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THE MIDDLE EAST AT A CRITICAL CROSSROADS

The Historic Tour of President Trump and Secretary Rubio in the Middle East

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A. INTRODUCTION

Samia Nakhoul and James Mackenzie published an article titled "Trump's Gulf tour reshapes Middle East diplomatic map" in Reuters on 19 May 2025. Extracts from this article are given below.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/trumps-gulf-tour-reshapes-middle-east-diplomatic-map-2025-05-18/>

"Trump's other key priority - expanding the Abraham Accords establishing diplomatic ties between Israel and Arab states to include Saudi Arabia - has also been blocked by Netanyahu's intransigence. Riyadh has made it clear it will not normalize relations with Israel until the war has ceased and there is a path to Palestinian statehood, something Netanyahu rejects.

Nothing captured Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's isolation more starkly this week than the image of U.S. President Donald Trump shaking hands with Syria's Islamist leader Ahmed al-Sharaa - a man Israel has branded 'an al-Qaeda terrorist in a suit'. 'He's got the potential. He's a real leader', Trump told reporters' after talks with Sharaa on Wednesday in Riyadh - a meeting brokered by his Saudi hosts, with whom the U.S. president agreed a slew of arms, business and technology deals.

Trump's whirlwind four-day tour of Saudi Arabia, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates this week was more than just a diplomatic spectacle marked by lucrative investments.

It sealed the emergence of a new Sunni-led Middle East order - one that eclipses Iran's shattered 'axis of resistance', and leaves Israel sidelined, according to three regional and two Western sources.

Amid growing irritation in Washington with Israel's failure to reach a ceasefire in Gaza, Trump's tour was a snub to Netanyahu, a close U.S. ally who was the first foreign leader to visit Washington after the president returned to office in January, the sources said.

The message was clear: in Trump's less ideological, more results-driven vision of Middle East diplomacy, Netanyahu could no longer count on unconditional U.S. support for his right-wing agenda, the sources said.

'This administration is very frustrated with Netanyahu and that frustration is showing,' said David Schenker."

Ali Harb published an article titled "Five key takeaways from US President Donald Trump's Middle East trip" in Al Jazeera on 16 May 2025. Extracts from this article are given below.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/trumps-gulf-tour-reshapes-middle-east-diplomatic-map-2025-05-18/>

"Three days, three countries, hundreds of billions of dollars in investments and a geopolitical shift in the United States's approach to the region: Donald Trump's trip to the Middle East has been eventful. Trump was visibly gleeful throughout the trip as he secured investments, criticised domestic political rivals and heaped praise on Gulf leaders. The word "historic" was used more than a few times by US officials to describe the visits.

With Trump returning to the White House, here are five key takeaways from his trip:

1. A rebuke of interventionism

Addressing an investment summit in Riyadh, Trump promoted a realist approach to the Middle East — one in which the US does not intervene in the affairs of other countries.

He took a swipe at neoconservatives who oversaw the US wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, as he lauded Gulf leaders for developing the region.

'This great transformation has not come from Western intervention or flying people in beautiful planes, giving you lectures on how to live and how to govern your own affairs' he said.

'The gleaming marbles of Riyadh and Abu Dhabi were not created by the so-called nation-builders, neo-cons or liberal nonprofits like those who spent trillions and trillions of dollars failing to develop Kabul, Baghdad, so many other cities'.

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2. Israel sidelined, but no Gaza solution

It is rare for US presidents to travel to the Middle East and not visit Israel, but Trump omitted the US ally from his itinerary as he toured the region.

Skipping Israel was seen as a reflection of the deteriorating ties between the US administration and the government of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

It remains unclear how Trump's decisions will affect the 'special relationship' between the two allies, but experts say it is becoming increasingly apparent that the US no longer views the Middle East solely through the lens of Israel.

'Is it a tactical problem for Netanyahu and the entire pro-Israel lobby? I think it is', Khaled Elgindy, a visiting scholar at Georgetown University, said of Trump's shift.

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3. Lifting Syria sanctions

In a move that surprised many observers, Trump announced from Riyadh that he will offer sanction relief to Syria, as the country emerges from a decade-plus civil war.

Trump also met with interim Syrian President Ahmad al-Sharaa and described him as a 'young, attractive guy'.

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4. A carrot and a stick for Iran

In Saudi Arabia, Trump declared that he wants a deal with Iran — and he wants it done quickly.

'We really want them to be a successful country', the US president said of Iran.

'We want them to be a wonderful, safe, great country, but they cannot have a nuclear weapon. This is an offer that will not last forever. The time is right now for them to choose'.

Trump warned Iran that, if it rejects his 'olive branch', he would impose a 'massive maximum pressure' against Tehran and choke off its oil exports.

US envoy Steve Witkoff said last month that Iran "must stop and eliminate" uranium enrichment, but days earlier, he had suggested that enrichment should be brought down to civilian energy levels.

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5. Investments, investments and more investments

While in the wealthy Gulf region, Trump was in his element. He announced deals that would see Saudi Arabia, Qatar and the UAE buy US arms and invest in American firms. According to the White House, Trump secured a total of \$2 trillion in investments from the Middle East during the trip.

And his administration is framing the deals as a major political and economic victory for Trump.

'While it took President Biden nearly four years to secure \$1 trillion in investments, President Trump achieved this in his first month, with additional investment commitments continuing to roll in', the White House said".

Gerald Walker published an article titled "Trump's Middle East trip indicates a new world order" in Modern Diplomacy on 17 May 2025. Extracts from this article are given below.

<https://moderndiplomacy.eu/2025/05/17/trumps-middle-east-trip-indicates-a-new-world-order/>

"The trip was framed as an opportunity to secure economic deals, strengthen U.S.-Gulf partnerships, and advance Trump's signature foreign policy achievement from his first term: the Abraham Accords. The question now is whether Trump, in his effort to reshape the world order, will also manage to convince both the Saudis and Syrians to normalize relations with Israel and sign onto the Abraham Accords.

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Saudi Arabia's insistence on Palestinian statehood aligns with the Democratic Party's emphasis on a two-state solution as a cornerstone of Middle East peace. However, the Trump administration's apparent willingness to sideline this issue risks perpetuating the accords' original flaw: prioritizing short-term diplomatic wins over long-term stability. The Gaza war's devastation and Israel's war against Hamas underscore the urgency of addressing Palestinian rights to prevent further radicalization and regional unrest.

The Biden administration's efforts to link normalization to a U.S.-Saudi defense treaty and Palestinian progress were incomplete but reflected a more balanced approach. Trump's reluctance to pressure Israel, coupled with his hands-off stance on Gaza, risks alienating Arab partners.

Trump also announced a significant policy shift: the lifting of U.S. sanctions on Syria following the fall of the Assad regime. Trump asked Syria's interim leader, Ahmed al-Shara'a, to join the Accords in exchange. Syria's potential inclusion in the Abraham Accords is a newer and more speculative prospect. Al-Shara'a may explore normalization with Israel to secure international legitimacy and reconstruction aid.

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Trump's decision, influenced by Saudi and Turkish pressure, reflects a pragmatic approach to capitalize on the post-Assad vacuum and counter Iranian and Russian influence.

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But Israel's deepening occupation of Syrian territory and strikes on Syrian targets complicate normalization. Jerusalem's preference for a decentralized Syria with a demilitarized south clashes with Sharaa's goal of unifying the country under HTS control.

It is important to exercise caution against rushing to normalize relations with a nascent Syrian regime led by a former al-Qaeda affiliate. The lifting of sanctions, while potentially enabling reconstruction, risks empowering HTS without guarantees of human rights protections or democratic transition.

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A more effective U.S. strategy needs to prioritize a Gaza ceasefire, link normalization to Palestinian progress, engage Syria with caution, and strengthen multilateral diplomacy.

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As it stands today, the prospects of Saudi Arabia and Syria joining the Abraham Accords in 2025 are slim due to the Gaza war, Israel's hardline stance, and domestic constraints in both countries. Saudi Arabia's insistence on Palestinian statehood and Syria's uncertain transition under HTS leadership present formidable barriers".

Zamir Ahmed Awan published an article titled "President Trump's Saudi Visit: A Strategic Reset in the Middle East and a Vision for Shared Prosperity" in *Modern Diplomacy* on 16 May 2025. Extracts from this article are given below.

<https://moderndiplomacy.eu/2025/05/16/president-trumps-saudi-visit-a-strategic-reset-in-the-middle-east-and-a-vision-for-shared-prosperity/>

"President Donald Trump's recent visit to Saudi Arabia marks a major milestone in US-Middle East relations and a strategic shift in America's engagement with the region. It was his first foreign trip since his re-election, symbolizing the enduring importance of Saudi Arabia as a key regional partner. The visit was not only a display of mutual respect and diplomatic warmth but also yielded tangible agreements, candid deliberations, and a renewed vision of cooperation between the United States and the Arab-Islamic world.

