

NBC News Special

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2 minutes and 40 seconds

RICHARD ENGEL: Well, every day we have seen this war expand. It began as a regional war and now it is a regional war that just included a new country, Lebanon joined the conflict overnight with Hezbollah firing rockets at Israel. Israel responding, at least 30 people killed in Lebanon according to health officials there. We've already seen this spread across the Gulf, not just American bases targeted, but oil tankers set on fire, airports. So, this is very much a regional war that is becoming a more and more unpredictable and more complex with every hour that passes. And we are not just seeing military targets that are being struck either in Iran or in Israel. This was a residential area outside of Jerusalem that was hit by an Iranian ballistic missile. And also American diplomatic compounds are now increasingly at risk. Overnight, we saw in Baghdad thousands of pro-Iranians coming out on to the streets and Iran has tremendous influence over what happens in Iraq and they were trying to get inside the Green Zone and swarm the U.S. Embassy. The American consulate in Pakistan, a similar scene, where pro-Iranian crowds tried to swarm that consulate. So, when you listen to the secretary of war and you listen to this briefing, he makes it sound like a very neat and clean operation, that the U.S. is trying to achieve very clear military objectives, but seeing from the Middle East with every day that passes it gets more complex, it gets — the geographical space where it is operating gets wider and wider. That's one thing. Also, Hegseth said repeatedly that the United States didn't start this war. That — that will clearly be greeted with a lot of skepticism in this part of the world because it was Israel and the United States that launched this war. It was described as a preemptive attack with that surprise attack against Iran to target the senior leaders, targeting the late Supreme Leader of Iraq [sic]. When he talked about how it was Iran that started the war, he talked about old grievances going back to 1979 when the Islamic revolutionary government overthrew the Shah. He talked about revenge for the IED attacks that Iran and Iranian-backed militias carried out against U.S. troops in Iraq. So, it seems this is more old grievances meeting an opportunity and meeting a President of the United States and a prime minister of Israel who are willing to act on those old grievances.