

*Administration of Donald J. Trump, 2026*

**Remarks and an Exchange With Reporters Aboard Air Force One En Route to Miami, Florida**

*March 7, 2026*

*The President.* Hello, everybody.

*Q.* Hello, Mr. President.

*The President.* It's a very sad day. And I'm glad we paid our respects. It's tough. Tough. It's a tough situation. Great people, great parents, wives, family. And a beautiful ceremony. I guess you got to see that, at least partial.

Any questions?

*Iran/U.S. Military Operations*

*Q.* President Trump, did what you just witness make you think differently about going ahead with this war or even putting troops on the ground in the Middle East?

*The President.* We're winning the war by a lot. We've decimated their whole evil empire. It will continue, I'm sure, for a little while. But I'm very proud of the people and parents. The parents were so proud of their boy, as they call them. "My boy." One case, a young lady. The parents are so proud. Many of them are military parents, as you know. So it's—but it's always a very sad thing.

The war itself is going unbelievably. It's as good as it can be.

We have Pete here. Pete. And you have Steve Witkoff here. We have some additional questions.

*Progress of U.S. Military Operations in Iran*

*Q.* You're 1 week in now, sir.

*The President.* Say it?

*Q.* You're 1 week in at this point.

*The President.* Yes.

*Q.* How long, as of now, do you expect operations to continue?

*The President.* Well, I think we've accomplished more in one week than anyone thought possible. We've wiped out their navy, 44 ships. We've wiped out their air force, every plane. We've wiped out most of their missiles. You see the missiles aren't coming much anymore. We've also hit their manufacturing areas, where they make the missiles, very hard. Their drone capacity is way down. And we've hurt them where it hurts, including about every form of leadership you can have, we've wiped out.

*Duration of U.S. Military Operations in Iran*

*Q.* Do you still expect up to 6 weeks total?

*The President.* I don't know. I don't know. I never project time. Whatever it takes.

But we've—their military is almost nonexistent, if you look. I mean, we could hit their military itself very hard, but maybe we will, maybe we won't. We haven't made that determination.

### *Gasoline Prices*

*Q.* What do you think of gas prices? Gas prices right now.

*The President.* Say it?

*Q.* Are you worried about gas prices right now?

*The President.* No, I'm not.

*Q.* Why?

*The President.* This is a short excursion into something that should have been done for 47 years. Forty-seven years it's taken to do this, and no President had the guts to do it.

### *Dignified Transfer of Remains Ceremony at Dover Air Force Base, Delaware*

*Q.* Are you worried you're going to end up coming back to Dover for more of these such dignified transfers?

*The President.* Oh, yes. I'm sure. I hate to do them, but it's a part of war, isn't it?

Who are you with?

*Q.* The Washington Post, sir.

*The President.* Wouldn't you say it's part of war? Yes.

*Q.* Deaths are part of war, yes.

*The President.* Yes. It's part of war. It's a sad part of war. It's the bad part of war.

### *U.S. Airstrikes in Iran*

*Q.* Mr. President, did the United States bomb a girls' elementary school in southern Iran on the first day of the war and kill 175 people?

*The President.* No. In my opinion, and based on what I've seen, that was done by Iran.

*Q.* Is that true, Mr. Hegseth, it was Iran who did that?

*Secretary of War Peter B. Hegseth.* We're certainly investigating.

*Q.* You're still investigating?

*Secretary Hegseth.* But the only side that targets civilians is Iran.

*The President.* We think it was done by Iran. Because they're very inaccurate, as you know, with their munitions. They have no accuracy whatsoever. It was done by Iran.

### *U.S. Military Operations in Iran*

*Q.* Can you give us an idea of what unconditional surrender looks like to you? I mean, what do you want from Iran?

*The President.* I said, "unconditional," not conditional. I said "unconditional." It's where they cry uncle or when they can't fight any longer and there's nobody around to cry uncle. That could happen too, because, you know, we've wiped out their leadership numerous times already.

So it's—if they surrender or if there is nobody around to surrender but they're rendered useless in terms of military.

