



Written by [Veronika Kyrylenko](#) on March 31, 2025

Trump Threatens to Bomb Iran if Nuclear Deal Not Reached; Tehran Pledges Retaliation

Tensions between the United States and Iran are escalating fast. Both sides are trading threats and mobilizing military assets in a standoff over Iran's nuclear program. On Sunday, President Donald Trump issued his most direct warning yet, while both U.S. deployments and Iranian missile activity point to a dangerous new phase.



Stocktrek Images/iStock/Getty Images Plus
B-2 Spirit bomber approaching a KC-135 Stratotanker to refuel

Trump's Threat

In a phone interview with [NBC News](#) on Sunday, Trump made his warning clear:

If they [Iran] don't make a deal, there will be bombing. It will be bombing the likes of which they have never seen before.

The comment marked a sharp escalation from his [earlier threat](#) just days prior:

Bad, bad things are going to happen to Iran.

Trump also floated "secondary tariffs" on Iranian oil if no agreement is reached, though he offered no details.

Iran Responds

Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei pushed back on Monday. According to [Reuters](#), he said,

The enmity from the U.S. and Israel has always been there. They threaten to attack us, which we don't think is very probable, but if they commit any mischief they will surely receive a strong reciprocal blow.

Iran also issued a formal warning to the Swiss Embassy in Tehran, which represents U.S. interests and acts as an intermediary between the two countries. Iranian state media, quoted by Reuters, said Tehran vowed to "respond decisively and immediately" to any aggression.

Missiles on Alert

In addition to returning rhetorical threats, Iran has reportedly moved ballistic missiles into launch positions.

State-affiliated English-language newspaper *The Tehran Times* [posted](#):



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Iran's missiles are loaded onto launchers in all underground missile [sites] and are ready for launch.

The outlet said the United States and its allies would pay a "heavy cost" should they "open Pandora's box" and strike.

The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) Aerospace Commander Brigadier General Amir Ali Hajizadeh added a [pointed threat](#) to U.S. forces in the region:

The Americans have 10 [military] bases in the region, particularly around Iran and 50,000 troops based in there.... This means they are sitting in a glass house; and when one sits in a glass house, one does not throw stones at others.

Trump's Letter

On March 7, Trump revealed on [Fox Business](#) that he sent a letter directly to Khamenei. The message: "Make a deal" or face military consequences.

[According](#) to a leak from Emirati statesman Abdolkhalegh Abdollah, the letter demanded:

- Full dismantling of Iran's nuclear program
- A halt to uranium enrichment
- End of support for the Houthis and Hezbollah
- Disbanding Iraq's Hashd al-Shaabi militias
- Negotiations hosted in the UAE.

In exchange, Trump offered to lift sanctions and end Iran's so-called international isolation. Iran was given a two-month deadline to comply, with the implicit warning of military action if no agreement was reached.

Iran's Defiance

Days later, Khamenei denied receiving the letter and dismissed Trump's offer as "bullying." According to [Iranian media](#), he said,

We sat down and negotiated for several years, and this very person took the completed, finalized and signed agreement off the table and tore it up.

Yet on March 22, Trump's Middle East envoy Steve Witkoff [claimed](#) Iran had responded and was open to indirect talks.

On March 30, Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian [confirmed](#) that Iran had answered via Oman. He ruled out direct talks but left room for indirect ones, blaming past broken U.S. promises for the collapse in trust.

U.S. Military Buildup

In the meantime, the United States is moving in heavy assets.

According to [Axios](#), B-2 stealth bombers were deployed to Diego Garcia, a key U.S. base in the Indian Ocean. A U.S. official said the move was "not disconnected" from Trump's two-month deadline.



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Satellite imagery and flight data confirm the arrival of at least four B-2s. [Some reports](#) say up to seven may now be in place.

[The War Zone](#) and open-source analysts tracked multiple C-17 cargo planes landing at the base — likely hauling equipment, personnel, and supplies. Ten KC-135 Stratotankers were also spotted, boosting the reach of the bomber fleet.

Meanwhile, U.S. warplanes continue pounding Houthi targets in [Yemen](#). Officially, the strikes target rebel forces. But critics say this is part of a broader pressure campaign on Iran and its proxies.

Nukes in Iran?

Trump's threats come despite U.S. intelligence saying earlier this month Iran isn't building a bomb, as [explicitly stated](#) in the annual threat assessment issued by the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI).

Still, Iran is enriching uranium to 60 percent, according to a [leaked](#) U.N. report. That's far above civilian levels, but below the 90 percent needed for weapons.

If Khamenei gave the green light, [Iran could](#) enrich its uranium to weapons-grade in less than a week. Assembling a bomb would then take [weeks to months](#).

Redefining the Threat

Trump's national security advisor Mike Waltz has been pushing a broader view of Iran's "nuclear program." In a March 16 [ABC interview](#), Waltz said the issue goes far beyond enrichment:

That's all aspects of Iran's program. That's the missiles, the weaponization, the enrichment.

That definition is now formal U.S. policy. In early February, as part of the revived "maximum pressure" campaign on Iran, Trump [signed](#) a National Security Presidential Memorandum that redefined Iran's nuclear program to include all nuclear fuel processing and any "nuclear-capable" missiles — language broad enough to cover most of Iran's long-range arsenal.

The Big Picture

The escalation comes in stark contrast to Trump's campaign rhetoric. Just months ago, he vowed "no more forever wars." Now, supporters cast the current maneuvering as yet another round of "5D chess" — a calibrated show of force meant to compel Tehran back to the negotiating table without firing a shot.

But critics see a well-worn script: Inflate the threat, position military assets, then wait for a provocation — or engineer one.

The legal stakes are also high. The U.S. Constitution vests the power to declare war in Congress, not the White House. Any preemptive strike without authorization would yet again [sidestep that framework](#), further eroding the constitutional guardrails meant to prevent unilateral warmaking of the executive branch.

After decades of disastrous interventions — wars that drained the treasury, fueled inflation at home, shattered trust, and destabilized entire regions — the appetite for another conflict has long soured among everyday Americans. Trump positioned himself as the candidate who could break the status quo — and won.



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But putting “America First” takes more than slogans. It demands the spine to resist military adventurism — even when the pressure comes from powerful lobbies at home and abroad.



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