

White House press conference [via Newsmax]

04/06/26

1:53:42 p.m.

16 minutes and 39 seconds

UNIDENTIFIED REPORTER: What was your reaction when you learned that Kurdistan Region had resumed exporting oil to the international market with your support as United States of America?

PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP: Well, I expected that we've gotten along with the Kurds for a long time. So I expected that.

UNIDENTIFIED REPORTER: Another question what we — what would be your reaction if the Iranian people rise up against their regime during a ceasefire, Mr. President?

TRUMP: Well, they should do it. But again, the consequences are great. I mean, they were told you — if you protest, you will be shot immediately. You saw what happened to the young wrestler. He was a great champion, by the way. He's a great wrestler, one of the top in the world. And he and his two friends were hung, and all they did was say a little bit about liberty. They wanted liberty and they were violently executed. But the number is up to probably 45,000 people were killed. So, you know, when somebody stays in a house, when they know if they walk out of the house to protest, they'll be immediately shot and killed. And they issued that, you know, that was publicly issued. It's not a secret. That's why so many people say, oh, why are you doing this? We can't let Iran have a nuclear weapon. You know, we got regime change. We do. We're dealing with a much different regime than before. We're dealing with different people. They're smarter. I think they're sharper and far less radical. We have regime change, but we didn't do this for regime change. We did it for the fact — and my — my view is very simple — I saw somebody said, "oh, he doesn't have a plan." I have the best plan of all, but I'm not going to tell you what my plan is. You know, they want me to say, here's my plan. We're going to attack at 947 in the morning, and then we're going to do this, and then we're going to. And if you don't do that, they say, I have a plan. These people know what the plan is. Everybody here knows what the plan is, but it's very unfair to say, you know, because I don't mind being insulted. I've been insulted for many years by the — by the fake news. But you can't — it's so bad for the people that are so you just saw two great. And John Ratcliffe, three unbelievable people. They have a plan. Every — every single thing has been thought out by all of us, but I can't reveal the plan to the media. So, you know, but we're just thrilled by the success of this operation. [TO BRUCE] Yes, please.

MARY BRUCE: Thank you, Mr. President. You've said Iranians would be mad if you stopped these attacks, but why would they want you to blow up their infrastructure to — to cut off their power? Wouldn't that be punishing Iranians for the actions of the regime?

TRUMP: They would be willing to — they would be willing and it's suffering — they would be willing to suffer that in order to have freedom. The Iranians have — and we've had numerous intercepts — please keep bombing bombs that are dropping near their homes. Please keep

bombing. Do it. And these are people that are living with the bombs are exploding. And when we leave and we're not hitting those areas, they're saying, please come back, come back, come back. These are the people.

BRUCE: [INAUDIBLE]

TRUMP: I don't know what they do. All I can tell you is they want freedom. They have lived in a world that you know nothing about. It's a violent, horrible world where if you protest, you are shot. Remember the great woman protests where they had 400,000 500,000 women and they were all enthused and they were going to protest. And everybody said, 'oh, the regime's going to come to an end.' And then all of a sudden, boom, boom, five, six different areas. A woman would go down right between the eyes. They had snipers, they had five snipers. That's all it took. And those four or 500,000 women said, "oh my God, what's that?" "Oh, look over there. What's that?" A woman shot right between the eyes. And after five or six of them go down, then you start hearing the purr through the vast number of people. And then they said, "oh my God, who would do that?" And they're incredible people, but they've lived so horribly. They've lived so horribly. You know, Iran was a great country. If you go back 25 years ago or so, the Persian people, they're incredible smart, brilliant, actually. And I know so many. I know coming from New York originally, I know so many people from Iran. They're incredible people, incredible energy and, and very, very brilliant people. And — but when you're standing in a group and protesting and you have a woman, in the case of a woman, remember the great woman march, everybody was saying, "oh, this is the end of the country." And then snipers selectively picked. Every single one was shot right between the eyes from a long distance. They were on top of buildings. Nobody even knew where they were. Where are they coming from? This wasn't like a machine gun, which is also very bad. They've done that too. They did that recently. This was snipers sitting on the top of buildings aiming and hitting women. And when they see people go down and all of a sudden there's a riot in the reverse direction and they never came out again. And a lot of the — the news doesn't talk about they talk about, oh, women's rights. You want to see women's rights, you're not going to see it there. It's amazing when I see some of the stupid people like AOC plus three, all that group they talk about, oh, freedom for Iran. They don't tell you the real facts. Women, men, gays. How about gays for Iran? They kill the gays, they throw them off buildings. So, I wonder what — what's going on? I can only say this. They want us to keep bombing, even if it jeopardizes, because their life is in much greater danger. They want freedom for Iran, but it's very hard for them to protest. I actually tell them, I said, don't go out. I fully understand. Nobody in this room would go out. I don't think there's any because frankly, it's not a question of bravery. We're all brave, right? You're brave. I'm brave. We're all brave, but we're also intelligent. If you have people shooting at you, expert shots with the best rifles you can get and hitting you right between the eyes every single time, and you're looking here and you're seeing and you're looking here, you're out of there. I don't care who you are. [TO MEREDITH] Please.

