



[U.S. Attacks on Iranian Nuclear Sites Prompt Concern Regarding a Widening Conflict and Further Escalations](#)

The Trump administration's decision to carry out massive B-2 stealth bomber attacks on the three Iranian nuclear facilities of Fordow, Natanz, and Isfahan last Saturday abruptly raised fears of a potential widening Israel-Iran conflict and further escalations. The strikes came around a mere 48 hours after the American president had relayed his intent to make a determination on action against Iran within the next two weeks, with the operation including misdirection as six B-2 bombers were sent to Guam as decoys at the same time that those used in the actual attacks headed east from the continental United States towards Iran. While Trump and other officials in his administration claim that the strikes were a success, the extent of the damage to the sites – in particular the deeply buried facility at Fordow – is unclear, as the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) remarked that this was “not immediately possible to assess.” In addition to questions over their actual impact, most importantly, the attacks prompted unease regarding the type of retaliation that Iran was likely to take against the U.S. and how the ongoing situation could devolve as a result of the United States' direct insertion into the Israel-Iran conflict.

As outlined in [our newsletter last week](#), the United States' involvement in Israel's war on Iran unnecessarily puts Americans in harm's way and severely imperils detrimental consequences. This is precisely why [an overwhelming majority](#) of Americans oppose the prospect of war with Iran, and a plurality believe that President Trump's strikes on Iranian nuclear facilities make the United States less safe. In line with what was anticipated to unfold following the U.S. strikes, Iran did in fact retaliate earlier this week with a missile attack on an American military base in Qatar. Some experts contend that Iran's response was aimed at following through on its threats to retaliate to direct U.S. attacks, but without spurring further actions against it. Even as all of the missiles were intercepted and no one was reported to be killed or injured, the incident highlighted the needless and avoidable escalations arising from decisions such as that taken by the Trump administration this past Saturday. Rather than implore Israel to cease its bellicose attacks on Iran and bring about an end to the troubling recent outbreak of hostilities, the determination to instead join Israel in its attacks merely risked further escalations and devolvment.

For this reason, news of the U.S. attacks on multiple Iranian nuclear facilities last weekend was met with alarm and grave concern. Various governments in the Middle East had warned that the strikes endangered destabilizing an already precarious situation. Additionally, U.N. Secretary-General António Guterres condemned the use of force, calling the U.S. strikes “a dangerous escalation in a region already on the edge.” The initiation of reckless direct attacks is made even more regrettable considering that early intelligence assessments – including ones from the Pentagon – suggest that Iran's nuclear program was only set back by a few months, contrary to claims from Trump administration officials that it has been “obliterated.” This might lead one to justifiably question why American security and national interests are being jeopardized for perilous military actions that do not even achieve their alleged objectives. Above all, the attacks could have sparked intensified conflict that directly threatened U.S. servicemembers, citizens, and assets, and for what practical purpose, given that the strikes are unlikely to halt Iran's nuclear activities and could even spur it to pursue these more aggressively.

In the preceding days, President Trump announced that a fragile ceasefire had taken effect between Israel and Iran. This came amid the American president lashing out over violations of the truce and censuring Israel for its bombings after it had been reached. There have been indications that Israeli officials were keen on reaching a

ceasefire and contacted Trump to help broker this due to the heavy depletion of interceptor missiles. Over the past week, outlets had reported that Israel was facing a critical shortage, and that the United States itself has depleted much of its own regional interceptor stockpile by transferring them in massive quantities to Israel. Thus, there was also a growing fear among U.S. officials that its own defenses could soon be compromised as a result of the use of interceptors at what Navy admirals referred to as an “alarming rate” during a recent Senate Appropriations Committee hearing. It remains to be seen in the coming days if the cessation of hostilities between Israel and Iran will ultimately hold. Regardless, the Trump administration’s dangerous decision to launch direct attacks on Iran was an irresponsible gamble that could have easily entangled the United States into a deepening regional conflict, and it can only be hoped that this has been averted, at least for now.