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A Warm Welcome, A Powerful Message

President Trump received a warm and ceremonious welcome by the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, signaling the strength and depth of bilateral ties. From the very outset, the message was clear: the United States seeks to strengthen its traditional partnerships in the Middle East, promote peace and stability, and work jointly to combat extremism and build economic prosperity.

The Riyadh summit—attended by key leaders from the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and other Muslim-majority nations—provided a strong multilateral platform for deliberations on regional security, energy cooperation, counterterrorism, and economic development.

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Strategic Agreements and Economic Partnerships

During the visit, the United States and Saudi Arabia signed over \$400 billion in commercial and defense deals. These included arms agreements, energy investments, and collaborations in technology, infrastructure, and cybersecurity. The defense deals—totaling approximately \$110 billion—aim to enhance Saudi Arabia's defense capabilities while also bolstering American defense industries and job creation at home.

On the economic front, US companies such as Boeing, Raytheon, Lockheed Martin, and GE entered major agreements with Saudi counterparts. Saudi Aramco signed multiple deals with American firms, focusing on oil services, refining, and renewable energy, reinforcing the long-term energy partnership between the two nations.

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A Renewed Middle East Policy: Prioritizing Stability

President Trump's visit signals a recalibration of US foreign policy in the Middle East. His administration appears committed to a more pragmatic, interest-based approach, focusing on

strategic partnerships, combating terrorism, and containing Iran's expansionist agenda. There is a clear emphasis on empowering regional allies—especially Saudi Arabia—to take the lead in ensuring regional security and fostering intra-Muslim unity.

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Implications for Israel and the Netanyahu Government

Israel's exclusion from the discussions in Riyadh has sent a subtle but powerful message. The days of unconditional US support for Tel Aviv's aggressive and unilateral policies may be waning. Prime Minister Netanyahu, known for his hardline stances, may find himself increasingly isolated if he continues to reject the international consensus on Palestinian statehood and peace.

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The Future of Palestine, Gaza, and the West Bank

The silence on Israel during the Saudi visit may, paradoxically, open new diplomatic avenues for Palestine. With Saudi Arabia regaining its role as a key interlocutor for the Muslim world, and with President Trump exploring alternatives to the failed peace processes of the past, there is hope for a new initiative rooted in fairness, dignity, and international law.

The Trump administration's focus on countering extremism could also be leveraged to address the root causes of radicalization—including occupation, poverty, and systemic injustice.

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Israeli Aggression: Destabilizing the Region

Israel's frequent military actions against neighboring states—be it the bombing of Syria, provocations in Lebanon, or covert operations in Iran—pose grave risks to regional stability. Such aggression not only undermines international norms but also fuels extremism and resistance across the region. With President Trump now engaging closely with the Arab world, Israel's unilateralism may face increasing scrutiny and diminishing tolerance from Washington.

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Saudi Arabia: Pillar of the Muslim World and a Force for Peace

Under King Salman and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, Saudi Arabia has undertaken sweeping reforms aimed at economic diversification, social modernization, and regional engagement. The Vision 2030 program reflects a forward-looking, inclusive, and progressive approach to governance and development.

In regional affairs, Saudi Arabia has positioned itself as a mediator in Yemen, a supporter of reconstruction in Syria, and a key player in GCC unity. Its commitment to fighting terrorism, promoting moderate Islam, and supporting diplomatic solutions to crises in Sudan, Libya, and Lebanon has made it an indispensable partner in peace-building.

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Economic Powerhouse and Global Influence

Through sovereign wealth investments, humanitarian aid, and multilateral diplomacy, Saudi Arabia has become a force for development and stability—not just in the Muslim world, but globally.

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A Visit of Substance and Symbolism

It (Trump's visit) also laid the foundation for a more balanced US policy in the Middle East—one that does not blindly follow Tel Aviv's lead but instead seeks comprehensive and inclusive solutions to regional conflicts. By choosing to begin his international diplomacy in Riyadh, President Trump has shown that respect, dialogue, and shared interests can chart a new course for the Middle East.

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Looking Ahead: A New Dawn?

In sum, President Trump's visit to Saudi Arabia is a pivotal step in redefining America's Middle East policy. It recognizes Saudi Arabia not just as a regional power, but as a global partner in peace, prosperity, and progress. The world is watching—this time, with hope.

B. THE DIPLOMATIC TOUR OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE MARCO RUBIO TO SAUDI ARABIA, QATAR, TÜRKIYE, ITALY, AND THE HOLY SEE (11-18 May 2025)

In a Press Statement (see below) the U.S. Department of State announced a diplomatic tour of Secretary Rubio in Southern Europe and the Middle East during the period 11-18 May 2025. Note that in February 2025 Secretary Rubio visited Germany, Israel, Saudi Arabia and the UAE to discuss U.S. priorities with international partners, regional cooperation, stability, and peace with emphasis on Gaza and Iran. Relevant statement is given in appendix 2.

Press Statement:

"Secretary of State Marco Rubio will accompany President Trump to Saudi Arabia and Qatar May 11-14, where the President will look to strengthen ties between the United States and Gulf partners. Secretary Rubio's engagements with senior officials will advance solutions to global and regional challenges, expand bilateral trade and investment, and reaffirm our strategic partnerships.

Secretary Rubio will then travel to Antalya, Türkiye, May 14-16 to attend the NATO Informal Foreign Ministers Meeting to discuss security priorities for the Alliance, including increased Allied defense investment and ending the Russia-Ukraine war. Looking towards the NATO Summit in The Hague this June, the Secretary will advance President Trump's agenda of ensuring that our Allies contribute their fair share to making NATO stronger and more effective. He will then travel to Istanbul, Türkiye for meetings with European counterparts to discuss the conflict in Ukraine and other regional issues of mutual concern.

Secretary Rubio will then travel to Italy and the Holy See, May 16-18 as a member of the U.S. delegation attending Pope Leo XIV's inaugural Mass."

B1. Meetings and phone calls of the Secretary of State Marco Rubio in Antalya (15/5/2025), in Istanbul (16/5/2025) and in Rome (17/5/2025)

In 15/5/2025, Secretary Rubio met in Antalya with Turkish, German and Syrian Foreign Ministers and with the Transatlantic Quint Foreign Ministers.

In 16/5/2025, Secretary Rubio met in Istanbul with Turkish and Ukrainian representatives to discuss the war in Ukraine.

In 17/5/2025, Secretary Rubio met with Italian Foreign Minister Tajani and had phone calls in Rome with Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu and with Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov.

Relevant readouts of the Office of the Spokesperson are given below.

B2. Secretary Rubio's Meeting with Turkish Foreign Minister Fidan

Secretary of State Marco Rubio met with Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan today in Antalya, Türkiye, to discuss security priorities for the NATO Alliance. The Secretary thanked Türkiye for hosting the meeting and emphasized the need to solidify NATO's path to 5 percent defense spending for all Allies. The Secretary and FM Fidan also discussed key developments in the region, including in Syria and Iran, and bilateral trade and energy issues.

B3. Secretary Rubio's Meeting with Transatlantic Quint Foreign Ministers

Secretary of State Marco Rubio met today on the sidelines of the NATO Informal Foreign Ministers Meeting in Antalya, Türkiye, with the Transatlantic Quint Foreign Ministers: French Foreign Minister Jean-Noël Barrot, German Foreign Minister Johann Wadephul, Italian Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani, and UK Foreign Secretary David Lammy. Secretary Rubio briefed the ministers on President Trump's efforts to halt the senseless bloodshed in Ukraine and emphasized that European leadership is critical for getting Russia and Ukraine to negotiate in good faith for a swift and durable peace settlement. The Secretary and Foreign Ministers agreed on the urgent need to increase NATO burden-sharing and European defense spending. Secretary Rubio stressed that U.S. defense companies are integral to the transatlantic industrial base and should not be sidelined in Europe's rearmament efforts. Secretary Rubio reaffirmed the United States' desire to give Syria a chance at greatness. The leaders also discussed shared priorities including preventing Iran from developing or obtaining a nuclear weapon and countering China's influence.

B4. Secretary Rubio's Meeting with German Foreign Minister Wadephul

Secretary of State Marco Rubio met today with German Foreign Minister Johann Wadephul on the margins of the NATO foreign ministers informal meeting in Antalya. They discussed bilateral and global priorities, including working together to address threats posed by China, ending the Russia-Ukraine war, strengthening NATO and European defense, and preventing Iran from developing or acquiring nuclear weapons.

