

# With US-Iran negotiations on the verge of breakdown, Democrats, Republicans intensify attack on Iran agreement

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The agreement between the Trump administration and Iran that suspended the four-month war began to unravel over the weekend, four days after US President Donald Trump signed it at Versailles, as leading Democrats and Republicans intensified their attack on it as a capitulation to Iran.

The first round of talks to implement the deal, set to open in Switzerland on Friday, was postponed after Iran held back its delegation over Israel's continued bombing of Lebanon. Vice President JD Vance, who had been due to fly out, delayed his trip.

The negotiations resumed Sunday at the Bürgenstock resort in Switzerland. Vance joined envoys Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner across the table from Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi and parliament speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf.

On Saturday Iran's military command declared the Strait of Hormuz closed once again. It charged that the United States had broken its commitment to carry out the first clause of the memorandum and that Israel had refused to withdraw from southern Lebanon.

The US military denied that Iran controlled the strait and said traffic continued to flow. Energy Secretary Chris Wright said 67 tankers had passed through on Saturday, up from 55 two days earlier, with oil volumes "about equal to where we were before the war." Roughly 20 million barrels of oil cross the waterway each day.

Israel continued its assault on Lebanon over the weekend. Israeli strikes killed 83 people in southern Lebanon on Friday, according to the Lebanese health ministry, and more than a dozen more overnight into Saturday. Hezbollah fired over 50 rockets at Israeli troops.

On Sunday Trump threatened to renew the bombing of Iran. "Iran must immediately stop their highly paid PROXIES in Lebanon from causing trouble," he wrote on Truth Social. "If they don't, we'll hit Iran very hard again, just like we did last week, only harder!!!" He told Fox News that Iran "won't have a country" if it closed the strait.

As the deal was on the verge of falling apart, the Sunday talk shows became a forum for demands within the US political establishment for escalation against Iran. Leading Democrats joined the Republicans in a warmongering attack on Trump's agreement, arguing, de facto, that the war should resume.

Democratic Senator Cory Booker of New Jersey, on NBC's *Meet the Press* on Sunday, said he did "not support this deal that he made which was an abject surrender." He complained that "Iran has billions and billions of dollars of benefits" and that "American dollars, American resources are now going to be used to help rebuild Iran."

Susan Rice, Barack Obama's national security adviser, called the agreement "a jaw-dropping, horrific surrender" on ABC's *This Week* on Sunday. She objected that "there is nothing in that agreement that requires that the nuclear material, the dust, as the president likes to call it, will be removed from Iran," and that Iran could now use the strait "to hold us and the global economy hostage anytime they want."

Along similar lines, Mark Esper, Trump's own first-term defense secretary, told *Meet the Press* on Sunday that the deal was "a strategic setback," warning that Iran had found "a reusable tool, unlike a nuclear weapon, that they can shut down the global economy." Former Republican Governor Chris Christie of New

Jersey said on *This Week* that Trump had “gone from America first to Iran first.”

Jeh Johnson, Obama’s Homeland Security secretary, said on *Meet the Press* that Iran’s new power to open and close the strait “has greater potency than any prospect that they might develop a nuclear weapon in the future.”

Esper had run the Pentagon under Trump; Rice and Johnson had directed the National Security Council and the Department of Homeland Security under Obama.

New Yorker writer Susan Glasser said on the *Meet the Press* panel that the question across Washington was “whether it was the United States itself that engaged with a form of unconditional surrender.”

The complaint, from representatives of the Democratic and Republican parties alike, was that Trump had stopped short of breaking Iran—that he had released its frozen funds, left its enriched uranium in place and pulled American forces back from the Gulf. Rice prefaced her indictment with “I oppose this war because it was a stupid war,” but every objection that followed assumed the fighting should have ended with Iran disarmed and broken.

Booker said the alternative was a president who had not “surrendered all of our leverage.”

The same argument appeared in Democratic Party-aligned publications. *New York Times* columnist Thomas Friedman wrote in a Friday column that “this deal has left Iran stronger and all its neighbors more vulnerable to Tehran’s whims.”

Trump signed the deal amid a deepening economic crisis triggered by the war. The closure of the strait had driven oil and consumer prices sharply higher and raised the danger of a collapse on the markets, and the agreement was meant to head it off.

Oil prices had fallen sharply after the deal was signed. But after Iran declared the strait shut again on Saturday, US crude climbed back above \$78 a barrel, with traders warning that a sustained closure of the Gulf would drive it back toward the \$118 it reached during the war.

The unanimity of the condemnation of the agreement within the US political establishment makes clear the bipartisan character of support for global war. Both parties fault Trump for halting the war short of victory, and both are pressing for it to resume on harsher terms.

Any agreement—if an agreement is even reached—will

only be the prelude to further US military escalation, whether targeting Iran, the broader Middle East, or Russia and China.



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