MARK MEREDITH: Mark Meredith, Fox News.

TRUMP: I know that.

MEREDITH: Oh, thank you so much.

TRUMP: How would I not know that? Go ahead.

MEREDITH: America's Watching!

TRUMP: Good job.

MEREDITH: Can we go back to the weekend? First off, was everyone on board with the operation or were there people that were trying to talk you out of going through with the operation this weekend?

TRUMP: Not everybody was on board.

MEREDITH: Somebody else within?

TRUMP: No. There was military people, very professional, that preferred not doing it. These two were totally on board, which was very important. They weren't. I would have had a little difficulty. But no, there were military people that said, you just don't do this. You don't go into the heart of a very powerful military. You know, this is, hey, you have countries and countries. You have some countries where military is not their strong suit. This whole thing is militarized like nobody's ever seen before. Half the people are wearing uniforms. And, you know, we had, we had people within the military. Usually, it's not done. That's one of the reasons, you know, I was surprised somebody said it's the only time it's ever been done. I said, that's not possible, but it is possible because you're going into hundreds of thousands of soldiers along the path. I mean, look at some of the helicopters how they got hit. So yeah, there were people within the military that said it's a wise — and don't forget, how many men did you send all together, approximately for the operation?

JOINT CHIEFS CHAIRMAN GENERAL DAN CAINE: I'd love to keep that a secret.

[ROOM LAUGHS]

TRUMP: Okay. Well, we — but I will tell you the number. I'll keep it a secret. But it was hundreds and hundreds of these people. It's pretty good. Is he central? Is he central casting? But hundreds of people went into this journey. Hundreds of people could have been killed. Forget about the equipment. A lot of equipment. Nobody cares. Hundreds of people could have been killed. So, we had people that were within the military that said, this is not a wise — and I understood that, but I decided to do it.

MEREDITH: Was there a point that they were going to that you were thinking there's too much on the line. And somebody was saying, maybe we abort this now and wait. I mean, given the resources, like the general said, it seems like there was so much on the line here. You must have been thinking this could have completely changed the next few —

TRUMP: So, the first one, which was in many ways as dangerous as the second. I guess it gets because we're flying over daylight. You know, we're the best at the world at night. We have goggles that nobody. We have goggles. I've tried them. Unbelievable. I see better with the goggles at night than I see without them during daylight, I mean daylight today. We have a beautiful day, you see just as well with goggles. In many ways, it's enhanced. So, we have the best in the world. So, it's much safer for us to — for us to do it at night whereas other people, no other country has that capability. They don't have the they don't have that particular piece of equipment like we do. But when I was told flying and in daylight, I think we flew seven hours over Iran. And that's a long time over unbelievably hostile territory where they have nothing but weapons, we took out their anti-aircraft, which is great. We took out their radar, which is great. We took out a lot, but they still have, you know, what hit this one was a shoulder — handheld, shoulder missile, heat-seeking missile. So, it's not like, you know, they're totally whatever, but — but, and they have probably a little luck because you got to get lucky. But they shot it and it got sucked in right by the engine. But these guys were out of there. They were great. Their timing was great. But no, I was told that this is a very dangerous mission. I understand they didn't say it's a foolish mission. They said, you know, we're going to be sacrificing hundreds of people do this. This is — I mean, you have tankers that are flying over this area so that they could — the flight was so long they had to refuel. It's a very dangerous mission. I just felt it was worth it. If you would have told me that we would have been successful, gotten both, and nobody was even essentially injured, I would have said that would be impossible. [TO HALPERN] Yeah, please.

