As Trump rejects Iranian cease-fire proposal, Wall Street Journal reports plans to resume bombing after midterms

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US President Donald Trump on Saturday publicly rejected an Iranian proposal for a seven-day cease-fire, after the *Wall Street Journal* reported Friday night that he "has told aides he expects to resume bombing Iran after the November midterms."

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi presented Iran's position to reporters Friday outside the UN Security Council in New York. Within seven days of US acceptance, Iran would reopen the Strait of Hormuz and begin nuclear talks, in exchange for the lifting of the US naval blockade, the release of part of Iran's frozen assets, the waiving of oil sanctions and a cease-fire extending to Lebanon, as the Associated Press and *Al Jazeera* reported.

Trump told reporters Saturday: "I'm rejecting their deal. They want to make a deal where they open the strait immediately because they are losing so badly."

The United States "has told Iran and the mediators that Trump has no intention of lifting the maritime embargo," according to the *Journal*. Washington, the *Journal* wrote, "believes economic pressure will eventually force Tehran to sign an agreement with terms that are favorable to Washington and the Arab states along the Persian Gulf."

Citing US officials, the *Journal* reported that Trump "has told his staff that he sees a renewed bombing campaign as likely." The *Journal* wrote that "the level of strikes Trump is contemplating couldn't be determined" and that his views "could be affected by the results of the midterms."

Asked by Fox News on Sunday whether strikes in the coming weeks remained an option, Trump said they were "possible."

The *Journal*'s report gives concrete content to Trump's threat, in his speech to the United Nations General Assembly on Tuesday, to "annihilate the Islamic Republic and do it quickly" and to "drive them into hell with no chance of survival and no hope of future greatness or generations."

The journalist Seymour Hersh wrote on June 10 he had been told that in "a recent secret meeting in the White House," Trump "began speculating, albeit vaguely, about a nuclear option that could perhaps bring a quicker end to the war."

On April 7, Trump wrote on Truth Social: "A whole civilization will die tonight, never to be brought back again." Asked that day whether Trump would use nuclear weapons, then-White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt did not rule it out. "Only the President knows where things stand and what he will do," she said.

Despite unleashing a full-scale aerial bombardment of Iran, the United States has failed to achieve its objectives. Announcing the war on February 28, Trump vowed to "raze their missile industry to the ground" and told Iranians to "take over your government" once the bombing was finished. Nearly seven months later, the government in Tehran remains in power, and Iranian forces have kept firing missiles at US bases.

The United States and Israel assassinated Iran's supreme leader, Ali Khamenei, on February 28, and in March Iran's Assembly of Experts named his son, Mojtaba Khamenei, to succeed him. On July 17, Iranian forces killed three US soldiers in a missile attack on the Muwaffaq Salti base in Jordan.

Al Jazeera reported August 28 that US and Israeli forces had attacked Iran at least 3,580 times, according to the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data project, and had killed no fewer than 3,527 people there, according to official figures.

On September 17, the UN Human Rights Council's fact-finding mission on Iran reported "reasonable grounds to believe" that the United States had carried out the

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February 28 attack on a primary school in the southern city of Minab, killing 157 people, among them 123 children, and that the attack was a war crime.

What will be the next stage of escalation? Will Trump deploy ground troops or use nuclear weapons?

On June 11, Trump wrote on Truth Social that "we will be taking Kharg Island," Iran's chief oil terminal, "and other oil infrastructure points, and assume total control of their Oil and Gas Markets, much like we have with Venezuela...." Trump met his top aides in the White House Situation Room on July 14 to discuss sending ground troops to seize the island, the *Journal* reported the next day.

More than 50,000 American troops were deployed in the region, the military news site *Task & Purpose* reported August 30, and units of the 82nd Airborne Division have had their deployment extended to 12 months. On Sunday morning, Trump shared on Truth Social a video in which Fox News host Mark Levin said "there is no reason [Kharg] Island is off the table...."

The cease-fire that began in April collapsed in July. On July 7, after three commercial ships were attacked in the Strait of Hormuz, US forces bombed more than 80 sites in Iran, and the next day Trump pronounced the cease-fire "over." Since July 14, the US Navy has enforced a blockade of Iran's entire coastline, which under international law is an act of war.

US forces have attacked Iran repeatedly since, including on September 1, when they killed at least five people at a wedding in Kuhestak on Iran's southern coast, among them a child, according to Iranian media.

Iran is a strategic battlefield in a developing global war against Russia and China. CNN reported Friday, citing unnamed sources, that satellite imagery from Chinese groups helped Iran carry out the July 17 attack in Jordan. According to the *Journal*, Trump "is reluctant to resume major combat operations" partly because the United States "wants to reserve dwindling munitions for other contingencies."

French President Emmanuel Macron said Thursday that France would send "soldiers, radar systems and defense systems" to protect Saudi Arabia's Yanbu oil terminal on the Red Sea, which Yemen's Iran-allied Houthis have attacked with missiles.

In a CNN poll published September 22, 78 percent of respondents said Trump was not doing enough to end the war, and 76 percent said it had not been worth the cost.

Trump's approval rating was 34.6 percent on Thursday, according to the FiftyPlusOne average compiled by the analyst G. Elliott Morris, the lowest for any president this close to a midterm election since scientific polling began in the 1930s.

The Democrats' criticisms of the administration center on its failure to secure US imperialism's aims in Iran. On ABC's "This Week" on Sunday, Democratic Senator Mark Kelly of Arizona said Trump had gone to war "without a plan." He added: "We can't leave the Strait in the hands of the Iranians. They can't be allowed to get a nuclear weapon."

On Thursday, 21 Democratic senators, Senate Minority Leader Charles Schumer among them, wrote in a statement on Trump's Washington summit that day with Chinese President Xi Jinping that the United States "should never have launched the reckless and illegal war against Iran." In the same statement they complained that "Beijing has exploited the conflict to purchase discounted Iranian oil, while U.S. munitions and strategic stockpiles have been expended at alarming rates." Schumer told the Senate that day that Trump had acted "sort of as a supplicant" toward Xi and "needs to finally show some backbone."

On September 16, 58 Democrats helped the House pass a bill that lets Trump impose tariffs as steep as 100 percent on the countries that buy the most Russian oil and gas, chiefly China and India. The bill also extends US sanctions on Iran.

Previously, on September 1, House Democrats voted 176 to 29 for a stopgap bill that keeps the government, the Pentagon included, funded through December 11. In January, 149 House Democrats had voted for the $839 billion military budget that has paid for the war since February 28.

Whatever the result on November 3, the Democratic and Republican parties alike support the war on Iran and the aim of subordinating the country to US domination.

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