Trump preparing forces for “massive attack” on Iran

Andre Damon
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The Trump administration is concentrating US military forces in the Middle East and Europe for a vast expansion of US imperialism’s war against Iran.

According to an article published Wednesday in the *Wall Street Journal*, “In the past week, special-operations forces have deployed to the region from their U.S. bases, according to flight-tracking data and U.S. officials. Squadrons of jet fighters have been staged across the Middle East, and bomber aircraft at bases in the U.S. and U.K. are on high alert to ramp up operations, according to one of the officials.”

According to the article, more than 150 medics have arrived in recent days at Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany, the largest American military hospital abroad and the first stop for troops wounded in the Middle East. This is a clear indication that the Trump administration is preparing for a major increase in American casualties.

Long-range bombers, including B-1s staged in Britain, are preparing for “major combat operations,” the *Journal* wrote. A B-1 flew its first strike mission of the renewed bombing, Axios reported on Thursday.

“I am considering a massive attack. Bigger than ever before,” US President Donald Trump told Axios. “I am close to making a decision. We are all set for it.”

The purpose of the surge, the *Journal* wrote, is to give Trump “more muscular military options as he considers expanding the conflict against Iran.” Some sort of ground invasion is clearly among the options that are being considered.

On July 15, the *Journal* revealed that a White House Situation Room meeting discussed seizing “Kharg Island and other territory along the Strait of Hormuz using U.S. troops.” There are other potential targets, including nuclear energy facilities on Pickaxe Mountain and the seizure of other islands in the Strait of Hormuz.

Keith Kellogg, the retired lieutenant general who served as Trump’s envoy for Ukraine until last year, called Monday on Fox News for a ground invasion: “You’re going to need ground troops to do something.”

A US effort to reopen the strait by force would be a massive undertaking. Mark Montgomery, a retired U.S. Navy rear admiral, told the *Financial Times* in an article published Thursday that degrading Iran’s ability to launch drones and missiles could take weeks of as many as 150 to 200 American strikes a night. The FT also quoted a maritime adviser: “Iran only needs to hit one tanker to put everyone off.”

Trump is also returning to his threats of genocidal violence. On Wednesday, he posted on Truth Social that any Iranian attack on shipping in the Strait of Hormuz will be answered by the destruction of “ONE BRIDGE OR POWER PLANT, including those located next to, or in, the Capital City of Tehran.” This is a public declaration of intent to commit war crimes under the Geneva Conventions, which state that “Civilian objects shall not be the object of attack or of reprisals.”

On Thursday, Secretary of State Marco Rubio declared a policy of disproportionate retaliation to any resistance by Iran: “a head for an eye.” Reprisal at a fixed ratio was one of the notorious practices of the Hitler dictatorship.

The Trump administration is driven to escalation by the logic of the war, which is now in its fifth month. American imperialism has failed to achieve any of its stated objectives, including the overthrow of the Iranian government and the seizure of the Strait of Hormuz, through which a large percentage of the world’s oil and natural gas passes.

Every failure by the Trump administration has led to an even greater and more reckless escalation. In January, the administration encouraged and tried to arm protests inside Iran that it had hoped would overthrow the government. That operation’s failure led Trump to seek regime change by killing Iran’s leaders on February 28. These murders,

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too, failed to break the resistance of the Iranian population, and the administration escalated to a months-long bombing campaign that has killed more than 3,600 people and to the ongoing blockade.

Now the administration sees a massive and desperate escalation as the only way to rescue the prestige of US imperialism. In March 1965, as the Johnson administration prepared its escalation in Vietnam, Assistant Secretary of Defense John McNaughton wrote in a memorandum later published in the Pentagon Papers that 70 percent of the American purpose was "to avoid a humiliating US defeat (to our reputation as a guarantor)." That same month, the first 3,500 Marines landed at Da Nang; by the end of 1968, 536,000 American troops were in Vietnam.

A similar logic is involved in the war against Iran, under even more dangerous conditions. Washington calculates that a withdrawal after nearly five months of losses would shatter the world position of American imperialism in the eyes of its rivals, above all, China, and would represent a devastating blow to US domination.

American imperialism, staggering under massive debts, also confronts a deepening crisis of the dollar's dominance in the world financial system. Federal debt held by the public has passed 100 percent of gross domestic product, the dollar's share of world reserve assets has sunk to its lowest levels in three decades, and a survey of central banks published at the end of June found, for the first time, more of them planning to cut their dollar holdings over the coming decade than to increase them.

The war has the support of the entire political establishment. On Wednesday, the House passed a $1.15 trillion military authorization bill, 216-212, with six Democrats supplying the margin. After the Democrats ensured sufficient votes to pass the bill, the remainder were allowed to vote against. In January, 149 House Democrats approved the $839 billion military appropriations bill that paid for the assault on Iran launched five weeks later.

The Democrats' criticisms have centered on Trump's failure to secure victory, stated most bluntly at a Senate hearing on Tuesday by Democratic Senator Gary Peters of Michigan. Peters called Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth a "failure" and demanded: "You don't have a strategy. You don't have a long-term plan to actually win this war. Win the war!"

The Democrats also speak for sections of the ruling class that are concerned that the conduct of the war against Iran has undermined the US focus on the war with Russia, which is in their view the more important theater of the global US war.

Beyond conflicts over geopolitical strategy, the main concern of the Democratic Party is to prevent the emergence of popular opposition from below. The escalation of the war is being made without any explanation or warning, from any section of the political establishment, to the American people, who have opposed the war in every major poll since it began. No section of the ruling class is telling the population of the massive escalation of the war being prepared.

The escalation now underway will have catastrophic consequences for the population of Iran, the region and the entire world. Imperialism is in the initial stages of a global war that is continually expanding in scope. With each new stage, the danger of nuclear war grows.

The war has created the framework for a massive assault on the social position of the working class. Everything is to be subordinated to the unprecedented expenditures for war. Trump has declared the intention of the oligarchy to attack Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid. Food aid has already been cut off for 1.5 million children, according to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities.

The renewed bombing is having a devastating effect on US households. Gasoline passed $4 a gallon this week, up from $3.14 a month ago, and the war has cost the average household some $450 in higher energy bills, by CNBC's estimate—more than wiping out the tax rebate Trump promised. For the first time in three years, inflation is erasing all wage gains.

The war is necessarily fueling the growth of the class struggle, in the United States and throughout the world. Already, in the first half of 2026, this movement has begun to emerge explosively. The international working class, armed with a socialist program, is the social force upon which the struggle against imperialist war must be based.

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