WEIJIA JIANG: Mr. President, thank you very much.

TRUMP [TO HALPERN]: You. [TO JIANG] I'll come back.

JIANG: Okay.

JARED HALPERN: Given that you are now dealing, you say, with a more reasonable, less extreme leadership in Iran, what does that mean for the protesters, for the human rights movement in that country after this conflict? What's your expectation?

TRUMP: Yeah, if they assume control, if we do something and they assume control, I think it's very positive, a big step. I don't think you'd see the radicalization that you have seen in the last look what happened. I mean, women are being executed because they're not properly clothed. They say they're not properly clothed and they execute the women. They absolutely — they shoot them right on the street. No, you have a much different group of people. Now, I'm not saying we are dealing with them. Essentially, they have till 800 tomorrow night, eastern time, but we are dealing with them. I think it's going well. Mr. Witkoff is here and JD is involved in the dealing. Mr. Witkoff is sitting right here and I think it's going fine, but we'll have to see. You have to understand, we've been dealing with these people for 47 years. I'm standing here with a much more powerful Iran — as of a month ago, not anymore. Right now, they are decapitated. But I'm standing here a month ago with a much more powerful Iran than it was at any point during 47 years. This should have been handled by seven presidents, a lot of presidents. And those presidents are saying now, every one of them to their friends, we should have done this a long time ago. So, it's not something I like doing. It's very dangerous. And we're getting them at the

height of — of their strength. If I didn't terminate the Barack Hussein Obama/Iran nuclear deal, they would have had a don't forget, that was a path to a nuclear weapon. Remember this. He chose Iran over Israel, pure and simple. How — in — how Israel can vote for a Democrat is — if you're Jewish in New York City or any place else in this country, and how you can vote for a Democrat is unbelievable because he chose Iran, a very hostile Iran. Remember when he filled up a 757 with cash, billions of dollars of cash, and he sent it over to them, then they gave them tens of billions of dollars? He chose Iran over Israel. And really, the Arab world, if you look because, you know, the other Saudi Arabia, Qatar, UAE, I mean, you take a look. I mean, I can add Kuwait and I can add Bahrain and you can add others. He chose such an unlikely candidate. Nobody could believe it. Frankly, if you're going to choose between Iraq and Iran, he should have chosen he should have befriended Iraq. He went in the exact opposite direction of — of all thinking, and he made a terrible mistake. But that was a road to a nuclear weapon. And when I terminated that, everyone said, oh, he terminated it. It was one of the best things we ever did because he had a road to a nuclear weapon. And it was it was a very short term deal. You know, countries don't do ten-year deals. Countries do hundreds of years. You don't do a ten-year deal. For a country, you need — this isn't — you're a landlord, you're renting a store on — on a certain street and you give somebody a five-year or ten-year lease. This is a country. It was a short term deal. It was ready to expire. I terminated it before it expired, took a lot of heat. And it was one of the best things I ever did, because he would have had a nuclear weapon. Then he would have had another nuclear weapon, had those beautiful B-2 bombers not gone in eight months ago and obliterated that site. And by the way, the word is obliteration. CNN said, well, maybe it wasn't complete. It was so complete that they still haven't been able to get it. It was obliteration. But if we didn't hit them, that was a courageous decision too, because we had all those planes flying in at night with very little cover, unbelievable stealth planes, and they were able to do their job. If we didn't do that, Iran would have had a nuclear weapon at a high level, either one of those two instances. And if they did, in my opinion, I told this to Bibi Netanyahu yesterday, Israel would have been extinguished. Large portions of the Middle East would have been extinguished, whether it's Saudi Arabia, Qatar, UAE, or others. And you saw that with thousands of missiles raining down upon them, they didn't think they were going to be hit. They thought they'd be watching us fight. And all of a sudden, UAE got hit by 1,500 missiles. He would have taken them out also, and they were powerful. If I didn't come along and terminate the Obama deal, which was terrible. The Iran nuclear deal was a road to a nuclear weapon, a big one, unlimited legally. I terminated it without even much thought. It was so easy, I terminated that and then the B-2 bombers and I did one other thing. I had killed Qassem Soleimani, who was an evil genius. And the reason I did it, I heard he was going to knock out five of our military bases. And had he lived, I believe we would be fighting perhaps a different Iran right now because because he's never he's never been replaced. You know, and I also I did one other, but this one was not picked up, Osama bin Laden. If you read my book, I said, you got to take him out one year before the World Trade Center came down. So, I wish you'd read the book. But you — as a president, to be a good president, I believe you have to have good instincts. And a lot of this is instinct.

