

Audio file

[AtWarwithTrumplsraelandIran.mp3](#)

Transcript

Speaker 1

A short time ago, the United States military began major combat operations in Iran.

Speaker 2

Operation Epic Fury, unleashing the firepower of the U.S. and Israel.

Speaker 3

This is not only an act of aggression. It is a war crime and a crime against humanity.

Speaker 2

American and Israeli jets have dropped thousands of bombs on Iran.

Speaker 4

It's catastrophic. The barrage of attacks and the level of devastation is unbearable.

Speaker 2

In response, Iran has fired ballistic missiles and drones at Israel. Countries across the Gulf dragged in, with thousands of Britons caught up in the conflict.

Speaker 5

Then we saw them overhead. We saw rockets, missiles over our heads, being shot down.

Speaker 2

With the U.S. and Israel intensifying attacks, how will it end?

Speaker 6

Once you kick off a war like this, you don't have full control over where it's going to end up.

Speaker 2

So what does this war mean for the Middle East and for all of us? Saturday morning in Iran's capital city, Tehran, the start of the Iranian working week. Then, Israel struck. The office of the supreme leader, Ayatollah Khamenei, was targeted by around 30 Israeli long-range missiles. Israeli intelligence had tracked his exact movements down to the minute.

Speaker 7

Intelligence surfaced that Supreme Leader Khamenei was meeting with a large number of his aides at his palace during the daylight hours.

Speaker 6

I think the Americans and the Israelis were able to piece together data from all manner of sources inside Iran, of course, mobile phones. And they tapped into the traffic cameras in the streets of Tehran to monitor the movements of regime leaders.

Speaker 2

The Israelis had also created a trail of misinformation to lull the Iranians into a false sense of security.

Speaker 7

It appears that the Iranian leadership was fooled by the Israeli leadership and Israeli generals, who made it look like they had gone home for the weekend.

Speaker 8

Yes, we seize the opportunity. What we're basically saying is that there's no safe haven for you. We will find you all over the world, and we will hit you.

Speaker 2

The Supreme Leader was killed, along with other top officials. The attacks didn't stop there.

Speaker 1

The United States military is undertaking a massive and ongoing operation to prevent this very wicked, radical dictatorship from threatening America and our core national security interests.

Speaker 2

On the first day of the war, a missile hit a girls' school in southern Iran. Iranian authorities reported 168 deaths. Iran blames the U.S. and Israel. Israel says it wasn't carrying out operations in the area. Footage verified by the BBC shows a U.S. missile hitting a military base 600 meters from the school. President Trump had previously

denied hitting the school, saying from what he'd seen, Iran was responsible. His administration said it had been investigating.

Speaker 5

We, of course, never target civilian targets, but we're taking a look and investigating them.

Speaker 2

Iran retaliated with a volley of drones and missiles aimed at Israel, which was also hit by rockets from Iran's ally, Hezbollah, in Lebanon. Israel struck back hard. As the conflict escalated, Iran also launched attacks on US allies across the Gulf, including Qatar, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, and Bahrain. In Dubai, thousands of Britons who are on holiday or live there have also been caught up in the war. Go, go, go! Get in, get inside. This footage was filmed by Trevor and Lisa Davies from Tamworth. They were in Dubai for Lisa's 60th birthday.

Speaker 5

We were ran by the hall, just chilling out, and then we heard these... these loud explosions. And then we heard another one and then another one. The next thing we know is then we saw them overhead. We saw rockets, missiles over our heads being shot down. Oh my God. Debris was coming down and some of it landed in the hotel fountain. But at that point we were all running for cover, for shelter.

Speaker 2

Dubai Airport was then hit and the airspace was closed. So like countless others, they were now stuck. I'd managed to get hold of Trevor and Lisa, but our call didn't last long.

Speaker 5

But that was nothing to watch. They've frozen.

Speaker 2

Wait a minute, I don't know if you can hear us, guys, but the line's frozen. Just a sec. Do we know why that is? What's happening, Trevor? What's happening?

Speaker 5

We've just had an emergency alert come through the phone from the government.

Speaker 2

Get somewhere safe and call us back. Good luck. This is the second time in less than a year the US and Israel have joined forces to bomb Iran. They suspected the regime was

getting close to making nuclear weapons. Last June, Israel led an assault on three key nuclear sites, backed by the U.S.