B5. Secretary Rubio's Meeting with Syrian Foreign Minister al-Shaibani

Secretary of State Marco Rubio met today with Syrian Foreign Minister Asaad Hassan al-Shaibani in Türkiye following President Trump's historic May 14 meeting with Syrian President Ahmed al-Sharaa in Saudi Arabia. The Secretary affirmed the United States' support for sanctions relief to stabilize Syria. He welcomed the Syrian government's calls for peace with Israel, efforts to end Iran's influence in Syria, commitment to ascertaining the fate of U.S. citizens missing or killed in Syria, and elimination of all chemical weapons. The Secretary underscored the critical importance of protecting the human rights of all Syrians regardless of ethnicity or religion.

B6. Secretary Rubio's Meeting with Turkish and Ukrainian Representatives

Secretary Rubio met with Ukrainian Head of the Presidential Office Andriy Yermak, Ukrainian Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiha, and Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan today in Istanbul, Türkiye.

The three delegations discussed the importance of seeking a peaceful end to the Russia-Ukraine war. The Secretary noted today's direct talks between Russia and Ukraine while reiterating the U.S. position that the killing needs to stop.

Secretary Rubio also thanked Foreign Minister Fidan for hosting these important discussions.

B7. Secretary Rubio's Phone Call with Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu

Secretary Rubio spoke by phone with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu tonight from Rome. They discussed the situation in Gaza and their joint efforts to secure the release of all remaining hostages.

B8. Secretary Rubio's Phone Call with Russia Foreign Minister Lavrov

Secretary of State Marco Rubio spoke with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov today. Secretary Rubio welcomed the prisoner exchange agreement reached during the May 16 Ukraine-Russia talks in Istanbul and delivered President Trump's strong message: the United States is committed to achieving a lasting end to the Russia-Ukraine war. The comprehensive peace plan proposed by the United States outlines the best way forward. The Secretary emphasized President Trump's call for an immediate ceasefire and an end to the violence.

B9. Secretary Rubio's Meeting with Italian Foreign Minister Tajani

Secretary of State Marco Rubio met today with Italian Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani about the urgent need for a ceasefire in Ukraine and a path to durable peace. The two leaders also discussed our nations' enduring friendship and unity on a multitude of foreign policy issues.

Secretary Rubio acknowledged Italy's steps to increase defense spending and appreciated Minister Tajani's remarks committing to investment in the United States, as well as their determination to meet President Trump's defense spending target of five percent of GDP. Additionally, the two leaders exchanged views on key developments in the Middle East, including Israel, Libya, and Syria.

C. THE HISTORIC TOUR OF U.S. PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP IN THE MIDDLE EAST (13-16 May 2025)

Donald Trump in his first major international tour visited Saudi Arabia, Qatar and UAE. He was accompanied by his senior advisor Elon Musk, a Republican delegation and several business executives.

C1. Visit to Saudi Arabia (13-14 May 2025)

During his visit in Saudi Arabia Trump asked for US\$ 1 trillion Saudi investments in the U.S. and signed a "strategic economic partnership" agreement that includes a US\$142 billion. He met with prince Mohammed bin Salman, the de facto ruler of Saudi Arabia. He also met with the Syrian president Ahmed al-Sharaa, with the Turkish President Erdogan taking part in the meeting. During this meeting Trump announced the lifting of sanctions on the transitional government of Syria.

In Riyadh, President Trump in a historic speech charted the course for a prosperous future in the Middle East. A White House announcement in 13/5/2025 on this issue is given below:

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/articles/2025/05/in-riyadh-president-trump-charts-the-course-for-a-prosperous-future-in-the-middle-east/>

"President Donald J. Trump just wrapped up a major address in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, where he outlined an optimistic vision for the future of the Middle East and his approach to achieving a more stable region and peaceful world.

Here are the top moments:

- *Exactly eight years ago this month, I stood in this very room and looked forward to a future in which the nations of this region would drive out the forces of terrorism and extremism ... and take your place among the proudest, most prosperous, most successful nations anywhere in the world as leaders of a modern and rising Middle East.*

- *Before our eyes, a new generation of leaders is transcending the ancient conflicts and tired divisions of the past, and forging a future where the Middle East is defined by commerce, not chaos; where it exports technology, not terrorism; and where people of different nations, religions, and creeds are building cities together — not bombing each other out of existence*

- *This great transformation has not come from Western interventionists ... giving you lectures on how to live or how to govern your own affairs. No, the gleaming marvels of Riyadh and Abu Dhabi were not created by the so-called 'nation-builders,' 'neo-cons,' or 'liberal non-profits,' like those who spent trillions failing to develop Kabul and Baghdad, so many other cities. Instead, the birth of a modern Middle East has been brought about by the people of the region themselves ... developing your own sovereign countries, pursuing your own unique visions, and charting your own destinies.*

- *In the end, the so-called 'nation-builders' wrecked far more nations than they built — and the interventionists were intervening in complex societies that they did not even understand themselves."*

- *After so many decades of conflict, finally it is within our grasp to reach the future that generations before us could only dream about — a land of peace, safety, harmony, opportunity, innovation, and achievement right here in the Middle East.*

- *I am here today not merely to condemn the past chaos of Iran's leaders, but to offer them a new path and a much better path toward a far better and more hopeful future.*
- *As I have shown repeatedly, I am willing to end past conflicts and forge new partnerships for a better and more stable world, even if our differences may be very profound.*
- *"My preference will always be for peace and partnership, whenever those outcomes can be achieved. Always.*
- *In recent years, far too many American presidents have been afflicted with the notion that it's our job to look into the souls of foreign leaders and use U.S. policy to dispense justice for their sins ... I believe it is God's job to sit in judgement — my job [is] to defend America and to promote the fundamental interests of stability, prosperity, and peace.*
- *Following repeated attacks on American ships and freedom of navigation in the Red Sea, the United States military launched more than 1,100 strikes on the Houthis in Yemen. As a result, the Houthis agreed to stop ... We hit them hard, we got what we came for — and then we got out.*
- *My administration stands ready to help Lebanon create a future of economic development and peace with its neighbors.*
- *In Syria, which has seen so much misery and death, there is a new government that will hopefully succeed in stabilizing the country and keeping peace.*
- *If the responsible nations of this region seize this moment, put aside your differences and focus on the interests that unite you, then all of humanity will soon be amazed at what they will see right here in this geographic center of the world ... and the spiritual heart of its greatest faiths."*

The full text of Trump's speech in Riyadh is given in appendix 1.

From Antalya, Secretary Rubio made the following comments (15 May 2025) on Trump's speech in Riyadh:

"Yeah, I – Sean, I think the President the other night or the other day in Saudi Arabia gave perhaps one of the most impressive speeches of his presidency and one of the most meaningful speeches by an American president overseas in decades. And in it, one of the things he talks about is how he wants to see more building and less bombing. In essence, he wants to see us building things up, not destroying things. The President, frankly, is a lover of peace. He's – this is a person that would – wants to stop wars and prevent wars and end wars. That's what the President endeavors to do. In fact, he openly has said – and he said it in the speech – that he wishes we didn't have to spend all this money on the military; we could spend it instead on creating wealth and prosperity and human development. Obviously, that's not the way the world works, but that's what he hopes we can achieve. And that's what he's trying to achieve here".

C2. Visit to Qatar (14-15 May 2025)

Trump arrived in Qatar's capital Doha on 14 May 2025. There he met with the Emir of Qatar Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani. State Department announced a defense lucrative deal with Qatar amounting to over US\$240 billion and an agreement signed by Qatar Airways to purchase as many as 210 planes from Boeing, with Trump describing it as "the largest order of jets in the history of Boeing".

Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2025_visit_by_Donald_Trump_to_the_Middle_East

C3. Visit to UAE (15-16 May 2025)

Trump arrived in Abu Dhabi on 15 May 2025, becoming the second, after George Bush, serving U.S. president to visit UAE. UAE awarded Trump the Order of Zayed, the country's highest civil decoration. During the visit, the US Department of Commerce announced a deal with the Emirates and Emirati artificial intelligence firm G42 to establish the largest data center for artificial intelligence outside of the US in Abu Dhabi.

Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2025_visit_by_Donald_Trump_to_the_Middle_East

D. STATEMENTS OF PRESIDENT TRUMP, SECRETARY RUBIO, STATE DEPARTMENT AND WHITE HOUSE ON ISRAEL, IRAN, SYRIA AND THE GULF COUNTRIES

D1. Statements on Iran

President Trump, in his historic speech in Riyadh (13 May 2025), made extensive statements on Iran to reassure Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries on his determination to check Iranian aggressiveness and offer protection to them in order to secure lucrative economic returns:

"We'd imposed unprecedented sanctions on Iran and starved the regime of resources to fund terror. They were unable to fund anything because they had no money left. They had no money, but the new administration came in and let them have a lot of money, and you saw what happened. It was not money well spent".