(...)

2:11:39 p.m.

1 minute and 52 seconds

ZOLAN KANNO-YOUNGS: Deliberate attacks on civilian infrastructure violate the Geneva Conventions and international law.

TRUMP: Who are you with? Who are you with?

KANNO-YOUNGS: I'm with *The New York Times*. Zolan from *The New York Times*. Are you concerned —

TRUMP: Uh-huh. The failing, the failing *New York Times*.

KANNO-YOUNGS: — are you concerned —

TRUMP: Circulation way down at *The New York Times*.

KANNO-YOUNGS: — are you concerned that your threat to bomb power plants and bridges amount to war crimes?

TRUMP: No, not at all. No, no, I'm not. I hope I don't have to do it. But again, I just said 47 years they've been negotiating with these people, they're great negotiators.

KANNO-YOUNGS: [Inaudible]. But why would that attack not violate international law?

TRUMP: And because they're not going to have a nuclear weapon, and if somebody that takes my place someday is weak and ineffective, which possibly that will happen because we had numerous presidents that were weak, ineffective, and afraid of Iran. We're never going to let Iran have a nuclear weapon. And if you think it's okay for people that are sick of mind, that are tough, smart and sick, really sick ideological, you know, from — from a policy standpoint, from a standpoint, any which way you want to say mentally, these are disturbed people. If you think I'm going to allow them and powerful and rich to have a nuclear weapon, you can tell your friends at *The New York Times* not going to happen.

KANNO-YOUNGS: Even if it means violating international law? Even if it means violating international law?

TRUMP: Quiet, quiet, quiet. You no longer have credibility with *The New York Times* because *The New York Times* said, 'oh, Trump won't win the election.' And I won in a landslide. I won every swing state. *New York Times* said, 'oh, Trump won't win the election.' *New York Times* has no credibility. The credibility they have is it used to be all the news that's fit to print a great — the Old Gray Lady, it was great. But they're running on past fumes and you can't keep doing that. You have to be able to give the correct news. And people like you who I know are fake. You're fake.

(...)

2:14:53 p.m.

2 minutes and 43 seconds

TRUMP: CNN, fake news.

KRISTEN HOLMES: Are you willing to make a deal that does not include reopening the Strait of Hormuz, or is that now a top priority?