Speaker 1

Iran's key nuclear enrichment facilities have been completely and totally obliterated.

Speaker 2

If President Trump was right, why the need for more strikes now?

Speaker 3

The nuclear program was heard very much, but was not obliterated, as President Trump has said. And since the end of the war in June, the Iranians started, as they proclaimed openly, to work 24/7 in order to enlarge the number of launchers and missiles that they have.

Speaker 2

In February this year, Iran agreed to talks with US envoy Steve Witkoff about its nuclear program. The aim to get it to reduce its stocks of enriched uranium.

Speaker 3

We just heard from the envoy of the president, Steve Witkov, that said that during the meetings with the Iranians, they have mentioned to him that they still have enriched uranium to 60%, which can allow 10 to 11 nuclear devices.

Speaker 2

While the talks were taking place, the president was deploying more warships to the Gulf. Fouad Izadi is an associate professor at Tehran University who has expressed support for Hamas and the October 7th attacks.

Speaker 3

Two weeks ago, Iran was negotiating in good faith. Iran was willing to give huge concessions, maybe because Iran was trying to avoid War. Trump was interested in having war. He was not interested in an agreement.

Speaker 6

It looked pretty clear to me that the Witkoff had expected the Iranians to just capitulate when they failed to do so. That led the Americans to conclude, well, this is the end of the negotiating process.

Speaker 2

Two days later, the bombs were launched. Then President Trump gave his justification for war.

Speaker 1

Our objective is to defend the American people by eliminating imminent threats from the Iranian regime.

Speaker 2

The U.S. administration didn't seek permission from Congress or the United Nations before the first strikes. It argued its actions were legal because Iran posed a direct threat.

Speaker 7

There really was an imminent threat. And that was an enormous surge in its missile program that would have made it so formidable that it wouldn't have been possible to conduct a preemptive attack like we're doing right now.

Speaker 2

Was there an imminent threat that justified the start of this war?

Speaker 6

I have not seen any sense of an imminent threat. I don't think the intelligence shows that the Iranian regime had restarted those dangerous bits of their nuclear program. This is an unnecessary war. It was not required for American or even Israeli defense interests.

Speaker 2

Israel has long called for a change to the leadership of Iran, which has said the state of Israel shouldn't exist.

Speaker 8

We have a window of opportunity right now to boost and hit the bad guys and hopefully change their leadership.

Speaker 2

So it was about regime change, simple as that.

Speaker 8

Well, we hope so. From our perspective, that regime has to be replaced by peace-seeking leadership.

Speaker 2

In Israel, families are counting the cost, too. Beit Shemesh is a city southwest of Jerusalem. An Iranian missile destroyed a synagogue and nearby houses in this Orthodox community the day after the war began. At the time, Avi Yohana and his wife were taking shelter underground. Nine people were killed in the missile strike. Avi's brother-in-law was one of them. Rabbi Yitzhak Biton's three children were also killed.

Speaker 5

We should.

Speaker 2

Israel has also suffered civilian casualties. The missiles that Iran has fired at Israel have caused deaths also.

Speaker 3

So they can stop the war today. They started it. All deaths, whether Israelis or Americans or others, Iranians, are the responsibilities of Netanyahu and Trump. They can-- they can stop it today.

Speaker 2

Access to film inside Iran is extremely restricted by the regime. Colleagues from the BBC Persian Service have helped us contact an Iranian man willing to tell us what life is like. We're not showing his face.

Speaker 4

It's catastrophic. The barrage of attacks and the level of devastation that it brings about is unbearable. It's just carpet bombing whenever it's possible. It's loads and loads of civilian casualties. And it's horrifying. It's devastation for the sake of it. It's that try to cripple Iran for good.

Speaker 2

More than 1,300 civilians have been killed in Iran so far. Iranian civilians are dying in these attacks by Israel. This is your responsibility.

Speaker 8

The big difference between the terrorist regime and Israel and the United States on that behalf is that we have no intention of killing any, God forbid, civilians. God forbid. We do-- we go out of our way to make sure that, uh, we just target the bad guys.

Speaker 2

At the turn of the year, just two months before this war began, Iranians were taking to the streets to protest over rising prices.

Speaker 9

It resulted in a brutal crackdown. President Trump waded into these protests, promising Iranians that help was on its way. And I think those were very fateful words.

