



[Pentagon Preparations for Weeks of Ground Operations in Iran Prompt Concern Regarding the Risk of Further U.S. Entanglement](#)

As the Iran war enters its second month, recent reports of Pentagon preparations for weeks of ground operations have prompted concern regarding the risk of further U.S. entanglement. The prospect of this marks a critical inflection point in the conflict and has sparked debate among military analysts and other observers about the potential impacts these operations would have. Over 50,000 U.S. troops are already stationed in the region, and earlier this week, the Pentagon ordered several thousand additional troops from the 82nd Airborne Division to be deployed to the Middle East. Furthermore, fresh deployments have included troops from the Boxer Amphibious Ready Group and the Tripoli Amphibious Ready Group. These amphibious ready groups (ARGs) carry U.S. Marines and can launch invasions from the sea to land. Analysts do point out that these arrivals are not necessarily indicative of a ground invasion, as it is more likely that these troops would be assigned with specific and special short-term missions such as seizing key sites like Kharg Island or other smaller islands near the Strait of Hormuz. Controlling these locations would give the United States a strategic advantage due to the fact that they contain most of Iran's oil exports, however, even if these operations are successful, they do not guarantee that the Strait of Hormuz will reopen. In this scenario, Iran could still control the waterway by disrupting shipping with missiles and naval attacks. Instead, reopening the Strait would likely require long-term naval protection instead of short-term seizures of nearby land, and many Americans are weary about the possibility of such sustained conflict in the Middle East.

Analysts have also suggested that the U.S. military might attempt to move forces to extract uranium from Iran, though this option would be more difficult, as it would require American troops to deploy inside the country. Experts contend that it would be challenging to hold any island for more than a few days and that the U.S. would likely have to lean on allies for support in order to fully open the Strait. Over the preceding weeks, major U.S. allies have of course conveyed serious reluctance to do so for risk of being dragged directly into the conflict. This is extremely significant because without allied naval and logistical support, the United States would likely struggle to maintain long-term control over the Strait of Hormuz on its own.

U.S. allies like the United Kingdom have held virtual meetings with international representatives to discuss reopening the Strait of Hormuz, while U.S. President Trump has avoided directly

addressing NATO and instead shifted responsibility to other nations. These meetings have included more than 30 countries and focus on diplomatic solutions over military action, reinforcing that American partners do not want to risk any type of further escalation. The fact that the United States is not part of these discussions highlights the lack of communication and absence of a clear or unified strategy to reopen the Strait.

While the Trump administration's strategy remains uncertain, it is clear that the costs of war, both human and financial, continue to grow. So far, there have been a reported 13 American deaths and over 200 wounded, and the prospect of initiating ground operations would pose a grave risk to the lives of American servicemembers. For context, U.S. ground operations in Iraq resulted in more than 4,400 deaths and over 30,000 wounded, alongside hundreds of thousands of Iraqi casualties. Iran's population is nearly four times larger, and thus, the potential scale of an expanded conflict there could be catastrophic. Financially, the Department of Defense reported that within the first six days of the conflict alone, the U.S. spent close to \$11.3 billion, with the White House seeking hundreds of billions more in military funding. The war was already unpopular among most Americans due to a host of reasons including the lack of clear objectives and motivations for it. On top of this, should it become a quagmire with no exit strategy and drain U.S. resources at such extreme levels, it is likely that the backlash against the war will become even more severe and pronounced.

Ultimately, most analysts contend that specialized ground operations may be enough to secure the Strait of Hormuz for a short period of time, but without allied support or a more prolonged U.S. ground presence, it is highly unlikely that this could be maintained. As such, even specialized ground operations or limited-duration raids that are intended to only be short-term missions run the dangerous risk of undesirable and detrimental further U.S. entanglement in the conflict.