

US-Iran tensions

Trump-Netanyahu meeting ends with no agreement on Iran strategy

US president backs talks with Tehran while building up military presence in Middle East



Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, left, and US President Donald Trump at a meeting in December. Ahead of the latest meeting, Trump had told Axios news that he was ‘thinking’ about deploying a second aircraft carrier to the Middle East © AP

James Politi and **Steff Chávez** in Washington

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Donald Trump said he “insisted” US talks with Iran should continue in a meeting with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Wednesday that concluded with no agreement on the strategy towards Tehran.

In a [Truth Social post](#) on Wednesday afternoon, Trump said he told the Israeli leader that his “preference” was to reach a pact with Iran on its [nuclear programme](#) even as Washington continues to weigh new military strikes against the Islamic republic.

Trump wrote: “There was nothing definitive reached other than I insisted that negotiations with Iran continue to see whether or not a Deal can be consummated. If it can, I let the Prime Minister know that will be a preference. If it cannot, we will just have to see what the outcome will be.”

After the meeting, Netanyahu’s office issued a brief statement on X, saying the two men had spoken about the “negotiations with Iran, Gaza and regional developments”. It added the prime minister had “emphasised the security needs of the state of Israel in the context of the negotiations and the two leaders agreed on continued co-ordination and the close contact between them”.

Ahead of the meeting with Netanyahu, Trump told Axios news on Tuesday that he was “thinking” about deploying a second aircraft carrier to the Middle East. This would be in addition to the Abraham Lincoln carrier strike group, which was sent to the region last month as part of a build-up of the American military presence in the Middle East in preparation for a potential strike on Iran.

When Washington attacked three main Iranian nuclear facilities last June, the US had two aircraft-carrier strike groups positioned in the region.

The US currently has 10 ships in the region, including the Abraham Lincoln aircraft carrier — with dozens of fighter aircraft and thousands of troops on board — in the Arabian Sea. The Pentagon has also deployed two destroyers to the Mediterranean as well as sending more fighter jets and bolstering air defences in the Middle East.

Trump is widely expected to order the USS George HW Bush aircraft carrier to join the Abraham Lincoln carrier strike group in the Middle East. The George HW Bush is off the coast of Florida undergoing training exercises, according to the US Navy.

The Wall Street Journal on Wednesday reported the Pentagon had told an aircraft carrier strike group to prepare to deploy to the Middle East and that a deployment order could come within hours.

The navy said it could not speak to future operations and the Pentagon said it had no information. The White House did not respond to a request for comment.

Two incidents occurred last week between the US and Iran in Middle Eastern waters. American forces shot down an Iranian drone as it approached the Abraham Lincoln. Separately, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps threatened to board and seize a US-flagged tanker in the Strait of Hormuz, prompting an American warship to respond.

Additional reporting by Neri Zilber in Tel Aviv

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