

Remarks in an Exchange With Reporters Prior to Departure for Hebron, Kentucky
March 11, 2026

The President. So it's day 11, and as you know, we're doing something that nobody ever thought was possible to do. Our military is the best. It's the most powerful in the world. And they're hitting them very hard.

This is 47 years of abuse and killing lots of people—killing and maiming lots of people.

What is it, Peter [Peter Alexander, NBC News]?

U.S. Military Operations in Iran

Q. Mr. President, what more do you need to do militarily for this operation to end?

The President. More of the same, and we'll see how that all comes out.

Right now they are—they've lost their navy. They've lost their air force. They have no anti-aircraft apparatus at all. They have no radar. Their leaders are gone. And we could do a lot worse, if you want to know the—we're leaving certain things that if we take them out—and we could take them out by this afternoon; in fact, within an hour—they literally would never be able to build their country back.

Initial U.S. Airstrikes in Iran/Civilian Casualties

Q. Mr. President, a new report shows—a new report says that the military investigation has found that the United States struck the school in Iran. As Commander in Chief, do you take responsibility for that?

The President. That it's what? What did you——

Q. As Commander in Chief, do you take——

The President. For what?

Q. The strike on the school in Iran. A military—a new report says the military investigation has found it was the United States——

White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt. [Inaudible]

Q. ——that struck the school.

The President. I don't know about it.

[At this point, several reporters began asking questions at once.]

Q. How do you respond—Mr. President, how do you respond——

Commercial Transit Through the Strait of Hormuz

Q. Are you talking to the CEOs of various oil companies, encouraging them to use the Strait of Hormuz right now?

The President. Yes, I think they should. I think they should. I think they should use the Strait.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Q. How do you respond——

The President. My opinion—look, we took out just about all of their mine ships in 1 night. We're up to boat number 60. I didn't realize they had that big a navy. I would say it was big and ineffective. But every one of their ships—just about all of their navy is gone at the bottom of the sea.

I hope you're impressed.

Q. Have they laid any mines in the Strait of Hormuz?

The President. We don't think so.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Q. Mr. President, how do you respond——

Election Reform

Q. Mr. President, is Senator Thune—is Senator Thune listening to you when you say you want to pass the SAVE America Act? He says there aren't the votes to do it right now. What's your response?

The President. Well, he's got to be a leader. You know? If he's a leader, he's got to get them. It's the most popular bill I've ever seen put before Congress. And it's voter ID and it's voter—you have to be able to be a citizen to vote. You've got to—it's called citizenship. And we're also adding in no men playing in women's sports, no transgender mutilization of our children, and no mail-in ballots—fake mail-in ballots. We have none of that, except in the case of the military, et cetera.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

I will say, it is—the SAVE America Act, it's the most popular bill I think I've ever put before Congress.

Q. Can you——

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Q. What's your message to Democrats——

Political Leadership in Iran

Q. Can you declare victory in this war if the Supreme Leader remains the Ayatollah's son?

The President. I don't want to comment on that. I don't want to comment.

But I will tell you I just spoke with various countries—the leaders of various countries. You'll have a list. And they said they've never seen anything like it. We have—and I built it during my first term, and I used it. I didn't realize I was going to use it this much. But we have the greatest military in the world by far. Nobody close.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Counterterrorism and Homeland Security

Q. Are you concerned, sir, about a domestic terror attack backed by Iran here, sir?

The President. No, I'm not.

Q. [Inaudible]—oil from the SPR?

Shield of Americas Initiative

Q. [Inaudible]—were not invited to the Shield of the Americas. Mexico, Brazil, and Colombia were not invited to the Shield of the Americas. Why was that? And could they come in the future to the event?

The President. I think they were invited. Maybe they didn't come. I think they were. I get along very well with all of them.

Political Leadership in Iraq

Q. Mr. President, in Iraqi Parliament, slogan—member slogan: "Death to America. Death to Israel." What is your response to them? What is your message for Iraqi Government?

The President. What did he say?

Q. In Iraqi Parliament, slogan: "Death of America. Death of Israel." Member of the parliament.

Press Secretary Leavitt. "Death to America. Death to Israel." What's your response to that?

The President. That's not a nice question.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Spain-U.S. Trade

Q. Mr. President, did Spain give in after you told them that you would tie—cut commerce ties with them? Are they cooperating with the United States in Spain?

The President. Who? Who?

Q. Spain.

The President. No, they're not. I think they're not cooperating at all. Spain? I think they've been very bad. Very bad. Not good at all. We may cut off trade with Spain.