"They (Biden Administration) lifted sanctions on Iran in exchange for getting nothing and sent the regime tens of billions of dollars to fund terror and death all over the world, and they laughed at him. They laughed at our leader, and they're still laughing at our leader. They thought him a fool, and they made nothing but trouble ever since, including the funding of October 7th, one of the worst days ever in the history of the Middle East, a horrible day".

"Working with the vast majority of people in this region who seek stability and calm, our task is to unify against the few agents of chaos and terror that are left and that are holding hostage the dreams of millions and millions of great people. The biggest and most destructive of these forces is the regime in Iran".

"The biggest and most destructive of these forces is the regime in Iran, which has caused unthinkable suffering in Syria, Lebanon, Gaza, Iraq, Yemen and beyond".

"There could be no sharper contrast with the path you have pursued on the Arabian Peninsula than the disaster unfolding right across in the Gulf of Iran. Think of that. They wanted to name it that, I said, "They're not going to let them do that. Do you mind if I stop that?" I stopped it. We're not going to let that happen".

"While you have been constructing the world's tallest skyscrapers in Jeddah and Dubai, Tehran's 1979 landmarks are collapsing into rubble and dust. They had it going for a little while under a much different system, but those buildings are largely falling apart, falling down, while you're building some of the world's biggest and most incredible infrastructure projects, buildings, all sorts of things you're building that nobody's ever even seen before. Instead, Iran's decades of neglect and mismanagement have left the country plagued by rolling blackouts, lasting for hours a day. All the time, you hear about it".

"While your skill has turned dry deserts into fertile farmland, Iran's leaders have managed to turn green farmland into dry deserts, as their corrupt water mafia, let's call it the water mafia, causes droughts and empty riverbeds. They get rich, but they don't let the people have any of it".

"And then of course there's the key difference at the root of it all: While the Arab states are focused on becoming pillars of regional stability and world commerce, Iran's leaders have focused on stealing their people's wealth to fund terror and bloodshed abroad. The most tragic of all, they have dragged down an entire region with them".

"Yet I'm here today not merely to condemn the past chaos of Iran's leaders, but to offer them a new path and a much better path toward a far better and more hopeful future. As I've shown repeatedly,

I am willing to end past conflicts and forge new partnerships for a better and more stable world, even if our differences may be very profound, which obviously they are in the case of Iran".

"If Iran's leadership rejects this olive branch and continues to attack their neighbors, then we will have no choice but to inflict massive maximum pressure".

"I want to make a deal with Iran. If I can make a deal with Iran, I'll be very happy if we're going to make your region and the world a safer place. But if Iran's leadership rejects this olive branch and continues to attack their neighbors, then we will have no choice but to inflict massive maximum pressure, drive Iranian oil exports to zero, like I did before".

"We want them to be a wonderful, safe, great country, but they cannot have a nuclear weapon".

"But with that said, Iran can have a much brighter future but we'll never allow America and its allies to be threatened with terrorism or nuclear attack. The choice is theirs to make. We really want them to be a successful country. We want them to be a wonderful, safe, great country, but they cannot have a nuclear weapon".

In an interview with Sean Hannity in Antalya, Turkey (Fox News, 15 May 2025) Secretary Rubio made the following statements on Iran:

"Well, first of all, I think what the President did is extend an opportunity. And the opportunity is Iran can be a prosperous and peaceful country. And that's the opportunity before them, and he hopes that they'll take this opportunity and that they'll take this offer. He says this offer won't be around forever. And what he means by that is at some point decisions will have to be made about more maximum pressure and other options because Iran can never have a nuclear weapon. Look, the regime – and our problem is not with the Iranian people. The Iranian people are a peaceful people, an ancient civilization and culture we admire greatly. Our problem is with a clerical regime that is behind every problem in the region: Hizballah, Hamas, the Houthis, the militias that have conducted attacks out of Iraq and Syria. They all – it – they all track back to the Iranian regime. Syria – all the instability in Syria tracks back to the Iranian regime. It's a regime that every day and every Friday chants, "Death to Israel, death to America." We have to believe them when they say that. A regime like that can never have nuclear weapons, and the President has made clear they will not have a nuclear weapon. We hope it's through the path of negotiation. We hope it's through the path of diplomacy. Steve Witkoff is doing a great job at negotiating in a very difficult negotiation. This will not be easy, but he's doing a great job at trying to bring about that peaceful resolution to this problem, and we should pray that he's successful. I have confidence in him. But in the end the decision lies in the hands of one person, and that's the supreme leader in Iran. And I hope he chooses the path of peace and prosperity, not a destructive path. And we'll see how that plays out".

"Well, we know. We're about to test it (enrichment levels) and we'll find out. Look, when you say 60 (percent enrichment), it's misleading when people hear that number because they think 60 percent enrichment and 90 percent is what you need for a weapon. Actually, 90 percent of the work it takes to get to weapons-grade enrichment is getting to 60. Once you're at 60, you're 90 percent of the way there. You are in essence a threshold nuclear weapon state, which is what Iran basically has become. They are at the threshold of a nuclear weapon. If they decided to do so, they could do so very quickly. If they stockpile enough of that 60 percent enriched, they could very quickly turn it into 90 and weaponize it".

*"That's the danger we face right now. That's the urgency here. **That's why Israel is – feels urgency about it and that's why we feel urgency about it, but not just us.** Throughout the Gulf region, no country in the region wants Iran to have a nuclear weapon. And you also talk about not just a weapon; they have long-range missiles that they can deliver that weapon, those weapons,*

through. So this is a very grave risk. And they are enriching at that level, and they are openly doing it, by the way. In fact, their congress, for – their legislative branch actually passed a law requiring them to enrich at a certain level because JCPOA, the Obama deal with Iran, was canceled".

In an press briefing in Washington, DC (15 May 2025), Thomas Pigott, Principal Deputy Spokesperson, made the following statements on Iran:

QUESTION: Thank you. On Iran. Today, the President said the U.S. and Iran are very close to a deal and said that Tehran has already sort of agreed to terms. Can you elaborate on that? And is there another round of direct, indirect negotiations scheduled to get this over the finish line?

MR PIGOTT: Well, I'm not going to comment on private diplomatic conversations, nor negotiate through the media when it comes to the details of these negotiations, these talks. What I can say, again, as we've reiterated here, is that the President has been clear that Iran can never have a nuclear weapon. The talks have been described as constructive by the participants in them, and so, again, Iran can never have a nuclear weapon. And the President has been clear he wants to see diplomacy; he wants to see a diplomatic solution here.

D2. Statements on Israel and Gaza

President Trump, in his speech in Riyadh (13 May 2025), made the following statements on Israel and Gaza:

"All civilized people must condemn the October 7th atrocities against Israel, which would never have happened, again, if you had, probably, a different president, but definitely if you had me as president. The people of Gaza deserve a much better future, but that will or can not occur as long as their leaders choose to kidnap, torture and target innocent men, women and children for political ends".

"And we've been working tirelessly to bring back all hostages held by Hamas. We brought back a lot already, but we're bringing back more. This weekend, we successfully negotiated the release of the last American hostage. Edan Alexander just came out a few hours ago, and we continue to work to get that war ended as quickly as possible. It's a horrible thing that's taking place".

"The people of Gaza deserve a much better future, but that will or can not occur as long as their leaders choose to kidnap, torture and target innocent men, women and children for political ends".

"The way those people are treated in Gaza, there's not a place in the world where people are treated so badly. It's horrible".

In an press briefing in Washington, DC (15 May 2025), Thomas Pigott, Principal Deputy Spokesperson, made the following statements on Israel and Gaza:

QUESTION: And separately, there's progress on the Gaza humanitarian funds. It says there's – foundation says there's – it's making progress with Israel on resuming aid in Gaza. Can you address, answer, explain what the U.S. role in that is, the U.S. Government role? What funding or support it's going to give, and if it's concerned by humanitarian groups' criticism that this violates humanitarian law by allowing a combatant, Israel, to control aid deliberately to civilians?

MR PIGOTT: Well, look, one of the fundamental principles of this plan is that it is independent, meant to get humanitarian aid into Gaza, and we welcome the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation's official launch yesterday. The Secretary also just spoke to this as well. We have seen what has happened in Gaza because of the hostilities that Hamas bears sole responsibility for. We have seen this

announcement. We welcome creative solutions to get aid in there. But as the Secretary also just said, we need to see aid enter Gaza in a way that does not allow Hamas or other terrorists to take that aid. So, we welcome this creative solution. We welcome the foundation's announcement. I refer you to the foundation itself for further details on this program.

