Trump holds war planning meeting amid speculation of November 9 attack on Iran

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US President Donald Trump met his national security team at the White House Thursday to discuss renewed attacks on Iran, officials told Fox News. The meeting came two days after midterm elections in which voters repudiated the war and handed the Democrats both houses of Congress.

The officials said there had been meetings at the White House on Wednesday as well, and that November 9 "marks a new moon in the Middle East, meaning little to no moonlight—a condition favorable for military operations.

"In Iran we are there for seven months and we control everything that we've wanted to control and now we'll make a decision—do we want to go further... I would rather not destroy the rest of the country if possible but maybe I'll have to. You'll know soon enough," Trump told reporters in the Oval Office after the meeting.

Axios reported Thursday, citing two US officials, that the session was Trump's first on Iran with his senior advisers since the election, and that it took place during his weekly intelligence briefing.

Trump was considering three options, Axios wrote: "launch new strikes, continue to strangle Iran's regime economically, or cut a deal that includes significant concessions to the Iranians." Axios reported, citing a US official, that the US military command for the Middle East was "finalizing preparations" to possibly resume major combat operations and had received no new order from Washington.

The carriers USS George Washington and USS George H.W. Bush and their strike groups are in the Arabian Sea. A third carrier, the USS Theodore Roosevelt, was due in Singapore on Friday and was at least two weeks from reaching the Middle East, CBS News reported Thursday, citing a US official.

The election result has prompted a deep crisis within the administration.

Vice President JD Vance wrote on X Wednesday morning: "The reason we lost is the war. The president himself said so last night."

Axios had reported Monday that Trump's advisers were split. Vance and Steve Witkoff, Trump's envoy, wanted a deal, Axios wrote. Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu wanted to resume combat and argued that "Trump should finish the job militarily."

The *Washington Post* reported Wednesday night that Trump may be considering ousting General Dan Caine, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, or Admiral Brad Cooper, who commands US forces in the Middle East, rather than Hegseth.

The *Post*'s report ran under the headline "'Knives out' for Hegseth, other military leaders after Iran war dooms GOP" and said that Republicans' "electoral drubbing leaves him and other key military leaders vulnerable, officials say."

Representative Thomas Massie, a Kentucky Republican who will leave Congress in January, told CNN Wednesday that he would force a vote on impeaching Hegseth next week, when the House will be back in session. CNN wrote that multiple Republican sources expected it to pass.

Massie introduced his articles of impeachment on September 16, and the Republican leadership put the House in recess before the articles reached a vote. "There is one contingency in which I won't reintroduce the articles of impeachment: Hegseth resigns," Massie said.

Hegseth answered in a video recorded on the Pentagon steps and posted Thursday, calling the articles a "sham" brought by a "disgruntled, defeated congressman, along with all his Democrat allies."

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Democrats face a December 11 cutoff to approve government spending, military spending included, to avert a partial shutdown, and the Democratic leadership has refused to pledge to use the opportunity to block funds for the war.

Senate Democratic Leader Charles Schumer and Senator Patty Murray of Washington, the senior Democrat on the Senate Appropriations Committee, "have not forecast whether Democrats will demand a cutoff of dollars for the Iran war during the upcoming funding negotiations," Politico reported Friday.

Schumer said Thursday that he was working with Murray to pass a funding bill before the deadline. Politico wrote that "triggering a shutdown isn't a risk all Democrats want to take." It quoted a Democrat on the House Appropriations Committee, who spoke on condition of anonymity: "I don't know where our leadership is on this one, but I would say that definitely there's got to be a way to wind this down instead of saying, 'no funding'."

The Democrats voted the money for the war before it began. On December 10, 2025, 115 House Democrats, House Democratic leader Hakeem Jeffries among them, voted for the military authorization bill, and on January 22, 149 House Democrats voted for the $839 billion military appropriations bill, five weeks before the United States and Israel attacked Iran.

Jeffries, the likely Speaker in the new Congress, told NPR Friday: "Well, we shouldn't have to wait till the new Congress until that happens ... but in the majority, having both the House and the Senate, we can advance strong war powers resolutions that the president will have to take up, get it to his desk, and then explain himself to the American people if, in fact, he decides to use his veto pen."

Jeffries was making clear that the Democratic approach would be to advance meaningless measures and blame the Republicans for not implementing them.

The Democrats' complaint for months has been that Trump has not won the war. Democratic Senator Gary Peters of Michigan told Hegseth at a hearing of the Senate Appropriations Committee on July 21: "You don't have a strategy. You don't have a long-term plan to actually win this war. Win the war." Peters said: "You are asking the American people for a blank check because, once again, the Trump administration's efforts have been an utter and complete failure to win this war to this point."

Democratic Senator Chris Murphy of Connecticut said on NBC's *Meet the Press* on August 9: "Donald Trump has lost this war. America is weaker. Iran is stronger."



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