

ABC's *Good Morning America*

03/02/26

7:11:54 a.m.

5 minutes and 44 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: President Trump Faces Questions on Iran Attack]

ROBIN ROBERTS: President Trump says the assault on Iran could last weeks. But there are many questions the administration has not yet answered. Chief White House correspondent Mary Bruce is there at the White House with more. Good morning to you, Mary.

MARY BRUCE: Good morning, Robin. We are now three days into this campaign. And President Trump has yet to fully make the case for this war to the American people, even after American lives have been lost, there are still big questions about why the U.S. is acting now and what comes next overnight, President Trump returning to Washington, ignoring questions from reporters after launching a new war with Iran. Instead, Trump stopping to inspect new statues of the Founding Fathers in the Rose Garden.

POOL REPORTER: Can you talk to us about Iran, Mr. President?

BRUCE: The President has yet to make a robust case for war to explain why Iran presented an imminent threat to the U.S. He has been adamant that U.S. strikes last June wiped out Iran's nuclear program and said it would take years for them to rebuild. But now, he insists, without evidence, that rebuild of their nuclear program was happening fast. And shortly after the strikes began, he made clear his goal: to topple the Supreme Leader. But he has not explained what comes next. Among the options, he suggested that the remaining leadership could stay in place or a new leader could come to power, and he's urging the Iranian people to take over their government

PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP: Be brave. Be bold. Be heroic, and take back your country. America is with you.

BRUCE: But Trump has long said the U.S. should not be in the business of regime change and vowed not to lead the U.S. into foreign conflicts.

TRUMP [on 11/06/24]: I'm not going to start a war. I'm going to stop wars.

BRUCE: But now, in a change of tone he says, Iran cannot be allowed to "extort the world" and that this military campaign is America's duty.

TRUMP: We're undertaking this massive operation not merely to ensure security for our own time and place, but for our children and their children, just as our ancestors have done for us many, many years ago. This is the duty and the burden of a free people.

BRUCE: The President launched the operation from his Mar-a-Lago resort in Florida, while

nearby, Trump supporters gathered for a fundraiser. Trump dropping by to mingle with guests in this video, obtained by *The Daily Mail* before returning to the war room. Hours later, Trump, seen here watching the operation unfold alongside Chief of Staff Susie Wiles, CIA director John Ratcliffe and the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Dan Caine, out of uniform, mapping out the strikes Trump now says the operation could last four to five weeks, but he did not seek congressional authorization for this campaign. Still, many top Republicans in Congress giving their seal of approval.

SENATOR LINDSEY GRAHAM (R-SC) [on NBC's *Meet the Press*, 03/01/26]: The mothership of terrorism is sinking. The captain is dead

BRUCE: But other Republicans voicing concerns. Congressman Thomas Massie of Kentucky saying: "This is not America first. The Constitution requires a vote, and your representative needs to be on record as opposing or supporting this war." Democrats sounding the alarm.

SENATOR ADAM SCHIFF (D-CA) [on ABC's *This Week*, 03/01/26]: There was simply no basis to go in with this massive military campaign, with the goal of regime change.

BRUCE: Now, the administration is set to brief congressional leaders later today and the full congress tomorrow. But Democrats are demanding that this war be put to a vote. The House is expected to take up a war powers resolution later this week, but it is unlikely that will become law. Meanwhile, here at the White House, the President still has no plans to field questions from the press or formally address the nation to make his case for war, George.

GEORGE STEPHANOPOULOS: Okay, Mary. Thanks. The President did speak to our chief Washington correspondent, Jon Karl, overnight. Jon joins us right now. Jon, you know, the President, promise to keep the United States out of foreign wars. But at this point, no modern President has ordered more military strikes against more countries than Donald Trump.

JONATHAN KARL: And I have to tell you, George, I spoke to the President. He sounded to me like a President who feels invincible. He talked about the military strike he ordered last summer against the nuclear program in Iran. He talked about the operation to take out Nicolas Maduro in Venezuela and what he sees as a wildly successful attack now underway against Iran. He told me "nobody could have done this but me and you know that." In fact, George, he suggested that the success in Venezuela made him less likely to accept concessions in Iran that were offered in the final round of talks. He told me that a year ago, he would have accepted what the Iranians offered, but "we have become spoiled."

STEPHANOPOULOS: But the President didn't offer a lot of clarity on what comes next

KARL: No, he told me that he had been in touch with one member of the regime. He wouldn't say who it was. One surviving member. He suggested that before the strikes, he had identified possible candidates within the Iranian government who could take over the way Delcy Rodríguez did after Maduro was taken out in Venezuela. But he said the attack was so successful it knocked out most of the candidates. "It's not going to be anybody that we were thinking of because they

are all dead. Second or third place is dead. As for how long this is going to go on he said it could be four. He said he was planning for four or five weeks, could be longer, could be shorter.

STEPHANOPOULOS: And it's pretty clear this is personal for the President.

KARL: Well, look, in 2024, while Biden was President, U.S. intelligence believed that Iran was plotting to kill then-candidate Donald Trump. Secret Service beefed up his security detail. Other precautionary measures were taken. That experience was clearly on his mind as he ordered the attack that killed the Supreme Leader. He told me, "I got him before he got me. They tried twice. Well, I got him first."

STEPHANOPOULOS: Jon Karl, thanks.