QUESTION: Should we call this a U.S. plan? Is it an Israeli plan? The UN has said they're not going to be involved in it, so who do we credit with this creative thinking?

MR PIGOTT: Well, again, as I said earlier, this is an independent plan in terms of making sure that aid reaches the people that need it. As the Secretary said, we endorse this plan in the sense that we want to see creative solutions. As he also said, if there are better options to get aid in there, we'd like to see those options provided. But ultimately, again, as he said, our priority here is making sure that aid gets to the people that need it in a way where that aid is not stolen by Hamas or other terrorists.

In an press conference in Antalya, Turkey (15 May 2025) Secretary Rubio made the following statements on Israel and Gaza:

QUESTION: On – just on that same theme about peace in Gaza, and I know the President had a bit to say today and yesterday. On the ground, I mean, there were more than 100 Palestinians killed today, 80 yesterday, two attacks on hospitals. We've had Tom Fletcher, the UN humanitarian chief, urging the Security Council to prevent, in his words, "genocide." Meanwhile, the families of many hostages are accusing the Netanyahu government of trying to prolong the war for political reasons. What is your engagement with the Israeli Government at the moment? Are you a hundred percent behind the nature of the military action? And what is your own position basically on – as you did with Edan Alexander – talking directly to Hamas to get the rest of the hostages –

SECRETARY RUBIO: Well, let me just say: I spoke to the prime minister today, of Israel. I know the President has been in contact with him earlier this week. The President talked about this in a speech the other day that the people of Gaza deserve a better future than what they've had under Hamas. We think that the elimination of Hamas is what achieves peace. We're troubled by the humanitarian situation there. Both the Israelis with American backing and support have offered a plan to deliver aid that doesn't get diverted or stolen by Hamas. I've heard criticisms of that plan. We're open to an alternative if someone has a better one, but it – we are for all the aid we can get without the people – without Hamas being able to steal it from people.

But I don't think – I think all of us would love to see an enduring end to this conflict, which, by the way, would end immediately if Hamas were to surrender. They're a terrorist group. They're a group that kidnapped, raped, murdered innocent people that had nothing to do with the war. And as long as they exist and they're around, you're not going to have peace. They – this is not a peaceful group. This is a group that deliberately on October 7th committed horrifying crimes which has triggered this conflict.

That said, we're not immune or in any way insensitive to the suffering of the people of Gaza, and I know that there's opportunities here to provide aid for them. There's a plan out there that's been offered, that's been criticized by some, but it allows people to get aid without Hamas stealing it. And we'll continue to work towards that in ways that we think are constructive and productive.

QUESTION: And what about – but what about negotiations? Are you in direct contact with Hamas? And would you continue to do that if it gets – if it's a way to get the rest of the hostages –

SECRETARY RUBIO: Well, I think anybody that tells you there's – there are obviously messages passed between intermediaries in the case of Hamas. There's obviously an external Hamas group and then there's an internal Hamas group as well. This is a terrorist organization; this is a murderous group that still continues to hold innocent hostages and the bodies and remains of dead hostages as well. They should all be released immediately. That's been our position from the very – they should never have been taken to begin with.

So again, we continue – that continues to be our position. And if there's a role we can play in bringing about the release of these hostages and the return of these remains to their families, and we have an opportunity to play a role, we will.

I won't comment any further on the mechanics of it, because I don't want to endanger them, but suffice it to say that we know there are others involved. The Qataris have been involved, the Egyptians have

been involved, the Turks have been involved. Numerous countries have been involved in passing messages and in getting results. And it – we're very happy to see Edan Alexander home with his family. It was very uplifting. But we recognize that there are still many others left behind, and we want to see them all released.

D3. Statements on Syria

In a White House report (13 May 2025) titled "In Riyadh, President Trump Charts the Course for a Prosperous Future in the Middle East" President Trump made the following statements on Syria:

"Countless lives were lost in the Iranian effort to maintain a crumbling regime in Syria. Look at what happened with Syria. ... Likewise, in Syria, which has seen so much misery and death, there is a new government that will hopefully succeed in stabilizing the country and keeping peace. That's what we want to see in Syria. They've had their share of travesty, war, killing, many years. That's why my administration has already taken the first steps toward restoring normal relations between the United States and Syria for the first time in more than a decade".

"I will be ordering the cessation of sanctions against Syria in order to give them a chance at greatness. And I'm very pleased to announce that Secretary Marco Rubio will be meeting with the new Syrian foreign minister in Turkey later this week. And very importantly, after discussing the situation in Syria with the Crown Prince, your Crown Prince, and also with President Erdogan of Turkey who called me the other day and asked for a very similar thing, among others and friends of mine, people that I have a lot of respect for in the Middle East, I will be ordering the cessation of sanctions against Syria in order to give them a chance at greatness".

"The sanctions were brutal and crippling and served as an important, really an important function, nevertheless, at the time, but now it's their time to shine. It's their time to shine. We're taking them all off, and I think they're going to have, based on the people and the spirit and everything else that I'm hearing about, so I say good luck, Syria".

"In Syria, which has seen so much misery and death, there is a new government that will hopefully succeed in stabilizing the country and keeping peace."

In an interview with Sean Hannity in Antalya, Turkey (Fox News, 15 May 2025) Secretary Rubio made the following statements on Syria:

"Syria – all the instability in Syria tracks back to the Iranian regime. It's a regime that every day and every Friday chants, 'Death to Israel, death to America.' We have to believe them when they say that.

And finally, to further support regional stability, the president also affirmed the United States' support for a peaceful future in Syria. As the President said, he is ordering the cessation of sanctions against Syria in order to give them a chance at greatness".

In an press conference in Antalya, Turkey (15 May 2025) Secretary Rubio made the following statements on Syria:

"We've – we invited the Syrian foreign minister today to come here and meet with me. So many leaders who are not members of NATO are invited to NATO conferences. I think that obviously this is a new relationship. We've now known each other – known them for 24 hours, so it's one that – we think that a peaceful, stable Syria would be one of the most dramatic improvements in the region in a very long time, and we want to do everything we can to help achieve that".

"We have governing authorities there now who have expressed, not openly and repeatedly, that they do – that this is a nationalistic movement designed to building their country in a pluralistic society in which all the different elements of Syrian society are able to live together. They have expressed an interest in being at peace with all of their neighbors, including Israel. They have expressed an interest in driving out foreign fighters and terrorists and others that would destabilize the country and are enemies of this transitional authority. And they've asked for our help, and so we're going to try to help them".

"Now, obviously, we want to see progress made, and we'll take every step that they take, and it'll be a long road, because it's been a long time. So we recognize that, but this is a historic opportunity and, if it succeeds, would have a dramatic, transformative effect on the region".

"I would say that Syria is a place where people of different faiths and backgrounds have lived alongside each other for a very long time. It's only in the last 10 years under Assad's rule, brutal rule, where he gassed and murdered his own people, where he created chaos that allowed foreign fighters to flow into the country and use it as a playground to conduct external attacks, where Iran saw an opportunity to come in and sponsor their groups that turned it into a terrorist highway to empower Hizballah – it's only in the last 10 years that you've seen 6 to 8 million people driven out of that country".

So we want to be helpful. The President said he – if they want to take these steps forward, we're going to do what we can, working with our partners in the region, to help them. And I hope it's successful, because if it is – there's two routes here. One will be success and we'll have a major transformation on the region, or you're going to have a brutal civil war that'll destabilize the region. We would prefer the former, not the latter, and we're going to do everything we can within our control to help effectuate that.

Ultimately it'll be up to the leaders there on the ground to make it happen. And they face some significant challenges, there's no doubt. The good news is that there are regional partners like Türkiye, like Saudi Arabia, like Qatar, like the UAE who are willing to contribute. And frankly, the lifting of sanctions – its first effects will be felt because – not because U.S. dollars are going to flow in, but because our regional partners will now be able to flow in dollars that'll allow them not just to stand up a government that can provide basic services, but also will allow them the work of reconstruction".

"One of the things they expressed today – and they're asking for our help – is to identify weapons of mass destruction, chemical weapons, and so forth, identify these sites and remove them from the country. As they expressed today, they are victims of the use of chemical weapons. They don't want these chemical weapons stored in their country anywhere, but you don't just go in and grab a bunch of chemical weapons and put them in a truck; it requires technical expertise to both identify where they're located and remove them safely. And they've asked for our help in that regard, and we're going to be willing to provide it".

