

**Remarks at a Gulf Cooperation Council Leaders Meeting in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia  
May 14, 2025**

*[The President's remarks were joined in progress.]*

*The President.* —Muhammad for the incredible welcome you've shown us. It's been an unbelievable stay. He is a very special man.

I also want to thank the other leaders here today, including friends from United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Oman, Kuwait, Bahrain—all friends. As I said in my address last night, the Gulf nations are at the forefront of creating a stable, peaceful, and prosperous Middle East, and I have to say that I've seen such progress. It's really incredible.

I've also seen great unity and friendships. I've spent a little time with you just before this, and I've seen tremendous unity, tremendous friendship. And the whole world is watching the Middle East, and many are watching with envy. You have something very special going on.

Incredible opportunities are within reach for this region, if we can simply stop the aggression from a small group of pretty bad actors. The Biden administration created havoc and bedlam by basically being incompetent, but by empowering Iran and its proxies, sending them billions of dollars—billions and billions of dollars, senselessly. I couldn't believe it to watch. One of the reasons I said, "Let's do this again." But what they did was so bad, while turning his back on the Gulf allies.

Those days are over. Everybody at this table knows where my loyalties lie. Always have. They'll never waver. Never. And we'll stand with our friends and partners, and we'll confront the aggression that threatens us all.

I want to make a deal with Iran. I want to do something, if it's possible, but for that to happen, it must stop sponsoring terror, halt its bloody proxy wars, and permanently and verifiably cease its pursuit of nuclear weapons. They cannot have a nuclear weapon. I don't imagine there's anybody at this table or anybody in this room that would say they can.

I'm strongly urging all nations to join us in fully and totally enforcing the sanctions that I just placed on Iran, and we also placed secondary sanctions, which are in certain ways even more devastating.

Iran, as you know, had no money when I left office. They were broke. They had no money for Hamas. They had no money for Hizballah. There was no attack. There was no thought of attack. There would have been no attack if I were President, but bad things happened in that election. And I said, "Let's do it again." And by doing it again, it became much more historic. It's a much more historic election, much more powerful election.

And we have a mandate. We won every swing State. We won by millions of votes. We won 2,750 districts—we call them "districts"—out of a total—if you look at the numbers, 2,750 to 505. The whole map was red—"red" meaning Republican.

So, I will say, recently we launched strikes on more than 1,100 Houthi targets in Yemen, as you know, and last week, they agreed to stop. They don't want to be targeting our commercial ships anymore. They said, "That's enough. That's enough." We've done—about 52 days, 52 nights. It didn't end.

We just put in a budget of a trillion dollars. It's our biggest budget—military budget we have ever put in. And the United States is very—very strong right now. It's amazing. In a short period

of time—we've been there a hundred days, and in a short period of time, we've done what a lot of people don't do in 4 years. We're a hot country, just like you're a hot area. And we're going to keep it that way.

In Gaza, my administration shares the hope of so many in this region for a future of safety and dignity of the Palestinian people. But that cannot happen as long as Gaza's leaders take delight in raping, torturing, and murdering innocent people. Can't have it.

I greatly appreciate the constructive role that the leaders in this room have played in trying to bring the terrible conflict to an end, including by helping secure the release of American hostage Edan Alexander. It was a big day yesterday. Very important day. I was told just before I left that they were going to be releasing Edan. We thought Edan was dead. Three weeks ago, they said Edan was no longer living. And it was a very, very good thing.

Ultimately, all hostages of all nationalities must be released as a stepping stone to peace, and I think it's going to be happening. A lot of things are happening. A lot of very positive things are happening on every front.

With the support of leaders in this room and the great leaders you are, we are currently exploring normalizing relations with Syria's new Government, as you know, beginning with my meeting with President Ahmad al-Shara' and Secretary Rubio's meeting with the Syrian Foreign Minister in Turkey.

After discussing the situation with Crown Prince Muhammad and President Erdoğan of Turkey, I'm also ordering the cessation of sanctions against Syria to give them a fresh start. It gives them a chance for greatness. The sanctions were really crippling, very powerful.

And I spoke to Muhammad, and I spoke to our friend from Turkey, who we just spoke to, also, by phone, now. But felt very strongly that this would give them a chance. It's not going to be easy anyway. So gives them a good, strong chance. And it was my honor to do so.

So we've—we will be dropping all of the sanctions on Syria, which I think really is going to be a good thing. And it actually—we made a speech last night, and that was the thing that got the biggest applause from the room. We had a very crowded room with thousands of people, and the statement that got the biggest applause was dropping the sanctions on Syria.