### *Russia/Iran*

*Q.* Mr. President, can I ask you what—Peter [Peter Doocy, Fox News] asked you a question yesterday. You said it wasn't the right time in that event. But he was asking whether you have indications of whether Russia is supporting Iran somehow in this. Do you—

*The President.* No, I haven't had that—I have had no indication of that whatsoever. If they are, they're not doing a very good job because Iran is not doing too well.

#### *Commercial Transit Through the Strait of Hormuz/Iran/Oil Markets and Prices*

*Q.* What about the Strait of Hormuz? There's no traffic really going through it right now.

*The President.* Well, that's, you know, the ships' choices. But we have it cleaned out. We've wiped out their navy. Their navy is now at the bottom of the sea. So that's the choice.

This is an excursion. We figured oil prices would go up, which they will. They'll also come down. They'll come down very fast. And we will have gotten rid of a major, major cancer on the face of the Earth. We will have taken out a cancer.

You know, don't forget October 7. Don't forget all of the things that have happened over the years, all caused by these people.

So what we're doing is a great thing, not only for our country and not only for Israel, not only for the Middle East, but for the world.

#### *Russia/Temporary Relief on U.S. Sanctions/Oil Markets and Prices*

*Q.* Secretary Bessent announced some moves to temporarily allow certain Russian oil sales to India. Are you considering any other moves, including the SPR?

*The President.* Well, if there were some, I would do it just to take a little of the pressure off. But I think that—the oil pressure. But there's a lot of oil. We've got a lot of oil. Our country has a tremendous amount. And we have—there's a lot of oil out there.

*Q.* Would you consider—

*The President.* That will get healed very quickly.

#### *Strategic Petroleum Reserve/2024 Presidential Election*

*Q.* Would you consider using the SPR or tapping into the SPR at some point?

*The President.* Strategic Reserves?

*Q.* Yes. Yes.

*The President.* Well, I'm the one that built them up. Biden used them so that he could get some extra votes in the election. It turned out it wasn't even him that ran. It was Kamala. And she obviously didn't get any extra votes, because we won in an absolute landslide. He should have used it for that. He used it to get—I filled it up, and he brought it down to the lowest level it's ever been. We will start, at the appropriate time, which is basically a gut instinct, we will start filling up the strategic reserves.

#### *U.S. Military Operations in Iran*

*Q.* What are the circumstances where you'd send in ground troops? How are you thinking about that?

*The President.* I don't even want to talk about it now. I mean, it's—I don't think it's an appropriate question. You know I'm not going to answer it. Could there be? Possibly, for very good reason. Have to be very good reason. And I would say if we ever did that, they would be so decimated that they wouldn't be able to fight at the ground level.

*Q.* Are you thinking about the oil facility there? There's an oil facility kind of on the coast of Iran that could be secured by ground troops. There's been some speculation that could be a target.

*The President.* Well, I don't know what the speculation is, but I certainly wouldn't be able to tell you that. I'd be in trouble with myself if I told you that.

### *Iranian Nuclear Capabilities*

*Q.* Mr. President, don't you need ground troops to secure the enriched uranium at the nuclear sites?

*The President.* We're going to find out about that. We haven't talked about it. But it was a total obliteration. They haven't been able to get to it. And at some point, maybe we will. You know, that'd be a—that would be a great thing. But right now we're just decimating them.

But we haven't gone after it, but you know, it's something we could do later on. We wouldn't do it——

*Q.* You said you want——

*The President.* We wouldn't do it now. Maybe we'll do it later.

*Q.* You said you want to be involved in the selection of the next——

*The President.* Yes.

*Q.* ——leader of Iran. Can you talk to who you'd put there?

*The President.* Well, because I don't want to just come back every 10 years. And mostly you'll have Presidents, mostly, that won't do that because they don't get it. But we don't want to come back every 5 years or every 10 years and do this. So we want to pick a President that's not going to be leading their country into a war.

Do you have any questions for Pete or Steve? Come on up.

*Q.* Mr. Witkoff——

*The President.* Steve, come on up.

*Q.* Mr. Witkoff, is there still space to do a deal with whatever is left of the Iranian government?

*U.S. Special Envoy for Peace Missions Steven C. Witkoff.* I think there is. I think that's going to be up to the President. That's what I think.