In an press briefing in Washington, DC (15 May 2025), Thomas Pigott, Principal Deputy Spokesperson, made the following statements on Syria:

QUESTION: And on Syria, Secretary Rubio met Syrian Foreign Minister Al-Shaibani and Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan today in Antalya, Türkiye. You just shared a readout of the meeting. Secretary Rubio said right after the meeting that the U.S. will start with initial waivers instead of fully lifting the sanctions. Can you provide more details on like when and under what conditions these sanctions might be fully lifted? And what – will the U.S. do anything to contribute to the reconstruction of Syria? Was this discussed during the meeting too?

MR PIGOTT: Look, what I can say, as the Secretary said during those comments, is that this is something that had been discussed, worked on, options considered for many weeks leading up to this announcement and that we are going to be implementing what the President has announced as an administration. In terms of exact timelines, I have nothing further to preview on that front now, except

for to say the fact that we are moving now to implement this announcement, and this was something that was discussed, as the Secretary said himself, for many weeks leading up to this announcement.

QUESTION: On the lifting of sanctions, obviously it's a pretty complicated process. Do you have a timeline for how long you think that might take? And also, how much advance notice was the State Department and Treasury given to sort of start that winddown?

SECRETARY RUBIO: Well, we – this is a road we were on. So we've been doing the work, the prep work, for it. Their finance minister, we provided him a visa to travel to Washington, D.C. two weeks ago. Their foreign minister, we provided him a visa to – a week ago to travel to New York and met with our UN representative. I was scheduled to come here and meet today with the foreign minister. I was with the President when he made the decision to do this and included it in his speech. So we've been doing preparatory work in that regard. The core of these sanctions are statutory under the Caesar Act. I've had members of Congress – Congress in both parties – ask us to use the waivers authorities in that law. But – and that's what the President intends to do. Those waivers have to be renewed every 180 days.

Ultimately, if we make enough progress, we'd like to see the law repealed because you're going to struggle to find people to invest in a country when any – in six months, sanctions could come back. We're not there yet. That's premature. I think we want to start with the initial waiver, which will allow foreign partners who wanted to flow in aid to begin to do so without running the risk of sanctions.

I think as we make progress, hopefully we'll be in a position soon, or one day, to go to Congress and ask them to permanently remove the sanctions.

QUESTION: Thank you. Thank you, Tommy. A question on Syria. After the President's meeting with the Syrian interim president and today's meeting between Secretary Rubio and Syrian foreign minister, do you recognize this Syrian interim authority now or you still hold your previous position on that?

MR PIGOTT: Well, look, what we want to see – and taking a step back – is Syria take certain actions that were detailed in the readout the White House put out. We've also seen the Secretary discuss this in terms of movement forward. I don't necessarily want to get ahead of where that movement might be, but ultimately just to reinforce and – reinforce the fact that, as the President said, we want to give Syria a chance at greatness, and we are working now to implement what the President announced in his speech in Saudi Arabia.

QUESTION: And Secretary Rubio was touching the importance of protecting the human rights of all Syrians. We have seen this interim authority were violating many international laws, and they were even harassing the Druze people and the Kurdish and the Christians. What's your position on these minority rights in Syria, after you met with the Syrian foreign minister and after the President's meeting with Ahmed al-Sharaa?

MR PIGOTT: Well, again, not going to discuss the private diplomatic conversations that were – happened in that regard. We have been clear in regards to any nation that we have certain expectations, and there have been expectations that the President has communicated to Syria regarding a whole host of actions. And again, those actions that we're hoping that they take are hand in hand with this announcement in terms of lifting sanctions, that opportunity to achieve greatness. So, it's the cessation of sanctions, but also the actions we're hoping to see them take would then contribute to that, that long peace, that prosperity that the President and Secretary want to see for the entire region.

QUESTION: Thank you, Tommy. A couple of questions, one on Syria. Just I want to understand – does lifting sanctions on Damascus come up with any conditions? And secondly, on May 17 the Arab League is scheduled to be held in Baghdad, Iraq. Does the Secretary Rubio attend the meeting?

MR PIGOTT: Nothing to preview on that second question. Again on the first, let's reiterate what the President said. This is about giving Syria an opportunity for greatness. And there have been actions that have been communicated by the President – it was detailed in the readout that the White House put out, have been detailed again from this podium – in terms of actions that Syria should take, and those actions that we hope to see them take go hand in hand with that opportunity for greatness, that if they take those actions we could see a long peace, prosperity – again, something that the President wishes for the entire region.

D4. Statements on Saudi Arabia and the other Gulf Countries

President Trump, in his speech in Riyadh (13 May 2025), made the following statements on Saudi Arabia:

"Well, thank you very much. It's an honor to be here. What a great place. What a great place. But more importantly, what great people. I want to thank his Royal Highness, the Crown Prince, for that incredible introduction. He's an incredible man. Known him a long time now. There's nobody like him. Thank you very much. Appreciate it very much, my friend".

"And it's a tremendous honor to return to this beautiful kingdom and be welcomed back with such extraordinary generosity and warmth. I've never forgotten the exceptional hospitality shown to us by King Salman. We talk about a great man. That is a great man, that is a great man, a great family. That visit took place exactly eight years ago. The graciousness of the royal family and the Saudi people is really unsurpassed, no matter where you go".

"With this historic state visit, we celebrate more than 80 years of close partnership between the United States and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Ever since President Franklin Roosevelt met with King Salman's father, King Abdulaziz, aboard the USS Quincy in 1945, the US-Saudi relationship has been a bedrock of security and prosperity".

"Today, we reaffirm this important bond and we take the next steps to make our relationship closer, stronger, and more powerful than ever before. It is more powerful than ever before. And by the way, it will remain that way. We don't go in and out like other people. It will remain that way".

"Nobody makes military equipment like us. We have the best military equipment, the best missiles, the best rockets, the best everything. Best submarines, by the way. Most lethal weapon in the world. In addition to purchases of \$142 billion of American-made military equipment by our great Saudi partners, the largest ever this week. There are multibillion-dollar commercial deals with Amazon, Oracle, AMD. They're all here. Uber, Qualcomm, Johnson and Johnson, and many, many more".

"Saudi Arabia has proved the critics totally wrong. The transformation... has been truly extraordinary".

"But critics doubted that it was possible what you've done. But over the past eight years, Saudi Arabia has proved the critics totally wrong. The transformation that has occurred — even by these incredible business leaders, I mean you have the biggest leaders in business anywhere in the world standing right before us — but the transformation that has occurred under the leadership of King Salman and Crown Prince Mohammed has been truly extraordinary. Such a thing has I don't think ever happened before. I've never seen anything at that scale happen before".

"It's my fervent hope, wish, and even my dream that Saudi Arabia, a place I have such respect for... will soon be joining the Abraham Accords".

"And with the historic Abraham Accords that we're so proud of, all the momentum was aimed at peace, and it aimed very successfully. It's been an amazing thing, the Abraham Accords. And it's my fervent hope, wish, and even my dream that Saudi Arabia — a place I have such respect for, especially over the last fairly short period of time, what you've been able to do — but will soon be joining the Abraham Accords. I think it'll be a tremendous tribute to your country, and it will be something that's really going to be very important for the future of the Middle East".

"But let me take this opportunity to thank the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for the constructive role that you've played in facilitating the Ukraine talks, and it really is. You've been amazing. You've made everything available to us. Thank you very much. Thank you. And if we get that settled, we'll pay a special tribute to what you've done. You really did lay a great groundwork. Thank you very much. Appreciate it".

In an press briefing in Washington, DC (15 May 2025), Thomas Pigott, Principal Deputy Spokesperson, made the following statements on Saudi Arabia and UAE:

QUESTION: Hi, it's Ellen Knickmeyer with the AP. Did the Trump Administration on its Gulf trip raise the detentions of rights activists in Saudi Arabia? Did it ask for American citizens and American residents in Saudi Arabia to be able – allowed – freed from travel bans and allowed to return home? And did it – did it raise, relatedly, the issue of alleged UAE support to the RSF (paramilitary Rapid Support Forces of Sudan) during the U.S. – during the UAE stop?

MR PIGOTT: Let me just address some of that. There's a lot there already to unpack. I'm not going to discuss private diplomatic conversations, but what I can say is that when U.S. citizens have raised the challenges they experience with exit bans, we have provided consular assistance and worked to ensure they receive fair and transparent treatment. That's what I have to offer there.