Speaker 1

We're watching it very closely. If they start killing people like they have in the past, I think they're going to get hit very hard by the United States.

Speaker 10

I think it certainly did raise significant hopes, bring people on the streets. The fundamental problem at the time was that the U.S. didn't actually have sufficient military assets, even if it wanted to provide help in the form of bombing the regime, of going after regime targets.

Speaker 2

The figures are disputed, but regime forces are estimated to have killed at least 6,500 protesters. Nilu has family in Iran. Her boyfriend lives there and took part in the protests.

Speaker 11

This is my boyfriend's leg after being shot twice in the protests. So this is a video, one of the many videos that surfaced from the protests. And from descriptions from my family and my boyfriend, I think that might be my boyfriend standing.

Speaker 2

Right in the middle.

Speaker 11

Right in the middle with the flag.

Speaker 2

Her boyfriend's recovered from his injuries. Since the war started, the regime has restricted the internet, and she's only been able to reach him once.

Speaker 11

I spoke to him yesterday evening. He managed to call me for about 45 seconds, really. So I haven't been able to know much, really. It's just kind of a, I'm okay, I miss you, and I love you kind of situation. We just want freedom, and we want hope, and we want Iranians' voices inside Iran, our families, our friends, and even strangers, their voices to be heard and to be spread.

Speaker 2

Iran's response to the U.S. and Israeli attacks has been to lash out at some of its neighbors, particularly those hosting American military bases in the Gulf. Iran has targeted an oil refinery in Saudi Arabia and Qatar's industrial area. Liquefied natural gas production was halted, something Qatar said could bring down the world's economies.

Speaker 9

Because Iran does not have anywhere close to equal military capabilities as the United States or Israel. It wants to regionalize this war, to spread the pressure, even all the way to Europe and the United States, at the petrol pump, so that everyone feels the pain of what they see as an unjust war.

Speaker 5

For a country like the UK, that's going to show up in higher costs for businesses and households. You might see hits to confidence, so you might see a slower growth or maybe falling household living standards. If this conflict ends quickly, there will be disruption, but it won't be catastrophic. If this drags on and we do see a step change in the price of oil and gas and energy and food, that will clearly have consequences.

Speaker 2

Ships can no longer pass safely through the Middle East's most important waterway, the Strait of Hormuz. Iran says it's already hit several tankers and has threatened to set alight any vessel passing through.

Speaker 3

Iranian military has said that they have not closed straits. They have encouraged ships not to go through, because this is a war zone. You know, missiles fly everywhere. And they have claimed hitting, I think, two or three American ships.

Speaker 2

Well, then it has a huge economic effect, does it not? And isn't this what Iran is trying to do, to put pressure on?

Speaker 3

It has economic effects. Who to blame? Trump and Netanyahu, they started this war.

Speaker 5

We decided we're going to go to the airport and take off chances.

Speaker 2

It's been six days since Trevor and Lisa Davies found themselves in a war zone. In the small hours of last Friday morning, they finally arrive back home from Dubai.

Speaker 5

Moving to the bank to be back to get on that flight and took off. We checked on the website to see whether the flight was still going, and we had to make a decision that if it was still going to go, do we jump on it and risk being blown up out of the sky? We thought we'd got to get out of there and quick. We took that gamble. That's everybody else who's in the hotel, wanting exactly the same.

Speaker 2

As the war widened, so did a rift between Western allies. At the start of the conflict, the Prime Minister, Sakir Starmer, refused to allow the US to use UK bases for the first attacks.

Speaker 6

We all remember the mistakes of Iraq, and we have learned those lessons.

Speaker 5

Any UK actions must always have a lawful basis and a viable, thought-through plan. Why is it that under this prime minister, international law always seems to be at odds with our national interests?

Speaker 2

President Trump wasn't happy either.

Speaker 1

This is not Winston Churchill that we're dealing with.

Speaker 2

President Trump has said we're not dealing with a Winston Churchill. He's being pretty outspoken in his criticism.

Speaker 6

Well, we're not dealing with a Franklin Roosevelt. So it's, you know, it takes two to tango.

Speaker 2

After RAF Akrotiri in Cyprus was hit by an Iranian drone, the Prime Minister ordered more military hardware to the region. He's been accused of being too slow. President Trump says he doesn't need people to join wars after he's already won.