Q. You would cut all trade with them?

The President. I don't know what Spain's doing. They've been very bad to NATO. They get protected. They don't want to pay their fair share. And they've been that way for many years, actually.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

But let me give you the good news. The people of Spain are fantastic. The leadership—like you. The leadership, not so good.

Lebanon/Hizballah Political-Paramilitary Organization

Q. Mr. President, regarding Hizballah and Lebanon, Lebanon is under attack, and Hizballah is making dangers for the Lebanese and especially the Lebanese Christians. What is your message for Lebanon?

The President. Well, we're working on it very hard. We love Lebanon. We love the people of Lebanon, and we're working very hard. We've got to get rid of the—Hizballah has been a disaster for many years.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

"America First Refining Project" in Brownsville, Texas

Q. There's a oil refinery—a new oil refinery going up in Texas, sir. The new oil refinery going up in Brownsville, Texas, what do you want Americans to know about that?

The President. About what?

Q. About the new oil refinery going up in Brownsville, Texas.

The President. Oh, it will be great. It's going to be the greatest anywhere in the world. There's never been anything like it. It's great that it's going up in Texas.

You know, it's very hard to get refineries done. This will be like nothing else ever built. It's a great thing.

Thank you for that question.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

U.S. Military Operations in Iran

Q. When will you say, "Mission Accomplished?"

The President. Well, look, we've knocked out their navy. We've knocked out their air force. We've knocked out all of their anti-defense. We've taken out 60 mine boats—50 mine boats, which nobody has ever seen anything like it.

We have the greatest military in the world by far. Not even close. So——

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

But you know what? They've inflicted 47 years' worth of damage to the world, and now they're paying a big price.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

U.S. Military Operations in Iran

Q. Mr. President, would you—are you willing to withdraw the U.S. from Iran even if they have not turned over and allowed the U.S. to seize their remaining——

The President. I'm not going to answer——

Q. ——enriched uranium?

The President. I'm not going to—yes.

Q. Do they have to turn over the enriched uranium?

The President. I'm not going to answer that. But we have hit them harder than virtually any country in history has been hit, and we're not finished yet.

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Rwanda/Democratic Republic of the Congo

Q. Mr. President, you just imposed the sanctions on Rwanda. What make you so confident that they will stop the war in Congo?

The President. We hope so. We got along very well with Rwanda and with Congo, and we hope they're going to be—they're going to get along.

2020 Presidential Election

Q. In Arizona, why did the FBI seize election records in that State?

The President. Well, they probably thought the election was rigged, right?

Q. It wasn't rigged though.

The President. I really—who—how do you know?

Q. Attorney—your own——

The President. How do you know?

Q. Your own Attorney General, in 2020, said that there was not measurable voter fraud——

The President. Oh, really? You don't think it was rigged? I think it was rigged.

Q. [Inaudible]

The President. And if you say it wasn't rigged, you're a rotten reporter.

Q. Where is the evidence of that?

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Commercial Transit Through the Strait of Hormuz

Q. Mr. President, what is the U.S. doing to reopen the Strait of Hormuz?

The President. Oh, it's working out very well, and I think you're going to see that. Working out very well.

Safety of Commercial Transit Through the Strait of Hormuz

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. Thanks for coming to the cheap seats.

Now that tankers are being attacked in the Strait of Hormuz, how are you going to ensure the safety of oil flowing through there?

The President. I think you're going to see great safety, and it's going to be very, very quickly. We have decimated that country. They're paying a big price now for 47 years of killing. They killed—you have relatives, and we all have relatives. What they've done, and now they're paying a price.

"America First Refining Project" in Brownsville, Texas

Q. Mr. President, America First Refining opened up its first oil refining in 50 years.

The President. Yes.

Q. Brownsville, Texas. Why is this such a big deal? And would it have happened under a different President?

The President. It would not have happened under a different President. None of this would've happened under a different President.

Just so you know——

[Several reporters spoke at once.]

Ready?

A year ago, we were a dead country. Now we're the hottest country in the world.

Thank you. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:10 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House prior to boarding Marine One. In his remarks, he referred to S. 1383. Reporters referred to Supreme Leader Mojtaba Khamenei of Iran, son of former Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Hoseini-Khamenei of Iran, who was killed in an Israeli airstrike in Tehran, Iran, on February 28; and former Attorney General William P. Barr.

Categories: Interviews With the News Media : Exchanges with reporters, White House.

Names: Leavitt, Karoline; Thune, John R.

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