When it comes to – again, not going to talk about private diplomatic conversations – but when it comes to those reports, we have heard those reports when it comes to the RAF – RSF, excuse me. Both the RSF and Sudanese Armed Forces have used weapons acquired from foreign actors against the civilian population and have committed human rights violations and abuses. Supplying arms to any of the belligerents prolongs the conflict and heightens the risk of further destabilization of Sudan and the region. The United States calls for an end to all external support to the warring parties and urges all our partners to press for a comprehensive cessation of hostilities and increased humanitarian access.

In a Fact Sheet issued on 13 May 2025 and titled "PRESIDENT DONALD J. TRUMP SECURES HISTORIC \$600 BILLION INVESTMENT COMMITMENT IN SAUDI ARABIA" the White House presented the following:

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/fact-sheets/2025/05/fact-sheet-president-donald-j-trump-secures-historic-600-billion-investment-commitment-in-saudi-arabia/>

1. STRENGTHENING STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS FOR ECONOMIC PROSPERITY

"Today in Saudi Arabia, President Donald J. Trump announced Saudi Arabia's \$600-billion commitment to invest in the United States, building economic ties that will endure for generations to come. The first deals under the announcement strengthen our energy security, defense industry, technology leadership, and access to global infrastructure and critical minerals.

- The deals celebrated today are historic and transformative for both countries and represent a new golden era of partnership between the United States and Saudi Arabia.

- The following represent just a few of the many transformative deals secured in Saudi Arabia:

** Saudi Arabian DataVolt is moving forward with plans to invest \$20 billion in AI data centers and energy infrastructure in the United States.*

** Google, DataVolt, Oracle, Salesforce, AMD, and Uber are committing to invest \$80 billion in cutting-edge transformative technologies in both countries.*

** Iconic American companies including Hill International, Jacobs, Parsons, and AECOM are building key infrastructure projects like King Salman International Airport, King Salman Park, The Vault, Qiddiya City, and much more totaling \$2 billion in U.S. services exports.*

** Additional major exports include GE Vernova's gas turbines and energy solutions totaling \$14.2 billion and Boeing 737-8 passenger aircraft for AviLease totaling \$4.8 billion.*

** In the healthcare sector, Shamekh IV Solutions, LLC will be investing \$5.8 billion, including a plant in Michigan to launch a high-capacity IV fluid facility.*

** Investment partnerships include several sector-specific funds with a strong emphasis on U.S. deployment—such as the \$5 billion Energy Investment Fund, the \$5 billion New Era*

Aerospace and Defense Technology Fund, and the \$4 billion Enfield Sports Global Sports Fund—each channeling substantial capital into American industries, driving innovation, and creating high-quality jobs across the United States.

- Underscoring our commitment to strengthening our defense and security partnership, the United States and Saudi Arabia signed the largest defense sales agreement in history—nearly \$142 billion, providing Saudi Arabia with state-of-the-art warfighting equipment and services from over a dozen U.S. defense firms.

** The sales that we intend to complete fall into five broad categories: (1) air force advancement and space capabilities, (2) air and missile defense, (3) maritime and coastal security, (4) border security and land forces modernization, and (5) information and communication systems upgrades.*

** The package also includes extensive training and support to build the capacity of the Saudi armed forces, including enhancement of Saudi service academies and military medical services.*

** This deal represents a significant investment in Saudi Arabia's defense and regional security, built on American systems and training.*

- The United States and Saudi Arabia celebrate these and many other deals today as a result of the growing momentum of the last four months. The total package has quickly built to more than \$600 billion—the largest set of commercial agreements on record between the two countries".

2. UNLOCKING NEW OPPORTUNITIES THROUGH DEEPER ALLIANCES

The strategic partnership between the United States and Saudi Arabia has grown increasingly robust over the past eight decades since the meeting between King Abdulaziz Al Saud and President Franklin D. Roosevelt on board the USS Quincy, the 80th anniversary of which was celebrated earlier this year.

- Saudi Arabia is one of the United States' largest trading partners in the Middle East.

** Saudi direct investment in the United States totaled \$9.5 billion in 2023, focused on the transportation, real estate, and automotive sectors.*

** In 2024, U.S.-Saudi Arabia goods trade totaled \$25.9 billion, with U.S. exports at \$13.2 billion, imports at \$12.7 billion, and a trade surplus in goods of \$443 million.*

** The United States and Saudi Arabia share a commitment to deeper economic integration, underscoring the Kingdom's pledge of expanding cooperation in critical sectors such as health, energy, and science.*

** The U.S. Department of Energy and the Ministry of Energy of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia have concluded an agreement for cooperation in the field of energy. This agreement builds upon their strong existing relationship; it will focus collaboration on examining the potential for innovation, development, financing, and deployment of energy infrastructure.*

** The Ministry of Industry and Mineral Resources in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Department of Energy of the United States of America have signed a Memorandum of Cooperation to collaborate on mining and mineral resources. The agreement contributes to economic development and the diversification and resilience of critical mineral supply chains.*

** NASA and the Saudi Space Agency have signed an agreement for a CubeSat to fly on NASA's Artemis II test flight. Saudi Arabia's CubeSat will measure aspects of space weather at a range of distances from Earth and deploy in high Earth orbit from a spacecraft adapter on the Space Launch System rocket after the Orion spacecraft is safely flying on its own with its crew of four astronauts.*

** The United States and Saudi Arabia recently agreed to modernize the Air Transport Agreement to allow U.S. airlines to carry cargo between Saudi Arabia and third countries without needing to stop in the United States, an important right for cargo hub operations. Saudi carriers will have the same rights to serve the United States.*

** The United States and Saudi Arabia further underscored their commitment to deeper cultural, educational, and scientific partnerships through the signing of agreements between the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of Asian Art and the Royal Commission for AlUla*

on collaborative research and an exhibition focused on artifacts from ancient Dadan in AlUla, and between the Smithsonian's National Zoo and the Royal Commission for AlUla to support the conservation of the endangered Arabian leopard through creation of a dedicated exhibit in Washington, D.C.

- Saudi Arabia remains our largest Foreign Military Sales partner with active cases valued at more than \$129 billion.

** Our defense relationship with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is stronger than ever under President Trump's leadership, and the package signed today, the largest defense cooperation deal in U.S. history, is a clear demonstration of our commitment to strengthening our partnership.*

** The agreement opens the door for expanded U.S. defense industry participation and long-term sustainment partnerships with Saudi entities.*

- The deepening United States-Saudi Arabia partnership reflects a joint vision for long-term prosperity and employment opportunities in both nations.

Appendix 1

FULL TEXT OF TRUMP'S SPEECH IN RIYADH, 13/5/2025: 'DAWN OF THE BRIGHT NEW DAY FOR THE GREAT PEOPLE OF THE MIDDLE EAST'

Times of Israel, 16/5/2025

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/full-text-of-trumps-speech-in-riyadh-dawn-of-the-bright-new-day-for-the-great-people-of-the-middle-east/>

Well, thank you very much. It's an honor to be here. What a great place. What a great place. But more importantly, what great people. I want to thank his Royal Highness, the Crown Prince, for that incredible introduction. He's an incredible man. Known him a long time now. There's nobody like him. Thank you very much. Appreciate it very much, my friend.

And it's a tremendous honor to return to this beautiful kingdom and be welcomed back with such extraordinary generosity and warmth. I've never forgotten the exceptional hospitality shown to us by King Salman. We talk about a great man. That is a great man, that is a great man, a great family. That visit took place exactly eight years ago. The graciousness of the royal family and the Saudi people is really unsurpassed, no matter where you go.

Let me also thank the countless ministers, government officials, business leaders, and distinguished guests for that warm welcome, very warm. I know so many of you. I'd like to call out all of your names, but we'd have a lot of problems. We'd be here for a long time. We don't want that. So don't be upset.

With this historic state visit, we celebrate more than 80 years of close partnership between the United States and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Ever since President Franklin Roosevelt met with King Salman's father, King Abdulaziz, aboard the USS Quincy in 1945, the US-Saudi relationship has been a bedrock of security and prosperity.

Today, we reaffirm this important bond and we take the next steps to make our relationship closer, stronger, and more powerful than ever before. It is more powerful than ever before. And by the way, it will remain that way. We don't go in and out like other people. It will remain that way.

I've come this afternoon to talk about the bright future of the Middle East, but first, let me begin by sharing the abundance of good news from a place called America.

In less than four months, our new administration has achieved more than most other administrations accomplish in four years or even eight years. We've actually done, for the most part, more. The day I took office, we inherited... Thank you. Thank you.

The day I took office, we inherited a colossal invasion on our southern border, an invasion like you'd never want to see here, nobody should ever want to see it. But within weeks, we slashed illegal border crossings to an all-time low, down 99.999%. That's good even for this great gentleman standing right in front of me. That's a good number. We had hundreds of thousands of people. They came in at the same time last year, and last month we had, in this massive border, three people that got in. That's quite a difference.