Speaker 10

Once the war started, very quickly, Prime Minister Starmer did come out and say, look, we will allow for defensive support to especially our Gulf allies. The basing that is needed, it's had a huge impact on the war, frankly, because it's meant that the U.S. can take much shorter flights, not having to cross the ocean to get to the region. I think, ultimately, the U.K. and the U.S. will be able to overcome this, but clearly, this has thrown a wrench in the works.

Speaker 2

In America, messaging about the consequences for Iran of defying President Trump couldn't be clearer.

Speaker 1

And I'm once again calling on all members of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard, the military and the police to lay down their arms. They're only going to be killed. And now is the time to stand up for the Iranian people and help take back your country. You're going to have a chance after all these years to take back your country. Accept immunity. We'll give you immunity.

Speaker 2

The US says it's been systematically destroying Iran's military.

Speaker 5

Only the United States of America could lead this, only us. But when you add the Israeli Defense Forces, a devastatingly capable force, the combination is sheer destruction for our radical Islamist Iranian adversaries. They are toast, and they know it. Wake up, Daddy's home.

Speaker 2

Last week, the White House gave this war the Hollywood treatment. It posted this video called Justice the American Way. War.

Speaker 5

Now end this! Flawless victory.

Speaker 3

Disgusting. These are not mature people. They shouldn't be having the world's biggest military under their command. These people, if they're successful with what they are doing to Iran, you are not going to have world peace for many, many years to come.

Speaker 10

Among President Trump's most greatest skills are that he is a phenomenal marketer. And I think his view is fundamentally that in order to have success, you have to convince the people, and this is part of that.

Speaker 2

For Iranians, the war is brutally real. At the border with Turkey, some are already getting out. Sohelo fled Tehran. With no internet back home, it's the first time she's seen footage of the strikes. My last sequence was her name, Madame Birun, accident of the Amazon. President Trump has demanded unconditional surrender from Iran. and wanted a say in who should become its next leader.

Speaker 3

You think that's legal under international law? Why would the president of a country should be able to choose the leader of another country? If you allow Trump to do that, then he would want to determine who's UK's next prime minister. He needs to be stopped. He's on a rampage. This is not reasonable.

Speaker 2

The president is also still urging the Iranian people to rise up and take control of their country. But we've seen messages from the regime warning some who've already protested. Individuals will be dealt with decisively as Israeli soldiers. You talk about people rising up, but realistically, they're afraid to.

Speaker 7

We'll have to see how it plays out. My hope is that there will be massive and sustained demonstrations that the regime cannot put down. I think it's too early to tell how this is going to go.

Speaker 9

Ill-conceived, poorly planned, no day after. That seems to be the direction of travel. And for Iranians that have been agitating and protesting and wanting something different after five decades of the Islamic Republic, this does not bode well for them.

Speaker 2

Iran has now appointed its new supreme leader, Ayatollah Khomeini's son, Moshtaba. If you don't approve of whoever is chosen as successor, will Israel kill that person too?

Speaker 8

As long as we see threat, current or future threat, from that leadership, we will take them on. We will never allow anybody else in Iran to try to destroy the state of Israel.

Speaker 2

So when you say take them on, you mean kill them?

Speaker 8

They want to kill us, we'll kill them first.

Speaker 2

The Iranian president has apologized for Iran hitting its neighbors, but the attacks continue. Across the region outside Iran, nearly 500 have been killed, including 400 in Lebanon from Israeli strikes. Seven US military personnel have also been killed. The UN has warned the conflict could spiral out of control.

Speaker 6

I think that's one of the things that we should have learned from the last 25 years, is that once you kick off a war like this, you don't have full control over where it's going to end up.

Speaker 2

But, ultimately, most predict it will be President Trump who decides when this latest crisis in the Middle East ends.

Speaker 9

President Trump, of course, would like to see the emergence of a submissive Iran, an Iranian leadership that will concede to whatever he demands.

Speaker 6

I think the reality is that they will want to keep going for a little while yet, but at some point, we'll wake up in the morning and discover that Trump has caught an end to this as suddenly as he called Assad to it.

Speaker 2

47 years ago, the Islamic Revolution put the Ayatollahs in charge. Since then, Iran has funded armed groups, fought proxy wars with its neighbors, and brutally repressed its own people. Now, under a hail of bombs and missiles, Iran is being told to change course. But can even the world's most powerful military make that happen?