

# Hegseth trains flabby troops for Iran war

The Grayzone's Max Blumenthal and Aaron Mate discuss Secretary of War Pete Hegseth's latest and possibly most absurd PR stunt for aggression against Iran, and what it says about America's military readiness. ||| The Grayzone ||| Find more reporting at <https://thegrayzone.com> Support our original journalism at Patreon: <https://patreon.com/grayzone> Facebook: <https://facebook.com/thegrayzone> Twitter: <https://twitter.com/thegrayzonenews> Instagram: <https://instagram.com/thegrayzonenews> Minds: <https://minds.com/thegrayzone> Mastodon: <https://mastodon.social/@thegrayzone>  
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## #Max

Trump, I want to cover Iran today. We haven't really covered that. Do you want to discuss it? Trump is suggesting there's some kind of deal in the works?

## #Aaron Mate

I mean, how long are we going to go on with this, where Trump says he's about to finalize a deal, everything's been settled, and then Iran tells the truth and says, no, actually, things are not settled? So yeah, this is the latest we're broadcasting. Trump was heading into some White House meeting saying he's going to decide whether or not to approve a peace deal with Iran. It strikes me that basically there's a general understanding that could extend the ceasefire. That will involve a partial reopening of the Strait of Hormuz, and maybe some of Iran's stolen assets will get returned — a fraction of the money that the U.S. has stolen from Iran, maybe — or maybe some sanctions will be lifted as a token gesture.

But that just strikes me, uh, if there is any agreement to be made, it's basically another temporary one to extend the ceasefire. The idea that, like, Trump and Iran have worked out the nuclear file, I mean, like, no — that requires a lot of work. It requires people who know what they're talking about, not Steve Witkoff, Jared Kushner, and the guy they recently poached from the Foundation for Defense of Democracies, an Israeli front group — yeah, Nick Stewart, Nick Stewart. So, uh, but, uh, it's just, I think Trump continues to stall because he can't make a decision. He's surrounded by war hawks. But he knows that his military option is lost, that there is no military solution. He doesn't have the cards, as he told Zelensky.

## #Max

Yeah.

## #Aaron Mate

And he's just trying to figure out a way to, I think, delay an acceptance of defeat. And he's been talking this week about the Abraham Accords. All of a sudden, he wants the remaining Gulf states that haven't joined it to jump on board. The whole point of the Abraham Accords is to sideline Palestinians. Right. Especially after Trump put the region in peril with this provoked war of aggression against Iran. He thinks they're going to turn around and reward him by signing on to the sellout agreement. So he's all over the place. Rinse and repeat.

## **#Max**

Yeah, I want to get to the Abraham Accords in a second. But just to cover Trump's message today on Truth Social — you know, he's apparently, according to some Iranian sources, and this has come out in Al Jazeera as well — that this post on Truth Social was actually part of the ongoing agreements that he's supposedly making with Iran, that he has to announce this before moving forward in order to put it on the record, as if anyone can trust Trump. And he says that Iran must agree they will never have a nuclear weapon or bomb, and that the Strait of Hormuz must be immediately opened, and that he's basically pledging that it will soon be open.

Say hello to your wives, husbands, parents, and families from me, your favorite president. The ships caught in the Strait will be coming out, and everyone can start heading home. And then he says the nuclear dust, which is his reference to the bombed, highly enriched uranium bombed by Operation Midnight Hammer in Isfahan, that it will be unearthed by the U.S. in coordination with what he calls the Islamic Republic of Iran, which really does suggest he was doing this under some kind of negotiating pressure, plus the IAEA, and then destroyed, which means it won't necessarily come out to the United States, which was the initial proposal.

I question whether the IAEA will or should be allowed in there, given that they were furnished names of scientists, that Rafael Grossi, the Secretary General's phone, was hacked by the Mossad, and that he's proven to be kind of a tool of the West, and that all these scientists got assassinated by Israel. I question whether this is going to go down the same way. No money will be exchanged. Iran has been demanding money up front, sanctions relief, and reparations. But he's suggesting there's some deal in the works, which is obviously upsetting the foundation for the destruction of democracy.

## **#Aaron Mate**

Yeah, well, again, the money that Iran wants is simply its own money that the U.S. has stolen or kept for debt. In fact, a lot of it comes from when the Shah was in power and he was buying all the U.S. weaponry he wanted. So then when the Shah was overthrown, the U.S. simply kept the money rather than returning it to Iran. So it's stolen money that Iran wants back, along with other assets that have been frozen around the world, as the U.S. can do because it controls the financial system. And, I mean, the main question for me is Trump.