TRUMP: I would say it's a very big priority because you see that's — that's one thing that's a little different than other things. We can bomb the hell out of them. We can knock them out for a loop. But to close the Strait, all you need is one terrorist that somehow has a truck loaded with. Because you can carry them in trucks, large trucks, a water mine, drop them in the water. And now you tell people that own ships that cost \$1 billion to don't worry about the mine. You can do that even just by saying, we put mines in the water. So, it's not like the rest. We can knock out their military. We already have. We've knocked out their navy, we've knocked out their air force completely. We knocked out 158 ships in three days. We've knocked out even their mine droppers. They don't have any mind droppers anymore, but they put them on other boats and they could drop them. I'm not even sure they have any mines there, by the way. I'm not sure. I'm — personally, they say there might be a — I don't know, I don't know, I think there might be none because they're very good bullshit artists. That's why, for 47 years, they've been bullshitting other presidents and they haven't done the job. And people are living in hell. You live in that country. They're living in hell. No, I think that 47 years of this stuff is long enough. They're at the weakest point they've ever been. They have no navy. They have no air force. They have no anti-aircraft weaponry. They have no radar. They have no communication. In fact, the biggest problem we have in our negotiation is that they can't communicate. I said to Steve, what are they saying? Sir, they can't communicate. They have no method of communication. So we're doing — we're communicating like they used to communicate 2,000 years ago with children, bringing a note back and forth. They have no communication. But all I want to see is I want to have a safe world, and you're not going to have a safe world. Israel will be gone, the Middle East will be gone, and then they're coming for Europe. And I have to tell you, I'm very disappointed in NATO. Very. I think that NATO, I think it's a mark on NATO that will never disappear, never disappear in my mind. You know, they're coming to see me on Wednesday. They're going to say, oh, we'll do this. We'll do that. Now they all of a sudden want to send things, you know. But they said it loud and clear at the beginning when I spoke to U.K., of all I would have said, they would have been the first because they've been there, the oldest. And I say, yeah, I'd love to have a little help. I said, no sir, we'd rather wait till you win. I said, I don't need help after we win. They have two old broken aircraft carriers. Barely work. I said, I guess we can use them. Who the hell knows? I called the general. He didn't even want them. He said, we don't really need them. We got — we got the SS Abraham Lincoln, sir. We don't need them. You know, we have in terms of technology, we had one day, 101 missiles going at 2,700 miles an hour aimed at the Abraham Lincoln, 101 missiles. Out of 101 missiles, 101 missiles were shot down. Unbelievable technology. Ten years ago, five years ago. I don't know if that would have been possible, but ten years ago, that wouldn't have been that wouldn't have been possible. 101 missiles heading to a ship that's not that far off the coast. And out of the 101 missiles, we shot down all 101. We have weaponry. The Patriots are unbelievable. We have weaponry. That's unbelievable.

(....)

2:24:52 p.m.

7 minutes and 38 seconds

WEIJIA JIANG: Just to clarify, in order for Iran to successfully meet your deadline tomorrow, do they have to make a deal, open the Strait, or both?

TRUMP: We have to have a deal that's acceptable to me and part of the deal's going to be we want free traffic of oil and everything else.

[REPORTERS SHOUTING]

NATALIE ALLISON: Thank you very much. You said, "glory be to God in this conflict." Do you believe that God supports the United States actions in this war and have you sought His direction?

TRUMP: I do, because God is good and I — because God is good, and God wants to see people taken care of. God doesn't like what's happening. I don't like what's happening. Everyone says I enjoy it. I don't enjoy this. I don't enjoy it. These two guys don't enjoy it. You know, people say, "oh boy, they're so tough." They don't want — they don't like, I don't like seeing people killed. I've ended eight wars. Nobody's ever done it. The person who won the Nobel Prize came to me and said, you deserve the Nobel Prize. She announced that when they announced, they said — goes to Maria, she's a great person, really a good person — she said, "no, no, no, this is ridiculous. They gave me the Nobel Prize. President Trump ended eight wars." I could go over every one of them, including India and Pakistan, where the prime minister of Pakistan said President Trump saved from 30 to 50 million lives. That makes me much happier than what we're doing right now. That makes me much happier. We have one more to end, by the way. [REPORTERS SHOUTING] [TO KEMP] Okay, we'll —

DANNY KEMP: Mr. President, you called — yesterday in your Truth Social, you called the Iranians crazy bastards.

TRUMP: True.

KEMP: What is your response to critics who say —

TRUMP: I don't care about critics.

KEMP: — what is your response to critics who say that it is your mental health that should perhaps be examined as this war continues?

TRUMP: I haven't heard that, but if that's the case, you're going to have to have more people like me because our country was being ripped off on trade, on everything for many years until I came along. So, if that's the case, you're going to have to have more people [examined]. [TO

BURNS] Dasha. [REPORTERS SHOUTING] Dasha, go.

DASHA BURNS: You said that very little is off limits in Iran as far as targeting —

TRUMP: Yeah.

BURNS: — including power plants, bridges. You've mentioned those.

TRUMP: Very little is off limits.

BURNS: Are there certain kinds of civilian targets, though — I'm thinking, schools or hospitals

—

TRUMP: I don't want to tell you that. I don't want to tell you that.

BURNS: — that you would say is off limits?

