

Military Action Will Not Solve the Challenge of Iran's Nuclear Program

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We have known for decades that the US cannot bomb away Iran's nuclear program or knowledge. Likewise, it is clear that any attempt to remove nuclear materials from Iran through a US military ground operation would pose incredible risk to US service members – and in any event would be highly unlikely to definitively destroy the program. Simply put: there is no military solution to Iran's nuclear program.

The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), agreed to in 2015 by the P5+1 (China, France, Germany, Russia, the UK and US), and the European Union, with Iran, successfully capped Iran's enrichment program, prohibited certain weaponization activities, and put in place extensive, intrusive, and effective monitoring mechanisms. When President Trump unilaterally withdrew the US from the JCPOA in 2018, Iran was operating its civil nuclear program in [full compliance](#) with the agreement. A year after the US restored sanctions on Iran, Iran began advancing its nuclear program, eventually enriching to near weapons-grade levels in April 2021, and amassing a stockpile of 60 percent enriched uranium.

In June 2025, experts assessed that Iran had a stockpile of highly enriched uranium sufficient for approximately 10 - 12 warheads, if enriched to weapons-grade levels. However, there was no evidence that Iranian leadership had made the decision to weaponize, and building a nuclear weapon would still have taken a matter of months. Despite facing no imminent threat from Iran, Israel, and later the United States, struck Iran's nuclear sites in June. Furthermore, they carried out these attacks while diplomatic efforts to reach a new nuclear agreement between the US and Iran were ongoing.

The US and Israeli strikes in June significantly damaged both of Iran's operating uranium enrichment facilities at Natanz and Fordow, likely rendering them inoperable. While the uranium conversion facility at Isfahan was also damaged, experts agree that the 60 percent enriched uranium stored at that facility likely survived the strikes. These strikes dramatically reduced the International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA) ability to monitor Iran's nuclear program as Tehran suspended the agency's access to bombed sites, and eroded trust at the negotiating table.

Despite negotiations resuming in 2026, President Trump then made the senseless and unprovoked decision to abandon diplomacy and dramatically escalate conflict. Once again, the US attacked Iran when Iran's nuclear program did not pose an imminent threat. Once again, the US attacked while negotiations on the nuclear program were ongoing and reportedly making substantial progress.

Over the past few weeks US and Israeli attacks on Iran have killed thousands, and laid waste to civilian infrastructure (including an elementary school in Minab that killed at least 165 civilians). US service members in the region have been killed and injured by Iranian retaliation, and the risk to them continues to grow as the regional ramifications expand. The US claims successes in damaging military sites and targeting Iranian leadership, but as the war continues it is ever

more apparent that the destruction of the nuclear program through military action is not a realistic goal.

Despite this, there are concerning indications that the US is [considering](#) an attempt to remove Iran's highly enriched uranium by force – which would necessitate the use of American ground troops in Iran. Such an operation would involve the insertion of US combat forces onto Iranian soil, potentially at three sites - Natanz, Fordow, and Isfahan - separated by hundreds of miles deep in hostile territory. It could require heavy machinery to excavate the uranium likely entombed under these sites. It could also require the transport of about 440 kg of 60% enriched uranium and potentially some 184kg of 20% enriched uranium. This would pose a staggering operational difficulty and would likely be done under fire. The risk of more US casualties would be significant. It would be a dangerous, provocative move in an already senseless war. Furthermore, any attempt at military efforts will not fully solve the nonproliferation concern. Iran will retain key materials, and the nuclear knowledge necessary to build a bomb.

President Trump started a war that the American people [do not support](#), at a moment when diplomatic options were far from exhausted. Raphael Grossi, the Director General of the IAEA, [believes](#) “most probably, at the end of this [military conflict], the material will still be there and the enrichment capacities will be there, perhaps some infrastructure will still be there.” Grossi [has stated](#) plainly that “we will have to go back to a negotiation table” when it comes to Iran's nuclear program.

We, the undersigned individuals, strongly agree with this assessment. If the US is to curb the threat of nuclear proliferation, as President Trump has declared is his desire, the US must end this war before this war ends all possibility for diplomatic success.

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