



### Trump's Potential Decision to Join Israel in Their Attacks on Iran and Its Dangerous Consequences

One of the most pressing questions related to what is currently taking place between Israel and Iran is whether or not the United States will involve itself in the conflict. Most commentators overwhelmingly assert that U.S. intervention would not serve American interests, and on the contrary, a widening war would result in a host of negative consequences. Among others, these include the increased likelihood that the conflict would expand and become a broader regional war, the disruption to global trade, oil production, and supply chains particularly in the strategically important Strait of Hormuz, the undermining of the prospects for diplomatic engagement, further destabilization in the Middle East, and the direct threat that would be posed to American military personnel, bases, embassies, and civilians. Ultimately, the possibility of direct American involvement in the conflict has added to fears of a wider conflagration as experts anticipate that this would draw a swift retaliation from Iran against U.S. troops stationed across the Middle East.

If the Trump administration was to directly take part in Israel's attacks on Iran, American troops would certainly be put in harm's way. Some analysts have predicted that U.S. personnel stationed in Iraq, Kuwait, and Bahrain would likely be Iran's first targets should this take place. In fact, due to this, nonessential American personnel and family have already been withdrawn from the embassies in those three respective countries. U.S. bases in Qatar and the United Arab Emirates could be the target of Iranian attacks as well, should the United States insert itself into Israel's military attacks on Iran. It has been estimated that it would only take a few minutes for ballistic missiles fired from Iran to hit American bases in some of these Gulf countries, and as such, the extremely small window of time for air defenses could be problematic and worryingly put American lives at risk.

In addition to the direct peril to American troops and personnel that U.S. involvement in Israeli attacks on Iran could trigger, Iran has threatened to shut down the Strait of Hormuz – a major global trade passageway where approximately 20% of the world's oil supply flows through – and even seed the strait with as many as 6,000 naval mines. This could cause serious damage and disruption regarding trade for both suppliers and buyers, which would not only severely impact supplies, but also lead to significant price hikes. According to experts, Iran possesses the advanced technology, weaponry, and capabilities to substantially disrupt operations in the Strait of Hormuz, including the aforementioned naval mines as well as anti-ship missiles and fast boats. Furthermore, in the past, it has demonstrated the ability to deploy these using various methods, raising legitimate concerns about maritime security and the potential upheaval of global trade and energy flows should the United States decide to carry out direct military operations against Iran.

A clear understanding regarding the negative impacts of potential American involvement in Israel's war on Iran has prompted a bipartisan effort to block it without Congressional approval. Earlier this week, U.S. Representative Thomas Massie (R-KY) joined with several Democratic colleagues to introduce a war powers resolution in the House that would require a vote by Congress before Trump could attack Iran, while U.S. Senator Tim Kaine (D-VA) put forth similar legislation in the upper chamber of Congress. The proponents of the bills have been quick to point out that Trump campaigned on keeping the United States out of foreign wars, and that U.S. insertion would assuredly lead to a widening of the conflict, further regional destabilization, and undermine the prospects for diplomacy. The U.S. Constitution grants Congress the sole power to declare war, and the extent of the president's

authority to enter into conflict abroad without the approval of the legislative branch has been challenged in recent years. Co-sponsor of the House legislation U.S. Representative Ro Khanna (D-CA) put it aptly when he remarked “Are you with the neocons who led us into Iraq or do you stand with the American people?” In addition to the two aforementioned bills, U.S. Senator Bernie Sanders (I-VT) introduced legislation in the preceding days aimed at preventing the use of federal funds in possible military actions against Iran without the approval of Congress. Sanders condemned Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu’s reckless attacks on Iran, expressing that they violate international law and risk igniting a full-blown regional war. He also accused Israeli officials of deliberately sabotaging U.S.-Iran nuclear talks with the unprovoked military actions.

So far, President Trump has remained ambiguous regarding whether or not the United States will take part in Israel’s bombardment of Iran. Yesterday, the White House relayed that Trump will decide on potential action against Iran within the next two weeks. Meanwhile, several European foreign ministers are meeting with their Iranian counterpart in Geneva today in the latest bid for diplomacy.