TRUMP: We have — we have a plan because of the power of our military, where every bridge in Iran will be decimated by 1200 tomorrow night, where every power plant in Iran will be out of business, burning, exploding, and never to be used again. I mean, complete demolition by 1200, and it will happen over a period of four hours if we wanted to. We don't want that to happen. We may even get involved with helping them rebuild their nation. And you know what? If that's the case, the last thing we want to do is start with power plants, which are among the most expensive things, And bridges. You saw the bridge — the bridge one. We were very close to a deal. And then I got a call from Mr. Witkoff, Mr. Kushner and JD saying, I think they're breaking the deal. I said, tell them that's okay, don't worry about it, but tell them to look out their window and watch. And within 45 minutes, I gave the order to knock out the biggest bridge. I gave the order knock out the biggest bridge in, I believe, the Middle East, but the biggest bridge in Iran. And within ten minutes after I gave that order, that bridge was — was over. So, so do I want to do that? No.

BURNS: [Inaudible]

TRUMP: Do I want to destroy their infrastructure? No. It will take them 100 years to rebuild. Right now, if we left today, it would take them 20 years to rebuild their country, and it would never be as good as it was. And the only way they're going to be able to rebuild their country is to utilize the genius of the United States of America.

[REPORTERS SHOUTING]

JULIA MANCHESTER: Mr. President, on NATO, you voiced your displeasure with NATO in the past. Is there a danger to the U.S. not being the de facto of the leader of the alliance and then other powers within the alliance then getting the decision making when it comes to wars and nuclear weapons?

TRUMP: No, it's not a danger. NATO's — look, we went to NATO. I didn't ask very strongly. I just said, "hey, if you want to help, great." "No, no, no, we will not help." I said, "that's all right. You don't want to help." Because I've always said NATO is a paper tiger. See, NATO's a paper tiger. Putin's not afraid of NATO. Putin's afraid of us, very afraid of us. And he's explained it to me a lot of times. I got to know him very well. I know him very well. NATO is a paper tiger. NATO is us. And when we needed them — we didn't need them, by the way. We didn't need them, obviously, because they haven't helped at all. Just the opposite. They've actually gone out of their way not to help. They didn't even want to give us landing strips. Think of it. And it's not just NATO. You know who else didn't help us? South Korea didn't help us. You know who else didn't help us? Australia didn't help us. You know who else didn't help us? Japan. We've got 50,000 soldiers in Japan to protect them from North Korea. We have 45,000 soldiers in South Korea to protect us from Kim Jong-un, who I get along with very well, as you know. Do you notice he said very nice things about me. He used to call Joe Biden a mentally retarded person, okay? So, don't tell me about your stuff. Joe Biden — he said he's a mentally retarded person. He was so nasty to Joe Biden. It was terrible. But to me, he likes Trump. And you notice how nice things are with North Korea. It's very nice. But we have 45,000 people, soldiers in harm's way and right next to Kim Jong-un with a lot of nuclear weapons, 45 — which should have never happened if a certain president — I'm not going to mention this President because I happen to like him, believe it or not — but if a certain President did his job, Kim Jong-un would not have nuclear weapons right now. But they're all afraid to do their job properly. But just to conclude and just to finish, Japan didn't help us, Australia didn't help us, South Korea didn't help us. And then you get to NATO, and NATO didn't help us. There were some countries that did. Now countries that have been good. Now, you could also say there got to be a little bit more involved because they're in the territory. But Saudi Arabia has been excellent. Qatar has been excellent. UAE has been excellent. Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman. I mean, Kuwait did shoot down three of our planes. The only planes really that we lost with friendly fire, they call it. I call it unfriendly fire. They, unfortunately, didn't know how to use our — our great patriots. The pilot said, what kind of missiles coming at us? Patriot. Boom. They got out because they know a Patriot never misses. So, they had beautiful Patriots. There were planes heading in their direction. Unfortunately, they decided to shoot those planes. They were our planes. So, no, NATO is a paper tiger now. He's coming to see me on Wednesday. As you know, he's a wonderful guy. Secretary General is great. And Mark Rutte — he's a great person. But he's got — and you know, it all began with if you want to know the truth? Greenland. We want Greenland. They don't want to give it to us. And I said, "bye bye."