But I—but they didn't seem to be very amenable in this—in those first set of negotiations. You heard what I said. They said, "We have the inalienable right to enrich." They bragged about having 60-percent enriched fuel, enough for 11 bombs. They told me and Jared, "We're not going to give you diplomatically what you couldn't take militarily."

So, you know, I think they're going to need a change of attitude.

### *Iran*

*Q.* What sort of thing do you want to see in a deal? I mean, do you think you have maximum negotiating leverage at this point?

*Special Envoy Witkoff.* I think the President has proved that we have.

*Q.* Iran today accused the U.S. of hitting——

*The President.* We've got a lot of negotiating leverage, maybe maximum, but we're not looking to settle. They'd like to settle. We're not looking to settle.

*Q.* Iran accused——

### *U.S. Military Operations in Iran*

*Q.* Sir, the British Government has now offered use of some—the British Government has offered use of some bases now, and you had previously said you were very disappointed in them.

*The President.* Are you talking about the two aircraft carriers?

*Q.* I mean about British bases. They said——

*The President.* Did you see my response that I just put out? I just put out a response. You mean the offer to send two aircraft carriers "maybe"—"maybe"—but they're not sure? I just put out a response to that. I said we don't need them. It's not the right time. It would have been nice to have had them 2 weeks ago. But the response I put out, I think, says it very well for you.

### *Iran*

*Q.* Secretary Hegseth, Iran today accused the U.S. of hitting a desalination plant in Iran.

*The President.* I don't know anything about——

*Q.* And they said that that might open the door to other strikes on infrastructure, nonmilitary.

*The President.* It will allow us to also open the door to other strikes against them. Look——

*Q.* Can you respond to that allegation? Did the U.S. hit a——

*The President.* Look, let me tell you about Iran. They are among the most evil people ever on Earth. They cut babies' heads off. They chop women in half. What they did—take a look at October 7. Take a look at what they've done over the last 47 years.

So I know nothing about a desalinization plant, other than to say: If they're complaining about a desalinization plant, we complain about the fact that they shouldn't be chopping babies' heads off. Okay?

### *Iran/Russian Intelligence*

*Q.* Mr. Witkoff, have you communicated to the Russians not to send targeting information and other assistance to the Iranians?

*Special Envoy Witkoff.* We've strongly said that.

*Q.* And do you believe that they are?

*Special Envoy Witkoff.* I hope they're not.

*Q.* Do you see any evidence?

*The President.* We don't know, but it's not doing very well. If they are, it's not helping much. If you take a look at what's happened to Iran in the last week, if they're getting information, it's not helping them much.

### *U.S. Airstrikes on Iranian Nuclear Facilities*

*Q.* What would it mean to you if they were? I mean, even if it's not helping the Iranians particularly much, it's still involving themselves in a conflict that they're not directly——

*The President.* I guess they'd say we do it against them, wouldn't they? Wouldn't they say that we do it against them?

I don't know. Look, they can give all the information that they want, but the people they're sending it to are overwhelmed. Russia would be overwhelmed too. Anybody would be

overwhelmed. We have the greatest military on Earth, and I built it in my first term. And unfortunately, I'm forced to use it now.

But when you look at what we did with Venezuela, when you look at what we did with the B-2 bombers, that was a very big moment, because Iran was going to have a nuclear weapon within 2 or 3 weeks, and that stopped it. And it stopped it cold.

And you ask about maybe going back and getting that? Something could happen. At the right time, it could happen.

#### *U.S. Military Operations in Iran*

*Q.* Is Iran running out of missiles and drones——

*The President.* Yes, I think so.

*Q.* ——or do you expect those counterattacks to continue indefinitely?

*The President.* Not only that. Manufacturing capability also. We've hit the manufacturing very hard. They're at about 9 percent of what they sent out in the first 2 days, and we think that's because they don't have that much.

They've also—we've knocked out about 70 percent of the rocket—of the launchers. The launchers are a big deal. Very hard to get, very expensive.

*Secretary Hegseth.* If you want to talk about leverage—with every passing day, we have more and more leverage because we have more and more capabilities. We're hitting them harder and harder, and they have less of an ability to defend themselves. So we're pressing the offensive every single day, creating all the leverage the President needs for the outcome he wants.

#### *U.S. Military Operations in Iran*

*Q.* So it sounds like you think they're running out of one or both of the drones and the missiles.