Likewise, in Lebanon, there is a new chance for a future free from the grip of Hizballah terrorists, if the new President and Prime Minister can rebuild an effective Lebanese state. We just appointed a very good Ambassador, a friend of mine who is Lebanese, and I didn't even know that. And I said, "Why do you want to be the Ambassador to Lebanon? That could be dangerous." He said: "I don't care. I grew up there. I love the country, and I don't care if it's dangerous or not dangerous, I want to do that."

And he's very capable man, very successful man from the United States, and he's going to be your Ambassador. He's going to be—he's going to do a great job.

But this is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to forge a Lebanon that is prosperous and at peace with its neighbors. And I think things can really happen there that's—they've been—they've had a tough go of it for a long time.

At the end of my first term, all of the momentum in this region was toward peace. I especially want to thank and congratulate the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain for their vision and courage in signing the historic Abraham Accords. It was something that's a very big thing. We would have—I believe we would have had it filled out had the election been called fairly, which it wasn't. It was a rigged election.

I hope that in the near future we can continue that progress. We have a mandate from the American people, the likes of which people haven't seen for 129 years. They say it was the most consequential election in America in 129 years. So that sounds like a long time. So we'll take that.

But in the future, we'll continue that progress by adding more countries to the Abraham Accords. We have the four, and we're going to—they're going to be—I think they're going to be filling up very rapidly.

Biden didn't do anything, because he never did anything about anything. He had no capability. He had no ability. And it was a shame what he's done to so many countries, including our own.

We had—an interesting fact, about a year ago, there was a story that we're having hard—a hard time getting enlistments into the military, and it was at the lowest level almost ever. We just—people didn't want to go into our military.

And it just came out last week—you probably saw—that we have now the strongest enlistment in the history of our country. They say 38 years. One said 37; one said 32; and one said ever. So, we just had the strongest enlistment in the history of the United States of America.

So think of it. In one year, we went from "They can't get people to enlist" to "We have the strongest enlistment." And that includes the police departments too. We're having a hard time getting people to be police, the great law enforcement arm that we're known for, and now we're setting records.

It's hard to get a job. I mean, the—frankly, the lines of people wanting to be police officers and go into the military—and it's really—it's a matter of spirit. We have great spirit in the country right now. We've done a lot in a hundred days. I'll tell you that. It's all started on November 5th with the election.

But a stable and peaceful Middle East will be a successful and prosperous Middle East, and that's what you've done, and that's what you're doing. And you know, it's amazing, because when I was here last, it was fine. It was doing good. And then I see the things that you're doing here, and in your countries, it's just an incredible—what you're—what you're doing is—the whole world is talking about it. The whole world is watching us.

Look at all the news over there, the fake news. Look at them. That whole world—the whole world is talking about what you're doing. And they're—you're the envy of the world.

Together, we're in this room, and we're going to forge a Middle East that will be a thriving commercial, diplomatic, and cultural crossroads at the geographic center of the world. That's what it is. It's the center of the world.

And I look forward to working with you. And I want to thank Muhammad. I want to thank you, Crown Prince. We have a special relationship. We have long had a special relationship, but it was an honor to spend a couple of days with you, and I'll see you again soon, and I'll see you a lot.

Thank you all very much. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:09 a.m. at the Ritz-Carlton, Riyadh hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Israeli soldier Edan Alexander of Tenaflly, NJ, who was captured during the October 7, 2023, Hamas attacks on Israel and released on May 12; Minister of Foreign Affairs As'ad Hasan al-Shaybani of Syria; President Joseph Aoun and Prime Minister Nawaf Salam of Lebanon; and Michel Issa, the President's nominee to be U.S. Ambassador to Lebanon.

*Categories:* Addresses and Remarks : Gulf Cooperation Council, leaders meeting in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

*Locations:* Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

*Names:* Aoun, Joseph; Biden, Joseph R., Jr.; Erdogan, Recep Tayyip; Issa, Michel; Muhammad bin Salman bin Abd al-Aziz Al Saud, Crown Prince; Rubio, Marco A.; Salam, Nawaf; Shara', Ahmad Husayn al-; Shaybani, As'ad Hasan al-.

*Subjects:* 2024 Presidential election; Gaza, hostages held by Hamas; Gaza, humanitarian situation; Gulf Cooperation Council; Hamas political-paramilitary organization; Iran, nuclear weapons development; Lebanon, Hizballah political-paramilitary organization; Lebanon, President; Lebanon, Prime Minister; Lebanon, U.S. Ambassador-designate; Middle East, regional integration and security; Saudi Arabia, Crown Prince; Saudi Arabia, President Trump's visit; Secretary of State; Syria, Minister of Foreign Affairs; Syria, President; Syria, U.S. sanctions; Turkey, President; Yemen, Houthi rebel group; Yemen, U.S. airstrikes.

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