

With complicity of media and Democrats, Trump prepares major escalation of Iran war

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The events of the past week leave no doubt that the Trump administration, with the complicity of the entire US political establishment, is preparing a major escalation of the Iran war. Having failed to achieve its objectives through a massive bombardment and then a blockade of the country, the White House is preparing a new and desperate gambit, potentially involving the deployment of ground troops or even the use of nuclear weapons.

The greatest danger is the chasm between the scale of what is being prepared and the public's awareness of it. One month before the 2026 midterm elections, Trump's conspiracy to escalate the war is being greeted with a wall of silence by the US media—which devoted just minutes to the war in this weekend's Sunday talk shows—and by the Democratic Party, which has done nothing to alert the public to the renewed onslaught against Iran that the administration is preparing.

On September 22, US President Donald Trump threatened in his speech before the United Nations to “annihilate the Islamic Republic, and do it quickly.” His threat followed a secret White House meeting, reported by the journalist Seymour Hersh on June 10, at which Trump spoke “about a nuclear option that could perhaps bring a quicker end to the war.”

These threats cannot be dismissed as bluster. Trump is the president of the United States and has already killed thousands of people in the months-long bombardment of Iran. The forces now converging on the Persian Gulf give him the means to carry out his threats. Nothing would be more dangerous than complacency.

After seven months of war, US imperialism has failed to achieve its aims of dominating the Strait of Hormuz, militarily defeating Iran and overthrowing its government. The administration is improvising,

desperately seeking a way out of the political disaster the war has produced. But its improvisation is driven by the logic of events. American imperialism cannot accept defeat in the Persian Gulf, and each failure becomes the basis for an ever-greater escalation.

Last week, the *Wall Street Journal* and the Associated Press reported that the White House had sent a third aircraft carrier to the Middle East. The USS Theodore Roosevelt left San Diego on September 27, followed the next day by the amphibious assault ship USS Makin Island with about 2,200 Marines. They will join the carrier USS George Washington and more than 50,000 US troops deployed across the region.

Trump “has told aides he expects to resume bombing Iran after the November midterms,” the *Journal* reported September 25. He was briefed in August on options including “sending in ground forces to seize Iranian islands near Hormuz,” the *Journal* reported last month.

The deployment of amphibious assault ships along with thousands of Marines is particularly ominous. They are the means of seizing territory, and the next phase of the war may include landings on the islands near Hormuz, at the Kharg Island oil terminal or at Iran's nuclear sites.

The administration's top national security officials met Friday at Camp David, the presidential retreat, “to discuss next steps in the Iran war and the Saudi-Houthi conflict in Yemen,” Axios reported that night. The last similar meeting, Axios noted, was in June 2025, just days before Israel and then the United States attacked Iran. The new US military deployments targeting Iran parallels a renewed offensive by Saudi Arabia, supported by the United States, in Yemen.

The Pentagon confirmed Sunday that all US bombers at Britain's Fairford air base, used for strikes on Iran,

had been flown back to the United States. The withdrawal followed British Prime Minister Andy Burnham's claim on September 30 that Iran "played a part" in an alleged plot against the base. The unproven allegation provides a ready-made pretext for escalation.

The war against Iran is part of a broader global offensive by US imperialism, centrally targeting Russia and China. Significantly, the plans to expand the Iran war accompany a sharp intensification of NATO's war on Russia in Ukraine, which threatens at any moment to erupt into direct warfare between nuclear-armed states.

Each president since the 1979 Iranian revolution, Democratic and Republican, has worked to bring Iran back under American domination. Trump's war against Iran is the latest stage of a 35-year offensive to subjugate the Middle East and Central Asia: the Gulf War of 1991, the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq, the destruction of Libya, the proxy war in Syria and Israel's genocide in Gaza.

Amid overwhelming popular opposition to the war and the ensuing surge in the cost of living, particularly of energy, the Democratic Party is expected to make significant gains on November 3. It is determined, however, to ensure that any electoral repudiation of Trump does not lead to a let-up in the drive by US imperialism in the Middle East.

The Democrats' policy is to "win this war," as Senator Ruben Gallego of Arizona said on CNN on September 30. Senator Chris Coons of Delaware, the senior Democrat on Pentagon appropriations, said on CNN Thursday that Trump needed to "come up with a plan that can work and that doesn't leave Iran permanently in control of the Strait of Hormuz." Democratic Senator Mark Kelly of Arizona, a former Navy pilot, faulted Trump on ABC's "This Week" on September 27, saying, "We can't leave the Strait in the hands of the Iranians."

None of the party's congressional leaders has called for halting the new deployment. Rather, 58 House Democrats, among them former Speaker Nancy Pelosi, voted with Republicans on September 16 for a bill expanding Trump's tariff powers against Russia and extending the sanctions on Iran. The party is running 67 congressional candidates "with a national security background, more than double the number who ran in any of the last four elections," the *World Socialist Web*

Site reported in a series that began last week. After the elections, the Democrats intend to work with Trump to escalate war throughout the world.

Opposition to the war is overwhelming, but the media, the Democratic Party and the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) are working to prevent its translation into action. The DSA plays a critical role in demobilizing antiwar sentiment. *Jacobin*, the magazine aligned with it, has not reported Trump's plans to attack Iran after the election, and neither Senator Bernie Sanders of Vermont nor Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez of New York, a DSA member, has issued a statement on them.

The escalation of war abroad is accompanied by an assault on the working class at home. The price surge triggered by the war has led to a disastrous reduction in workers' living standards. Diesel has risen from \$3.76 a gallon the day before the war began to \$6.34 on Sunday, according to AAA.

Trump said April 1 that, with the country "fighting wars," it was "not possible for us to take care of day care, Medicaid, Medicare—all these individual things." The White House has asked Congress for a \$1.5 trillion military budget for fiscal 2027, a 42 percent increase, while cutting nondefense spending by 10 percent. The war budget and the attack on social programs are a single class policy.

The struggle against war and its disastrous economic consequences cannot be subordinated to the Democratic Party, which is fully committed to the predatory aims of US imperialism. Ending the war against Iran and halting the global eruption of American imperialism requires the independent mobilization of the working class on the basis of a socialist program, seeking to unite the struggle against war with the defense of jobs and living standards.



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