*The President.* Well, I mean, when you look, I mean, they're sending in much less, much less drones. They're being decimated.

Now, you know, at some point I don't think there'll be anybody left, maybe, to say, "We surrender." But they're being decimated. And when you look also, they—all of a sudden, they apologized to the Middle Eastern states that they shot at them. I was very surprised to see they did that. But you mark that down as a victory for us and for the Middle Eastern states, who are really friends of ours. But I guess they're not going to be shooting at them anymore. They apologized. And we'll see what happens.

But that's a big loss. That's a surrender right there. I called it a surrender today. When they apologized and said they're not shooting at them anymore, that's really a surrender to those states and to us.

Okay. Anything else?

#### *Iran/Kurds*

*Q.* Sir, some Iranians are concerned that the Kurds will carve out kind of an autonomous region, as they did in Syria and Iraq.

*The President.* We're not having—we're not looking to the Kurds going in. We're very friendly with the Kurds, as you know, but we don't want to make the war any more complex than it already is. No——

### *Kurdish Involvement in Iran Conflict*

*Q.* Have you ruled that out?

*The President.* We don't want—yes, I—I have ruled it out. I don't want the Kurds going in. I don't want to see the Kurds get hurt, get killed. We've had a good relation. They're willing to go in, but we really—I've told them I don't want them to go in.

*Q.* Do you think the map of Iran will look the same——

*The President.* I just think it's—the war is complicated enough without having—getting the Kurds involved.

### *Iran/National Boundaries*

*Q.* And do you think the map of Iran looks the same after this is all done?

*The President.* That, I can't tell you. Probably not.

### *Commercial Transit Through the Strait of Hormuz/U.S. Military Operations in Iran*

*Q.* Do you know if any shipping companies have taken the U.S. up on its offer of insurance to go through the Strait of Hormuz?

*The President.* No, no, we have it set up. We have a great insurance and reinsurance system. But I don't.

*Q.* Sir, when you talk about——

*The President.* When this ends, we're going to have a much safer world. You know that. So, you know, this is a minor excursion. But when this ends, we're going to have a much safer world, and we will have gotten rid of a lot of sick and demented people, the leadership. So, we got rid of the one leadership, and we got rid of the second level of leadership. Now they're on their third or fourth level of leadership. And they have leaders right now that nobody even knows who they are.

Thank you very much, everybody. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:11 p.m. in the press cabin. In his remarks, he referred to the families of Maj. Jeffrey R. O'Brien, USA, Capt. Cody A. Khork, USA, CWO 3 Robert M. Marzan, USA, Sgt. 1 Nicole M. Amor, USA, Sgt. 1 Noah L. Tietjens, USA, and Sgt. Declan J. Coady, USA, who were killed in Iranian airstrikes on Port Shuaiba, Kuwait, on March 1; and former President Joseph R. Biden, Jr., and Vice President Kamala D. Harris, in her capacity as the 2024 Democratic Presidential nominee. Special Envoy Witkoff referred to the U.S. Special Envoy for Peace Jared C. Kushner. The transcript was released by the Office of Communications on March 8.

*Categories:* Interviews With the News Media : Exchanges with reporters, Air Force One.

*Locations:* Air Force One.

*Names:* Amor, Nicole M.; Biden, Joseph R., Jr.; Coady, Declan J.; Harris, Kamala D.; Hegseth, Peter B.; Khork, Cody A.; Kushner, Jared C.; Marzan, Robert M.; O'Brien, Jeffrey R.; Tietjens, Noah L.; Witkoff, Steven C.

*Subjects:* 2024 Presidential election; Gasoline costs; Iran, commercial transit through Strait of Hormuz; Iran, Kurdish ethnic group; Iran, U.S. airstrikes on nuclear facilities; Iran, U.S. diplomatic engagement; Iran, U.S. military operations; Israel, attacks by Hamas of October 7, 2023; News media, Presidential interviews; Oil and natural gas, domestic production; Secretary of War; U.S. Special Envoy for Peace; U.S. Special Envoy for Peace Missions; United Kingdom,

defense relationship with U.S.; Venezuela, U.S. military capture and exfiltration of President Maduro.

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