## **#Max**

And also some of that money is to go to, like, U.S. journalists who were hiking into Iran and were held prisoner there — Shane Bauer being one of them, who got something like \$300 million of stolen Iranian assets.

## **#Aaron Mate**

And then after they get released, they campaign for regime change against one of Iran's top allies in Syria. I forgot about that guy.

## **#Max**

That stolen money that could have been used to provide social programs in Iran is now being used to allow a Bay Area failed journalist to basically live lavishly.

## **#Aaron Mate**

That's a nice life. That's a nice life. Good for him. But my question is for Trump: is he going to be willing to stand up to Netanyahu and tell him to stop his war of aggression in Lebanon? Because that's what Iran is demanding. Iran insists on linking any ceasefire to Lebanon. And will Trump actually follow through on that? Can he actually tell Netanyahu to knock it off? I think if he wanted to, he could. The question is, does he have the fortitude? Is he willing to anger Mary Madison and Lindsey Graham and all those war hawks and Israel-firsters around him? That's, to me, what this comes down to. Remember a few weeks or about a month ago, he said that Israel is forbidden from bombing Lebanon anymore. Like, what happened to that one?

Because Israel has been bombing Lebanon pretty much every single day since Trump issued that pronouncement. So will he be willing to ultimately follow through on that? I think that's the question. And also on Iran, are they now really going to agree to not have a nuclear weapon at this point after all they've been through? Yeah, exactly. Yeah. If I were in their shoes, I don't know what I would do. I think they're in a tough position. If they renounce a nuclear weapon permanently, forever, they're making themselves vulnerable to two powers that have attacked them repeatedly and have nuclear weapons. But also, let's say they decided to go for a nuclear weapon, they also would be inviting another U.S.-Israeli attack, including with nuclear weapons.

## **#Max**

Here's the threat of a U.S. attack after the U.S. completely failed on every level, militarily.

## **#Pete Hegseth**

The adversaries know what's coming. And that's when...

## **#Max**

This is our Secretary of War.

## **#Pete Hegseth**

...and meet the fury of the American military or back down, and you create a whole bunch of options for America and the president.

## **#Max**

You see how they're holding their arms? They're being told to do that because if they have an outie belly button, they don't want the PR disaster of what Trump experienced in the White House, where there was this guy with a huge gut and a gigantic outie, like his umbilical cord was sliced with pliers at his birth. And so they're being told to stand like that, and also to cover up their guts. Some of them aren't in very good shape, but they're doing early morning training with Pete Hegseth. And this is like, you know, these are like the frontline fighting forces that are going to seize Karg Island.

## **#Max**

Look at the guy filming. Like, where did they come from? Iran has a choice: give up your nuclear program?

## **#Pete Hegseth**

I was on time two days ago now in the cabinet meeting. I'm sitting right next to him. He looks in the camera and says, well, Iran can either do it the right way with a deal across the table, or they can deal with my guy on the left. And it happened to be me. It's not me. It's you guys. It's what you're ready to do.

## **#Max**

Yeah, well, that doesn't look very intimidating to me. I love his "This Is War" shirt and his Crusader tattoos. I'm sure the IRGC is shaking in their boots right now.

## **#Aaron Mate**

Maybe Pete Hegseth also trying to cover himself for a future war crimes trial by saying, it's not me, it's you guys. So trying to pass off responsibility for war crimes to these poor soldiers under his watch. But yeah.

## **#Max**

Exactly. I mean, I don't actually know if he even saw combat. He was assigned to kind of like a desk job, reassigned after his convoy was supposedly attacked, but there's no documentation of that attack. He was a mid-level National Guard officer. Yeah, it's you guys. It's not me. It's you guys. It's not Steven Feinberg, my assistant at the Pentagon who runs everything. It's you guys.

## **#Aaron Mate**

And it's them who will die in the war that he and Trump launch. And remember when Trump showed up at the military base where the bodies of dead soldiers come back to? He showed up wearing, like, a baseball cap. Yeah. And didn't look like he wanted to be there. Yeah. So, I mean, Pete Hegseth is right. It's not him bearing the brunt of the war, you know, risking his life for it. It's them. And, of course, many more people inside of Iran who, on top of all the many that they've already killed.