

In Iran Negotiations, the White House's Military Options Are Dwindling

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Rather than pushing for the unrealistic goal of reaching a comprehensive deal in two weeks, the Trump administration should take the necessarily more patient approach of working through America's strong network of allies to strengthen its hand.

With no breakthrough between the U.S. and Iran in Islamabad this past weekend, President Trump is reverting to his preferred tool: the U.S. military. Last week he vowed to keep American forces in the region at an elevated level and to restart shooting (“bigger, and better, and stronger than anyone has ever seen before”). Last Wednesday, at the Pentagon’s post-ceasefire conference, Gen. Dan Caine, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, issued a similar threat: “A ceasefire is a pause, and the joint force remains ready, if ordered or called upon, to resume combat operations with the same speed and precision as we’ve demonstrated over the last 38 days.” As of 10 a.m. Monday, the U.S. military is implementing a “naval blockade” of ships traveling to or from Iranian ports. This is a step short of returning to full war; Iran has the next move. But the U.S. domestic appetite for more war is low, and the costs very high. Iran’s surviving leaders know this, and they’ve learned how to outlast American military might. Trump should not have expected the ceasefire talks to deliver much beyond a halt to hostilities in the short run...

[Read the full article on the Los Angeles Times website. \(https://www.latimes.com/opinion/story/2026-04-13/iran-negotiations-trump-military-options\)](https://www.latimes.com/opinion/story/2026-04-13/iran-negotiations-trump-military-options) ❖



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