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Trump says no decision yet on U.S. joining Israel's attacks on Iran, after Iran warns it would risk "all-out war"

By **Debora Patta, Tucker Reals**

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Trump supporters divided on potential U.S. involvement in...

President Trump said Wednesday that he had not yet decided whether the U.S. military should join Israel's ongoing attacks on Iran, and he didn't believe it was too late to reach a deal with the Islamic Republic on its nuclear program, though he warned it was "very late to be talking."

"I may do it, I may not do it. Nobody knows what I'm going to do," Mr. Trump told reporters when he was asked about the U.S. taking part in the strikes on Iran's nuclear and military facilities.

Asked if he believed it was too late to negotiate a new deal to curb Iran's nuclear program – which he has made clear he wants the Iranian government to abandon completely – Mr. Trump said: "Nothing's too late."

He added that the Iranians had sought talks, and said they had even suggested sending a delegation for discussions at the White House.



President Trump speaks to journalists as workers install a large flag pole on the South Lawn of the White House in Washington, D.C., June 18, 2025.

BRENDAN SMIALOWSKI/AFP/GETTY

"I said, 'it's really late. You know?' I said, 'it's very late to be talking,'" the president said, adding: "There's a big difference between now and a week ago," before Israel started hammering Iran with airstrikes.

In a social media post, Iran's mission to the United Nations appeared to respond directly to Mr. Trump's remarks, saying: "No Iranian official has ever asked to grovel at the gates of the White House."

"The only thing more despicable than his lies is his cowardly threat to 'take out' Iran's Supreme Leader," the post said. "Iran does NOT negotiate under duress, shall NOT accept peace under duress, and certainly NOT with a has-been warmonger clinging to relevance. Iran shall respond to any threat with a counter-threat, and to any action with reciprocal measures."

An Iranian official had warned earlier Wednesday that any U.S. intervention in the conflict with Israel would risk "all-out war," as the unprecedented exchange of fire with warplanes and ballistic missiles entered a sixth day.

Overnight, a fresh barrage of Israeli missiles streaked across the skies of

Tehran. Most were taken out by Iran's air defenses, but the Israeli military and the United Nations' nuclear watchdog agency said another site linked to Iran's nuclear program was hit.



Missiles fired from Iran are seen streaking across the skies over Hebron, in the Israeli-occupied West Bank, June 18, 2025.

WISAM HASHLAMOUN/ANADOLU/GETTY

Speaking to reporters on Wednesday, Israel Defense Forces spokesman Brigadier General Effie Defrin said the "extensive operation" overnight involved more than 50 fighter jets deployed for three waves of strikes, during which "we struck a centrifuge production site that was intended to enable the regime to continue to enhance its uranium enrichment. This complements actions from previous operations we have conducted targeting components of the nuclear program."

The U.N.'s International Atomic Energy Agency said in a social media post that it had "information that two centrifuge production facilities in Iran, the TESA Karaj workshop and the Tehran Research Center, were hit," adding that "both sites were previously under IAEA monitoring and verification as

part of the JCPOA" – the international Iran nuclear deal that Mr. Trump withdrew the U.S. from unilaterally during his first term.

- Trump's claim of "control of the skies over Iran" raises questions about U.S. role

Iran retaliated with another wave of missiles launched at Israel by the country's Islamic Revolutionary Guard. Sirens blared in Israel to warn they were on the way, but the missiles were intercepted, with explosions seen in the skies over Tel Aviv, Jerusalem and the occupied West Bank.

The steady exchange of fire has taken an escalating cost in human lives. Iranian authorities have provided no updates since saying over the weekend that more than 220 people were killed. The U.S.-based Human Rights Activists in Iran organization, which relies on a network of contacts in the country, said Tuesday that it had documented at least 452 deaths in Iran since Israel launched its attacks, including 109 confirmed military personnel, 224 civilians and 119 people it could not immediately identify.

The war has also sparked an exodus from Iran's capital Tehran with video showing thousands of vehicles at a near standstill on primary exit routes. Those frantic escape bids were fueled by Mr. Trump's direct warning to Tehran's roughly 10 million inhabitants earlier this week to "evacuate immediately."

While Israel has been able to inflict far greater damage on Iran, it has not been immune to the suffering. At least 24 people have been killed by Iranian missiles that slip through the country's robust air defenses.

Bella Ashkinaze, 90, and her husband Chaim were asleep in their apartment building near Tel Aviv on Sunday when an Iranian missile smashed into their home. Bella died and was buried this week in an emotional farewell. Her granddaughter Shani Boana told CBS News her grandparents were both too frail to keep going to their bomb shelters every time the sirens blared.

"I wish I could turn back time and to take her to the safe room," she said. "I am going to miss her a lot... but I still think that we need to do what it takes

to stop that threat [from Iran]."

Israel has advised its citizens to remain close to bomb shelters, and the U.S. embassy said it would be closed from Wednesday until at least Saturday.

Iran warns of "all-out war" if U.S. joins Israeli strikes

"I think any American intervention would be a recipe for an all-out war in the region with very, very bad consequences for the whole international community," Iranian foreign ministry spokesman Esmail Baghaei told Al Jazeera English on Wednesday, adding that he did not believe the Trump administration could dictate to Israel what it could and could not do.

Ali Bahreini, Iran's ambassador in Geneva and a senior diplomat from the country, said Tehran would "respond strongly" to what he called the ongoing Israeli "aggression," and he warned that Iran would do the same against the United States if U.S. forces join the conflict.

In a statement later aired on Iranian state TV, supreme leader Ayatollah Khamenei said the U.S. "should know that any military intervention will undoubtedly result in irreparable damage."

"Those who know Iran's history know that Iranians do not answer well to the language of threats," Khamenei said, adding that Iran "will never surrender."

He also said Israel had made a "huge mistake," which the country would be "punished for."

Iranian men hold the flags of Lebanon's Hezbollah and of Iran, along with a portrait of Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, during a rally to condemn Israeli attacks on Iran, in downtown Tehran, June 14, 2025.

MORTEZA NIKOUBAZL/NURPHOTO/GETTY

The defiant messages came after President Trump issued a stern warning on Tuesday, demanding an "unconditional surrender" by Iran's clerical rulers.

Asked Wednesday at the White House what he meant by those two words, Mr. Trump said: "Very simple – unconditional surrender. That means I've had it. I've had it. I give up, no more. Then we go blow up all the nuclear stuff that's all over the place there. They had bad intentions. You know, for 40 years they've been saying, death to America, death to Israel, death to anybody else that they didn't like. They were bullies. They were schoolyard bullies, and now they're not bullies anymore."

Mr. Trump had threatened the country's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, directly on Tuesday, saying the U.S. knew where he was but that it would not kill him, yet. He added: "Our patience is wearing thin."

Khamenei, in his Wednesday address, called Mr. Trump's ultimatum "unacceptable."

The Trump administration has insisted since Israel launched its first strikes on Iran that the U.S. military is not taking part directly in the attacks. But five sources familiar with the matter told CBS News on Tuesday that Mr. Trump is now considering joining the strikes, including potential attacks on

Iran's secretive Fordo nuclear enrichment facility. The site is buried deep under a mountain, and Israel is thought to need U.S. warplanes to effectively strike the facility.

Two sources told CBS News on Wednesday that Israel has not requested that the U.S. join its effort in Iran militarily. They said that decision was for Mr. Trump to make with his advisers, and that Israel has its own plans and feels it is able to proceed alone.

There's disagreement among Mr. Trump's close advisers about taking direct action along with Israel, CBS News' sources said Tuesday, but the U.S. military has sent additional warplanes from their home bases to Europe, which analysts believe could be preparation for a greater role in the Mideast.

CBS News' partner network BBC News said Tuesday that its own analysis of flight tracking data had verified at least 30 American military aircraft flying from bases in the U.S. to Europe over the previous three days - all tanker aircraft used to re-fuel fighter jets and bombers. Data from the Flightradar24 tracking website showed at least seven of the planes - all KC-135 Stratotankers - had stopped at U.S. bases in Spain, Scotland and England.

Justin Bronk, a senior analyst at the Royal United Services Institute (Rusi) think tank in London, told the BBC the deployments were "highly suggestive" of U.S. military contingency plans to "support intensive combat operations" in the Middle East in the days ahead.

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Debora Patta is a CBS News senior foreign correspondent based in Johannesburg. Since joining CBS News in 2013, she has reported on major stories across Africa, the Middle East and Europe. Edward R. Murrow and Scripps Howard awards are among the many accolades Patta has received for her work.

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