.

Iran’s reply to the Trump administration, delivered Sunday through Pakistani mediators, offered to transfer Tehran’s stockpile of 60 percent-enriched uranium to a third country and demanded that the US blockade of Iranian ports be lifted before further talks. Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi described the demand to dismantle enrichment facilities as non-negotiable. Trump’s terms had required immediate suspension of enrichment for 12 years.

In a televised interview Sunday with the journalist Sharyl Attkisson, Trump repeated his threat to bomb the Iranian uranium stockpile if any country assists Tehran in moving or hiding it: “If anybody got near the place, we will know about it. And we’ll blow them up.” On May 7, Trump warned that the United States would soon have to “look at one big glow coming out of Iran”—a remark widely read as a threat of nuclear strikes.

The administration is signaling a return to direct combat operations. Trump told reporters Friday that he was preparing to resume the U.S. Navy operation in the Strait of Hormuz, suspended on May 6, “with other things.” The US military has three carrier strike groups in the region; the blockade has now redirected 61

commercial ships and is holding more than 70 tankers in custody.

As Trump escalated his threats, the Israeli bombardment of Lebanon entered its bloodiest weekend since the cease-fire that began on April 16. Israeli forces killed at least 24 people in Lebanon on Saturday and at least 39 more on Sunday, according to Lebanese health officials, in what officials described as the deadliest single day of strikes since the cease-fire began. The Lebanese health ministry has now recorded 2,846 dead and 8,693 wounded since the resumed Israeli bombardment began March 2.

In the southern town of Nabatieh on Saturday, an Israeli drone fired three successive guided missiles at a Syrian agricultural laborer and his 12-year-old daughter on a motorcycle. The father was killed on the second strike. The wounded girl fled roughly 100 meters before the drone struck her with a third missile, killing her. The Lebanese health ministry condemned the attack as “deliberate violence against civilians.”

An Israeli airstrike on the village of Saksakiyeh killed seven people, including a child, in a building sheltering displaced families from Jibshit. Three drone strikes south of Beirut in the Bshamoun and Aramoun area killed four more.

On Sunday, Israeli aircraft struck the Beirut-Sidon coastal highway, a road in the Chouf region where three people were killed and a car in Burj Rahal-Aabbasiyyeh, where three more were killed. The Israeli military claimed to have struck more than 85 Hezbollah “infrastructure” targets in 24 hours. A Reuters photograph published Sunday by the *Financial Times* showed what appeared to be white phosphorus rounds fired by Israeli forces into Lebanese territory.

The Nabatieh strike was the latest in a documented pattern of multi-strike attacks targeting both initial victims and the responders who reach them. More than 100 Lebanese emergency personnel have been killed since March, including three civil defense workers in a double-tap strike on April 29 and four paramedics in a quadruple-tap attack on the village of Mayfadoun on April 15.

Lebanese Prime Minister Nawaf Salam has filed a complaint with the U.N. Security Council. Hezbollah responded with a drone attack on northern Israel that wounded three Israeli reservists. The Trump administration issued no condemnation of the Israeli strikes; a third round of US-mediated Israel-Lebanon talks is to be held in Washington on May 14 and 15.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, in an interview broadcast Sunday on CBS's *60 Minutes*, declared that the war on Iran was "not over" and demanded that Tehran dismantle its enrichment facilities and surrender its uranium stockpile. Asked whether Israel would remove the stockpile by force, Netanyahu declined to rule it out.

Secretary of State Marco Rubio and Middle East envoy Steve Witkoff met Qatar's prime minister, Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani, in Miami on Saturday in emergency consultations that produced no announced result.

Trump's confrontation with Iran will be carried directly into his Beijing summit, scheduled for Thursday and Friday. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent confirmed the war would dominate the agenda. Roughly four out of every five barrels of Iran's seaborne oil exports go to China, which has refused to participate in the US blockade and whose commerce ministry has issued a blocking statute ordering Chinese firms to ignore the US sanctions regime.

The Iran war is now in its 72nd day. Brent crude is at roughly \$101 a barrel, gasoline above \$4.50. US intelligence has found that the renewed combat operations did little additional damage to Iran's nuclear program; the roughly 440 kilograms of 60 percent-enriched uranium Iran is believed to hold, material sufficient for some 10 warheads if further enriched, sits in underground facilities US munitions cannot reach.

Democratic Party officials who appeared across the Sunday morning talk shows did not oppose the war. They demanded that Trump prosecute it more

aggressively.

Democratic Senator Jack Reed of Rhode Island, the ranking Democrat on the Senate Armed Services Committee, appeared on Fox News Sunday to attack the administration's handling of the war. "President Trump is going into this meeting terribly weakened," Reed said, referring to the Beijing summit. "There's a stalemate now. The Iranians are holding 20 percent of the world's oil at risk." He pointed to "significant gas prices, significant increases in grocery prices and in all sorts of prices for the American home" as the cost. He also faulted the administration for redeploying US personnel and equipment from the Indo-Pacific to the Middle East, weakening US "readiness" against China.

On CNN's *AC360* last Tuesday, with guest host John Berman, Reed had attacked Trump's pause of the same escort operation. "This is another example of the strategic incoherence that has dominated this whole operation," Reed said. "The president did not get the authority to conduct this war." He added, "You can't take a timeout like in football and say, 'Oh, timeout'."

Reed's criticisms of the administration were entirely that its incoherent policies had failed to secure US imperialism's goal of dominating Iran, while weakening its position for a potential war with China.

All factions of the US political establishment support the global war drive and the aim of subjugating Iran to US domination.



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