

Trump prepares new onslaught on Iran in defiance of mass opposition to war

Andre Damon
25 October 2026

The Trump and Netanyahu administrations are in the final stages of preparing a massive new assault against Iran, in advance of elections in which both leaders are expected to face major electoral setbacks.

Asked Saturday whether he planned another attack on Iran, US President Donald Trump told reporters in Florida that he was “thinking about doing it, and maybe tomorrow.” He added, “I may have to finish it off, or maybe they’ll make a deal.” On Sunday he told Fox News, “There will not be a strike today,” but framed the choice the same way: “Do I make a deal with them, or do I finish them off?”

These statements come just over a week before the November 3 midterm elections and three days before the Israeli national election of October 27. The American election is expected to register overwhelming popular opposition to the Iran war, with a major defeat forecast for Trump’s party. A Pew Research Center survey published October 8 found that 65 percent of Americans disapproved of Trump’s handling of the war.

The military preparations for a renewed assault on Iran are far advanced. The USS Theodore Roosevelt carrier strike group left San Diego at the end of September, followed a day later by an amphibious group carrying more than 2,000 Marines, and by the end of November three aircraft carriers and two amphibious landing groups will be positioned near Iran.

The new deployments total 9,000 to 10,000 troops, on top of the 40,000 to 50,000 already stationed in the Middle East before the war. The State Department ordered non-emergency staff and their families out of Saudi Arabia on October 21, and CNN reported Friday that staff was reduced at the embassies in Lebanon, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar and Jordan.

The administration is preparing a transparent propaganda narrative to justify its escalation. A memo sent Friday by Director of National Intelligence Jay Clayton to Secretary of State Marco Rubio, first reported by Axios, asserted that “the lethal plotting efforts by the Iranians against U.S. citizens have reached advanced stages.”

New York Times, in an article published ~~Thursday~~ Saturday under six bylines, reported that US officials are focused on intelligence suggesting “the Iranians may seek to kill U.S. ambassadors in the Middle East and American officials on U.S. soil.” The paper conceded that the intelligence “remains highly classified, so it is hard to judge.” It added that some officials were puzzled the memo had been released at all, “given that they knew they could not back it up by discussing evidence of specific plots.” In other words, it is a totally unsubstantiated piece of war propaganda.

Without a hint of irony, the *Times* added that “Iraq poses another cautionary tale, when selective intelligence can be used as an actual pretext for military action.” In fact, the hodgepodge of insinuations against Iran makes the government-media propaganda campaign that preceded the 2003 invasion of Iraq, in which the *Times* likewise played a leading role, look almost coherent.

The governments making these unfounded accusations are the ones with a record of assassination. The United States and Israel opened the war on February 28 by killing Iran’s supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, in its first hours.

What is the Trump administration preparing? CNN reported October 15 that the US military had drawn up new strike plans that included dropping the GBU-43, the bomb known as the “mother of all bombs,” on Iran.

Is Trump planning to drop the “mother of all bombs” on Tehran? Will Trump use nuclear weapons? Will he deploy ground troops? How, after a full-scale aerial bombardment that largely depleted the United States’ stock of long-range missiles and interceptors, does Trump expect to “finish [Iran] off”?

No one can say whether Trump will act on his threats, but the threats themselves are a sign of desperation. Eight months of war and blockade have not achieved Trump’s goals of overthrowing the Iranian government, defeating the Iranian military or reopening the Strait of Hormuz. But the deepening crisis of the war is driving US imperialism toward still greater gambles.

The Democrats are playing a critical role in enabling

Trump's criminal war aims.

To the extent that the Democrats address the war, they speak largely of its impact on gas prices, and not what is happening and its criminal character. The Democrats' real concern is that Trump has failed to secure the interests of American imperialism, both in the war against Russia and in the war against Iran.

Democratic Representative Jason Crow of Colorado, who described himself on CBS's "Face the Nation" Sunday as "the battleground chair for House Democrats," declared that "Iran remains a danger." Crow said Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth is "incompetent and is not doing what's necessary to protect our service members."

After Trump announced on October 11 a largely meaningless "energy ceasefire" between Russia and Ukraine, Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer wrote on X on October 17 that "Trump is aiding and abetting a dictator who has helped Iran target US troops in the Middle East."

Adam Smith, Gregory Meeks and Jim Himes, the ranking Democrats on the House Armed Services, Foreign Affairs and Intelligence committees, pledged October 20 to advance legislation that would "compel" Trump to give Ukraine "security, economic, and intelligence support."

From a certain standpoint, the Democrats would prefer that Trump launch the attack before the next Congress is seated. While the Democrats support the war, their base overwhelmingly opposes it, and an attack ordered by Trump before or shortly after the election lets them abdicate political responsibility for a war whose aims—the domination of the Middle East and the escalation of the war against Russia in Ukraine—they share.

The pro-war character of the Democrats' campaign was driven home by the appearance of former President Barack Obama, whom CNN introduced Sunday as the Democrats' "closer," at a rally Saturday in Detroit for the Democratic Senate candidate Abdul El-Sayed.

"Seven months later, how's that war going?" Obama asked in Detroit. "We've run down our stock of missiles, dangerously low. And this is the thing, Iran now has veto power over the Strait of Hormuz ... So they're in a stronger strategic position now than before the war started."

Obama was the only president in American history to serve two complete terms with the nation at war, and his administration conducted military operations in at least seven countries. Obama personally approved every name added to the "kill list" for illegal assassination under the "war on terror," and the Bureau of Investigative Journalism counted 563 US strikes, most of them by drones, in Pakistan, Somalia and Yemen during Obama's two terms, ten times the number under George W. Bush.

The "progressive" Senate candidate El-Sayed, in introducing Obama, associated himself completely with the former president, declaring that "we stand on the shoulders of giants."

In November 2012, El-Sayed condemned Obama for having "perpetuated war, violated our civil liberties, deported more people from our shores than any other president before him." Asked on NBC's "Meet the Press" on October 11 about that criticism, El-Sayed said: "The person who wrote those op-eds when I was younger—I was younger."

For the Democrats, mass popular opposition to war is a problem to be overcome. Both Trump and the Democrats, speaking for different factions of the US political establishment, are determined to pursue the predatory interests of US imperialism from the Middle East to Eastern Europe and Asia.

The social and economic crisis created by the global eruption of imperialist war is driving mass popular opposition among workers and youth. On Saturday 410,000 people marched across France.

The statement of the *World Socialist Web Site* editorial board of October 23, "The global rebellion of youth and workers and the war frenzy of the ruling class," identified the mass protests and the escalation of war as products of "the same crisis of world capitalism." Inflation, the assault on social programs and the diversion of hundreds of billions of dollars to war are the conditions of life in the United States as much as in Paris.

The opposition recorded in the polls does not yet have an organized form. The struggle against war must be united with the growing movement of the working class, independent of both parties, connecting the fight over wages and jobs to the fight against war and the capitalist system that produces it.



To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact