

President Donald Trump's address to the nation on the war against Iran

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as transcribed by The Associated Press

My fellow Americans, good evening. Let me begin by congratulating the team at NASA and our brave astronauts on the successful launch of Artemis II, it was quite something. It will be traveling further than any manned rocket has ever flown and will very substantially pass the moon, go around it and come back home from a distance that has never been done before. It's amazing. They are on the way and God bless them, these are brave people. We want to — God bless those four unbelievable astronauts.

As we speak this evening, it's been just one month since the United States military began Operation Epic Fury, targeting the world's No. 1 state sponsor of terror, Iran. In these past four weeks, our armed forces have delivered swift, decisive, overwhelming victories on the battlefield. Victories like few people have ever seen before. Tonight, Iran's navy is gone. Their air force is in ruins. Their leaders, most of them, terrorist regime, they led, are now dead. Their command and control of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps is being decimated as we speak. Their ability to launch missiles and drones is dramatically curtailed. And their weapons, factories and rocket launchers are being blown to pieces. Very few of them left.

Never in the history of warfare has an enemy suffered such clear and devastating large-scale losses in a matter of weeks. Our enemies are losing and America, as it has been for five years under my presidency, is winning, and now winning bigger than ever before.

Before discussing this current situation, I also want to thank our troops for the masterful job they did in taking the country of Venezuela in a matter of minutes. That hit was quick, lethal, violent and respected by everyone all over the world. After rebuilding our military during my first term, we have by far the strongest military anywhere in the world. And now we're working along with Venezuela and are, in a true sense, joint venture partners. We're getting along incredibly well in the production and sale of massive amounts of oil and gas, the second largest reserves on Earth after the United States of America. We're now totally independent of the Middle East, and yet we are there to help. We don't have to be there. We don't need their oil. We don't need anything they have. But we're there to help our allies.

Tonight, I want to provide an update on the tremendous progress our warriors have made in Iran and discuss why Operation Epic Fury is necessary for the safety of America and the security of the free world. From the very first day I announced my campaign for president in 2015, I vowed that I would never allow Iran to have a nuclear weapon. This fanatical regime has been chanting, "Death to America, death to Israel" for 47 years. Their proxies were behind the murder of 241 Americans in the Marine barracks bombing in Beirut, the slaughter of hundreds of our service members with roadside bombs. They were involved in the attack on the USS Cole, and they carried out the countless other heinous acts, including the blood — just horrible, bloody atrocities of Oct. 7 in Israel, something that most people, never seen anything like it. This murderous regime also recently killed 45,000 of their own people who were protesting in Iran, 45,000 dead. For these terrorists to have nuclear weapons would be an intolerable threat. The most violent and thuggish regime on earth would be free to carry out their campaigns of terror, coercion, conquest and mass murder from behind a nuclear shield. I will never let that happen, and neither should any of our past presidents.

This situation has been going on for 47 years, and should have been handled long before I arrived in office. I did many things during my two terms in office to stop the quest for nuclear weapons by Iran. First, and perhaps most importantly, I killed General Qassem Soleimani. In my first term. He was an evil genius, brilliant person, a horrible human being, however, the father of the roadside bomb. And he lived, just horrible what he did. Iran would have been perhaps in a far better, stronger position had he lived. We would have had probably a different conversation tonight. But you know what? We'd still be winning and winning big.

And then, very importantly, I terminated Barack Hussein Obama's Iran nuclear deal, a disaster. Obama gave them \$1.7 billion in cash. Green, green cash — took it out of banks from Virginia, D.C. and Maryland. All the cash they had. Flew it by airplanes in an attempt to buy their respect and loyalty, but it didn't work. They laughed at our president and went on with their mission to have a nuclear bomb. His Iran deal would have led to a colossal arsenal of massive nuclear weapons for Iran. They would have had them years ago, and they would have used them, would have been a different world. There would have been no Middle East and no Israel right now, in my opinion — the opinion of a lot of great experts — had I not terminated that terrible deal. I was so honored to do it, I was so proud to do it, it was so bad right from the beginning.

Essentially, I did what no other president was willing to do. They made mistakes and I am correcting them. My first preference was always the path of diplomacy, yet the regime continued their relentless quest for nuclear weapons and rejected every attempt at an agreement. For this reason, in June, I ordered a strike on Iran's key nuclear facilities in Operation Midnight Hammer. Nobody's ever seen anything like it. Those beautiful B-2 bombers performed magnificently. We totally

obliterated those nuclear sites. The regime then sought to rebuild their nuclear program at a totally different location, making clear they had no intention of abandoning their pursuit of nuclear weapons.

They were also rapidly building a vast stockpile of conventional ballistic missiles, and would soon have had missiles that could reach the American homeland, Europe and virtually any other place on Earth. Iran's strategy was so obvious, they wanted to produce as many missiles as possible, and they did with the longest range possible, and they had some weapons that nobody believed they had. We just learned that, we took them out, we took them all out so that no one would really dare stop them and their race for a nuclear bomb, a nuclear weapon like nobody's ever seen before. They were right at the doorstep. For years, everyone has said that Iran cannot have nuclear weapons. But in the end, those are just words. If you're not willing to take action when the time comes.

As I stated in my announcement of Operation Epic Fury, our objectives are very simple and clear. We are systematically dismantling the regime's ability to threaten America or reject power outside of their borders. That means eliminating Iran's navy, which is now absolutely destroyed, hurting their air force and their missile program at levels never seen before and annihilating their defense industrial base. We've done all of it. Their navy is gone. Their air force is gone. Their missiles are just about used up or beaten. Taken together, these actions will cripple Iran's military, crush their ability to support terrorist proxies and deny them the ability to build a nuclear bomb. Our armed forces have been extraordinary. There's never been anything like it militarily. Everyone is talking about it. And tonight, I'm pleased to say that these core strategic objectives are nearing completion.

As we celebrate this progress, we think especially of the 13 American warriors who have laid down their lives in this fight to prevent our children from ever having to face a nuclear Iran. Twice this past month, I have traveled to Dover Air Force Base, and it's been something, I wanted to be with those heroes as they returned to American soil. I was with them and their families, their parents, their wives, their husbands. We salute them. And now we must honor them by completing the mission for which they gave their lives. And every single one of the people, their loved ones said, "Please, sir, please finish the job," every one of them, and we are going to finish the job and we're going to finish it very fast. We're getting very close.

I want to thank our allies in the Middle East: Israel, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, the UAE, Kuwait and Bahrain. They've been great, and we will not let them get hurt or fail in any way, shape or form. Many Americans have been concerned to see the recent rise in gasoline prices here at home. This short-term increase has been entirely the result of the Iranian regime launching deranged terror attacks against commercial oil tankers and neighboring countries that have nothing to do with the conflict. This is yet more proof that Iran can never be trusted with nuclear

weapons. They will use them and they will use them quickly. It would lead to decades of extortion, economic pain and instability worse than we can ever imagine.

The United States has never been better prepared economically to confront this threat. You all know that. We built the strongest economy in history. We're going through it right now, the strongest in history. And one year we've taken a dead and crippled country. I hate to say that, but we were a dead and crippled country after the last administration and made it the hottest country anywhere in the world by far, with no inflation, record setting investments coming into the United States, over \$18 trillion and the highest stock market ever with 53 all-time record highs in just one year. It all positioned us to get rid of a cancer that has long simmered. It's known as the nuclear Iran, and they didn't know what was coming. They'd never imagined it.

Remember, because of our drill baby drill program, America has plenty of gas. We have so much gas. Under my leadership, we are No. 1 producer of oil and gas on the planet, without even discussing the millions of barrels that we're getting from Venezuela. Because of the Trump administration's policies, we produce more oil and gas than Saudi Arabia and Russia combined. Think of that. Saudi Arabia and Russia combined. And that number will soon be substantially higher than that. There's no country like us anywhere in the world, and we're in great shape for the future. The United States imports almost no oil through the Hormuz Strait and won't be taking any in the future. We don't need it. We haven't needed it, and we don't need it. We've beaten and completely decimated Iran. They are decimated both militarily and economically and in every other way. And the countries of the world that do receive oil through the Hormuz Strait must take care of that passage. They must cherish it. They must grab it and cherish it. They could do it easily. We will be helpful, but they should take the lead in protecting the oil that they so desperately depend on.

So to those countries that can't get fuel, many of which refuse to get involved in the decapitation of Iran — we had to do it ourselves — I have a suggestion. No. 1, buy oil from the United States of America. We have plenty. We have so much. And No. 2, build up some delayed courage. Should have done it before. Should have done it with us as we asked. Go to the strait and just take it, protect it, use it for yourselves. Iran has been essentially decimated. The hard part is done, so it should be easy.

And in any event, when this conflict is over, the strait will open up naturally. It'll just open up naturally. They're going to want to be able to sell oil because that's all they have to try and rebuild. It will resume the flowing and the gas prices will rapidly come back down. Stock prices will rapidly go back up. They haven't come down very much, frankly. They came down a little bit. But they've had some very good days over the last couple of days. We've done actually much better than I thought. But we had to take that little journey to Iran to get rid of this horrible threat.

With our historic tax cuts, where people are just now talking about receiving larger refunds than they ever thought possible, they are getting so much more money than they thought. That's from the great big, beautiful bill. Our economy is strong and improving by the day, and it will soon be roaring back like never before. It will top the levels that it was a month ago. I made clear from the beginning of Operation Epic Fury that we will continue until our objectives are fully achieved. Thanks to the progress we've made. I can say tonight that we are on track to complete all of America's military objectives shortly. Very shortly.

We are going to hit them extremely hard over the next two to three weeks. We're going to bring them back to the Stone Ages, where they belong. In the meantime, discussions are ongoing. Regime change was not our goal. We never said regime change, but regime change has occurred because of all of their original leaders' death. They're all dead. The new group is less radical and much more reasonable. Yet if during this period of time no deal is made, we have our eyes on key targets. If there is no deal, we are going to hit each and every one of their electric generating plants very hard and probably simultaneously. We have not hit their oil, even though that's the easiest target of all, because it would not give them even a small chance of survival or rebuilding. But we could hit it and it would be gone. And there's not a thing they could do about it. They have no anti-aircraft equipment. Their radar is 100% annihilated. We are unstoppable as a military force. The nuclear sites that we obliterated with the B-2 bombers have been hit so hard that it would take months to get near the nuclear dust. And we have it under intense satellite surveillance and control. If we see them make a move, even a move for it, we'll hit them with missiles very hard again. We have all the cards. They have none.

It's very important that we keep this conflict in perspective. American involvement in World War I lasted one year, seven months and five days. World War II lasted for three years, eight months and 25 days. The Korean War lasted for three years, one month and two days. The Vietnam War lasted for 19 years, five months and 29 days. Iraq went on for eight years, eight months and 28 days. We are in this military operation, so powerful, so brilliant against one of the most powerful countries for 32 days. And the country has been eviscerated and essentially is really no longer a threat. They were the bully of the Middle East, but they are the bully no longer. This is a true investment in your children and your grandchildren's future. The whole world is watching and they can't believe the power, strength and brilliance, they just can't believe what their seeing, they, leave it to your imagination, but they can't believe what they're seeing, the brilliance of the United States military.

Tonight, every American can look forward to a day when we are finally free from the wickedness of Iranian aggression and the specter of nuclear blackmail. Because of the actions we have taken, we are on the cusp of ending Iran's sinister threat to America and the world. And I'll tell you, the world is watching. And when

we do, when it's all over, the United States will be safer, stronger, more prosperous and greater than it has ever been before.

May God bless the men and women of the United States Armed Forces, and may God bless the United States of America. Thank you very much, and good night.