US resumes bombing of Iran

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US forces bombed Iranian territory early Sunday for the first time in a month, striking two rocket launchers on Iran's Larak Island in the Strait of Hormuz. Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps said Sunday the bombing left soldiers and civilians dead and injured, and its spokesman, Hossein Mohebi, called it a "strategic and fatal mistake" and vowed retaliation.

The war the United States and Israel launched against Iran on February 28, with opening strikes that assassinated Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, passed its six-month mark Friday. US President Donald Trump projected in March it would take "four to five weeks."

Iran's government is still standing, and most ships cannot traverse the Strait of Hormuz, through which a fifth of the world's oil was transported before the war. Iran's Health Ministry last published the human toll on June 10: at least 3,468 dead and more than 26,500 wounded. It has issued nothing since.

The Trump administration went to war for control of that chokepoint and through it a grip on the fuel supply of China, buyer of more than 80 percent of Iran's oil exports. During the month-long pause that Sunday's strike ended, the administration pressed its naval blockade of Iran's ports and widened the economic war whose chief target is Beijing.

The war has fed a surge in food and fuel prices, deepening the affordability crisis confronting workers in the United States and around the world. Gasoline averaged $4.09 a gallon nationwide on Friday, 88 cents more than a year earlier, and consumer prices rose 3.4 percent in the 12 months through July, with food and energy rising fastest. The war is overwhelmingly opposed by the population: 61 percent of Americans disapprove of it, according to CBS News polling cited on Face the Nation Sunday.

On Wednesday, Trump posted to Truth Social an AI-generated image of himself amid smoke and warplanes, beside an image of the assassinated Khamenei, labeled "MISSION ACCOMPLISHED 2026" and a photograph of George W. Bush labeled "MISSION NOT ACCOMPLISHED 2001-2021."

Bush spoke beneath a "Mission Accomplished" banner aboard the USS Abraham Lincoln in May 2003, six weeks into the Iraq war; the same carrier left the Middle East this month after almost nine months there.

On NBC's *Meet the Press* Sunday, Republican Senator Ted Cruz of Texas reiterated his calls for regime change: "What I've been urging is for President Trump and the Trump administration to arm the protesters, the people of Iran, arm the Kurds and let the protesters remove this regime from power."

Defense Department records list 18 American troops dead and 758 wounded since February 28, the *Intercept* reported Tuesday; a fuller count the outlet published August 4 put the dead and wounded above 900.

On Monday, August 24, Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent opened the sanctions campaign he calls an "economic D-Day" against Iran, blacklisting nearly 60 companies, ships and people and promising an announcement by week's end of sanctions on a major financial institution. On Friday, the Treasury moved to bar the Emirati offices of Banque Misr, the second-largest bank in Egypt, from the dollar system. The rule named no Chinese bank.

Bessent told the Associated Press in an interview published Sunday that another bank would be sanctioned this week. "This is going to be financial violence if we have to," he said, adding that on China "all options are on the table."

The campaign is a siege of a country of 90 million people: a naval blockade backed by the threat of economic ruin against any bank, company or government that trades with Tehran. Its logic leads to Beijing. To seal off Iran's remaining trade, much of which runs to China, Washington would have to wage

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financial war on a nuclear-armed power.

The criticism Democrats do make of Trump comes largely from the right, faulting him for failing to end the war on Washington's terms.

At a Senate Appropriations Committee hearing July 22, Democratic Senator Gary Peters of Michigan told Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth, who was defending a $67 billion war funding request: "You don't have a strategy. You don't have a long-term plan to actually win this war." Peters called the administration's record "an utter and complete failure to win this war to this point," and told Hegseth: "You, sir, are the failure."

The money for the ongoing war against Iran was appropriated by both parties. In December, 115 House Democrats, Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries among them, voted for the National Defense Authorization Act, and Charles Schumer, Richard Durbin and 21 other Senate Democrats passed it through the Senate; in January, 149 House Democrats approved the $839 billion Pentagon spending bill, five weeks before the bombing of Iran began.

The most recent vote came in the first week of August, when the Senate approved by 86-11 a bill extending sanctions on Iran and imposing new ones on Russia, authorizing tariffs of up to 100 percent against the largest buyers of Russian oil and gas, China and India among them. Democrats backed it 37-10. Democratic Senator Richard Blumenthal of Connecticut, the bill's chief Democratic sponsor, addressed Russian President Vladimir Putin directly: "Your economy, already on its heels, is going to be throttled, even decimated." Schumer said the bill sends "an unmistakable message to Moscow that America will back Ukraine to the hilt."

The economic siege of Iran is part of a widening campaign of imperialist war, including the escalation of the war against Russia. On Tuesday, CIA Director John Ratcliffe traveled in secret to Moscow—the first time a CIA director is known to have visited Russia since the Ukraine war began. CNN reported Thursday that Ratcliffe delivered a "warning to Russia not to stage an attack in NATO territory"—an indication that Washington itself considers open warfare between NATO and Russia a live danger.

The context of Ratcliffe's visit was a series of provocative actions by the NATO powers. On August 24, British Prime Minister Andy Burnham, in Kiev, handed Ukraine the classified design data for the Storm Shadow cruise missile's British-made parts so that Ukraine and France can produce it, and the European Commission approved €6.1 billion more for missiles and air defenses. Ukrainian drones have burned refineries hundreds of miles inside Russia, aimed with American and French targeting data, the *Financial Times* reported in July.

Israel's assault on the Palestinians continued through the week. Israeli strikes on Gaza killed at least seven people on August 24, among them a 4-year-old boy in Bureij, and hit a mosque, a desalination plant and an aid warehouse, *Al Jazeera* reported that day. Gaza's Health Ministry put the death toll at 73,422 through August 24, including 1,288 people killed since the cease-fire that took effect October 10. On Friday, an Israeli airstrike killed three Palestinians in Jenin, in the occupied West Bank, and on Sunday dozens of settlers attacked the village of Qusra.

On Saturday, masked Israeli settlers ambushed an NBC News crew in Jalud, a West Bank village near Nablus, beating correspondent Matt Bradley, cameraman Khaldoon Eid and producer Lawahez Jabari with sticks and injuring Aida Ahmed Abdullah, the Palestinian woman they were interviewing, whom settlers had already driven from her home. "They jumped out, beat us, then jumped back in the car," Bradley said. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu attributed the attack to "a handful of rioters."

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