

US and Israel deepen plans to attack Iran after elections

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The Trump administration and the Israeli government are deepening their plans for a massive attack on Iran in a matter of weeks. The *New York Times* reported Wednesday, citing US officials, that the American and Israeli militaries “have developed specific plans for renewed strikes against Iran after the American midterm elections,” and that the targets “would likely include Iran’s energy infrastructure, nuclear facilities, and missile and drone arsenal.”

Taking place as US President Donald Trump’s approval rating hits a record low, the November 3 midterm elections are expected to reflect widespread popular opposition to the wars being waged by American imperialism and the affordability crisis they have triggered. Both parties, however, are plotting to flout the election results. Trump is actively preparing to attack Iran, while the Democrats are agitating for an escalation of war with Russia.

The *Times* reported that Secretary of War Pete Hegseth discussed the new strikes with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu during a visit to Israel this week, and that American and Israeli warplanes have been flying over Iraq to rehearse the strikes. The United States “is assembling a massive arsenal that will be fully in place by early November,” the *Times* wrote, including “three aircraft carriers, thousands of Marines, fighter jets and Special Operations forces.” The US military “prefers to conduct attacks under the cover of night,” the *Times* added, “and there will be increasing hours of darkness over Iran early next month.”

Some US planners, according to the *Times*, believe “an intensive three-day campaign could cause enough economic damage to change the Iranian position.” The *Times* reported, citing people it described as briefed on the planning, that the two militaries are also preparing to bomb Iran’s nuclear program, possibly including the

underground site at Pickaxe Mountain. Trump said in an interview with the right-wing cable channel Newsmax on October 15: “Now we’re looking at Pickaxe Mountain. We may have to go there.”

The *Financial Times* reported Wednesday, under the headline “Netanyahu made plans to restart Iran strikes earlier this month,” that Israel’s military had planned to open several days of strikes on Iran on the weekend of October 10, against nuclear facilities, power plants and other civilian infrastructure, in an operation more intense than the US-Israeli air war launched in February. The strikes did not go ahead, the *Financial Times* reported, because Trump was against reopening the bombing until the midterms were over. The *New York Times* gave a similar account: The two militaries “came close to striking Iran early this month,” with their air forces “on the highest state of alert,” before Trump “decided at the last minute to postpone the attack.”

Netanyahu is campaigning in the Israeli election of October 27 on the platform of overthrowing the Iranian government. On September 3 he told an audience of Israeli military commanders: “I am convinced that we can remove this threat once and for all—that is, to overthrow this regime. That is the central task that still lies ahead of us, but it is close.”

The *Times of Israel*, an English-language Israeli news site, reported October 14 that Channel 12, an Israeli television news station, had learned that Netanyahu pushed Trump to restart the bombing before the Israeli vote, and that Trump told him he could “go ahead and prepare.” Five days earlier the *Times of Israel* reported, again citing Channel 12, that Lieutenant General Eyal Zamir, the Israeli military’s chief of staff, had warned US military commanders that a strike could force Israel to postpone its election.

The war being prepared by Trump and Netanyahu has already cost thousands of lives. US and Israeli warplanes first struck Iran on February 28, and the *Times* on Wednesday called the February-to-April bombardment the war's "first phase." The Qatar-based network Al Jazeera, compiling official figures, put the dead in Iran at 3,527 as of August 28. The toll on the American side, by the US military's count through September 28, was 19 dead and 861 wounded.

The *Times* acknowledged Wednesday that the first phase of the war "drove up energy prices and inflation around the world" and "severely strained the Pentagon's supply of missile interceptors." Brent crude, the international oil benchmark, traded at \$112 a barrel Thursday. The motorists' association AAA put the average price of a gallon of regular gasoline at \$4.27 on Thursday, up from \$2.98 on February 26, two days before the bombing began.

The Houthi militia of Yemen, which is allied with Iran, has stepped up its attacks on Saudi Arabia, and on Wednesday the State Department told its non-emergency staff in the kingdom to leave with their families. Strikes this week on the airport in Dammam and on the Shaybah oil field killed at least three people.

Neither Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer nor House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries has made any significant statement warning about the Trump administration's plans to attack Iran after the elections. The Democrats are demanding an escalation of war against Russia. Jeffries told the House on September 16, during the debate on a bill authorizing tariffs on countries that purchase Russian oil and gas: "Many of us wonder why the President has been so reluctant to aggressively confront the bully of Eastern Europe." He added that "you have to confront the bully, not appease the bully."

Schumer said on October 17, after Trump waived new sanctions on Russia: "Trump is aiding and abetting a dictator who has helped Iran target US troops in the Middle East." Schumer and Democratic Senators Jeanne Shaheen of New Hampshire and Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts had said on March 13 that Russian President Vladimir Putin "has been one of the prime beneficiaries of President Trump's poorly conceived and executed war against Iran," and that "Russia is reportedly providing Iran intelligence to target and kill U.S. service members."

Democratic Senator Tim Kaine of Virginia said of the waiver on *Fox News Sunday* on October 18 that if Trump is "giving that money to Russia ... they're using it to provide support for Iran. In the Iranian US war that's going on right now, you don't give money to an adversary."

Democratic Senator Mark Kelly of Arizona said on ABC's *This Week* on September 27: "We can't leave the Strait in the hands of the Iranians. They can't be allowed to get a nuclear weapon." Democratic Senator Ruben Gallego of Arizona said on CNN on September 30 that Hegseth "needs to distract from the fact that he's losing a war," and that if Hegseth needed a new office at the Pentagon, it should be for "figuring out how to win this war in Iran."

On January 22, five weeks before the US bombing of Iran began, 149 House Democrats voted for the \$839 billion military appropriations bill. On September 16, 58 House Democrats voted for the Russia sanctions bill, since signed by Trump, which also extends sanctions on Iran through 2031.



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