And we have no choice but to get a lot of the people that came in because they were not the best people. They were, in many cases, very bad people. We're getting them out. We're getting them out very fast. We're bringing them back to where they came from. We have no choice.

After years of military recruiting shortfalls, enlistments in the US armed forces are now the highest in 30 years because there is such an incredible spirit in the United States of America. We have tremendous spirit again.

Just about a year ago, it was a big story, front page on every paper all over the world, that nobody wanted to enlist in our military, meaning we were way under-enlisted. And just last week it came out that we had the strongest enlistment. They say 30 years, but probably it's maybe ever. They don't go back that far. It's the best. And that includes police officers, firemen, everything else.

There's a great spirit in the United States right now. A brand-new poll from Rasmussen just showed that the number of Americans who believe the nation is on the right track — they have a right track, wrong track — is now the highest in over 20 years. And it hasn't been anything like this, because for many years it was the wrong track. And I can tell you for the last four years, it was definitely the wrong track, but it's the highest it's been in many, many years.

We named the Gulf of Mexico into the Gulf of America — that was very popular, other than perhaps with Mexico. And most importantly for the people in this room, the days of economic misery under the last administration are rapidly giving way to the greatest economy in the history of the world. We are rocking.

The United States is the hottest country, with the exception of your country, I have to say, right?

The United States is the hottest country — with the exception of your country, I have to say, right? I'm not going to take that on. No, Mohammed, I'm not going to take that on. Wouldn't that be a terrible thing if I made that full statement? But I will not do it. You're hotter. At least as long as I'm up here, you're hotter.

But groceries, gasoline, energy, and all other prices are down, with no inflation. We have no inflation. In a few short weeks, we've created 464,000 brand-new jobs. Think of that. It's almost a half a million jobs created just in a matter of weeks.

We just reached a historic trade agreement with the United Kingdom, and over the weekend we reached a breakthrough agreement with China, both outstanding deals. China's agreed — we have to get it down. We have to get the little details down. And Scott, you're going to work on that very hard. But China's agreed to open up to the United States for trade and everything else. But they have to do it. So we'll see what happens. But we had a very, very good meeting with both of those countries.

We are cutting 10 old regulations for every new regulation. We're getting rid of all of the red tape that is... So many, frankly, countries, as they get older, they develop a lot of red tape, and we're getting rid of it. We're getting rid of it at record levels.

And I'm pleased to report that the United States Congress is on the verge of passing the largest tax cut and regulation cut in American history. We think we're in good shape to get that. And if we get that, that will be like a rocket ship for our country.

In the first quarter of the year, the investment in America was up an astounding 22%. More than \$10 trillion of new investments have been announced or are coming, just since the election on November 5th. So think of that. In a very short period of time, we have over \$10 trillion, and it could be much higher than that.

Not everybody comes to the White House to have a news conference that they're going to be opening up in America, but they're all coming in at numbers that we've never seen before. If you

take a look at other presidencies, they wouldn't do \$1 trillion, sometime in years. We did this in essentially two months. Because you have to say, we got into office and they gave me about a month to clean up and fix up the Oval Office, and after that, we started working, and the money is pouring in, the jobs are pouring in, the companies are pouring into our country like we've never seen before. There's never been anything like it.

We let other people tariff us into losing a lot of money and a lot of jobs, and now we're tariffing them, and it's at a level that nobody's seen. It's a level that is making us a very much different country and a very different Republican Party.

We won a tremendous victory in November. We won all seven swing states, the popular vote by millions and millions of votes. The electoral college, we won by 312 to 226. Remember, they said, "Well, we could get to 270," and we got to 312. That's a big difference. And very importantly, we won counties throughout the United States, 2,660 to 451. That's why when you look at a map, they're all red. The whole country is red. Red stands for Republican.

From the moment we started, we've seen wealth that just poured and is pouring back into America. Apple is investing \$500 billion. Nvidia is investing. And I see my friend is here, Jensen, that's very good. Wherever you may be, I thank you very much, because he's putting in \$500 billion. TSMC is investing. Where is Jensen, by the way? Where is he? He's standing here. Where is he? I just saw Beth. Thank you very much, Jensen.

I mean, Tim Cook isn't here, but you are. What a job you've done. He said he's got 99% of the chip market. I don't know. That's not easy to beat. But what a job you've done. Thank you. We are proud to have you in our country. You know that. Thank you for the investment. TSMC is investing \$200 billion. And with this trip, we're adding over \$1 trillion more in terms of investment, and investment into our country, and buying our products.

Nobody makes military equipment like us. We have the best military equipment, the best missiles, the best rockets, the best everything. Best submarines, by the way. Most lethal weapon in the world. In addition to purchases of \$142 billion of American-made military equipment by our great Saudi partners, the largest ever this week. There are multibillion-dollar commercial deals with Amazon, Oracle, AMD. They're all here. Uber, Qualcomm, Johnson and Johnson, and many, many more.

So I want to congratulate everybody. So many great business executives, many of you, most of you I know. They were coming in about a month ago. They weren't that happy when they saw me, and now they're saying, "Sir, you're doing a great job. Thank you very much." It's amazing what a rising market will do. It's going to get a lot higher. In fact, I told people five weeks ago, "This is a great time to buy." I got criticized for that. Now they don't criticize me anymore. People should have listened.

But it's going to go a lot higher. You're going to see. We've never had anything like this happen. It's an explosion of investment and jobs, and great companies are coming in. Never seen anything like it. There's no better place to make a future or make a fortune or do anything frankly, than what we have in the United States of America under a certain President, Donald J. Trump. I have the right attitude.

I have the same attitude that the people in the front row, second row, third row have. As you get back, perhaps they start to wane a little bit in terms of their view, but they understand, and we're doing what a lot of smart people would do. And we're not necessarily being politically correct.

You saw what we did yesterday with healthcare. We've cut our healthcare by 50 to 90%. You're going to see drugs and pharmaceuticals come down at numbers that nobody has ever seen. And

drugs, pharmaceuticals, we think will be dropping, and it'll be a redistribution of costs with other nations, which really took advantage of a very nice group of people that ran our country.

But not only is this a time of incredible excitement in the United States. It's also an exhilarating period right here in the Arabian Peninsula. A beautiful place, by the way, a beautiful place. Exactly... Thank you.

Exactly eight years ago this month I stood in this very room and looked forward to a future in which the nations of this region would drive the forces of terrorism and extremism, drive them right out of existence, and take your place among the proudest, most prosperous, most successful nations anywhere in the world as leaders of a modern and rising Middle East. So exciting. So exciting.

Mohammed, do you sleep at night? How do you sleep? Huh? Just thinking. What a job. He tosses and turns like some of us, tosses and turns all night, how do I make it even better, all night. It's the ones that don't toss and turn, they're the ones that will never take you to the promised land. Won't they? But you have done some job. True.

Saudi Arabia has proved the critics totally wrong. The transformation... has been truly extraordinary

But critics doubted that it was possible what you've done. But over the past eight years, Saudi Arabia has proved the critics totally wrong. The transformation that has occurred — even by these incredible business leaders, I mean you have the biggest leaders in business anywhere in the world standing right before us — but the transformation that has occurred under the leadership of King Salman and Crown Prince Mohammed has been truly extraordinary. Such a thing has I don't think ever happened before. I've never seen anything at that scale happen before.

And I guess maybe you could say the United States is doing pretty well too, but I don't think too many people have seen that happen before. Majestic skyscrapers, the towers that I see, the difference between now and eight years ago. And eight years ago, it was very impressive. But the towers that I see rising, some of the exhibits that I was shown by Mohammed, what I've seen there is just an amazing, amazing process, amazing genius of so many people, architecture. But I have a feeling I know where many of those ideas came from, happens to be sitting right in this room, right before me.

But the towers and all of the different... I've seen a lot of different towers. I didn't think there's any version of a tower that I haven't seen in one form or another. I just passed four exhibits. I have never seen anything like any of them. So it's going to be very exciting. And they sit among the ancient wonders of a growing and exciting city. It's really amazing.

Riyadh is becoming not just a seat of government, but a major business, cultural, and high-tech capital of the entire world. The World Cup is here. Gianni, just stand up, Gianni. Gianni. Thank you, Gianni. Great job, Gianni. Great job. But the World Cup and the World Expo will soon be coming here, just like the World Cup is coming to the United States. It's going to be really exciting next year.

The engines of Formula 1 racing now roar through the streets of Jeddah. In a historic milestone, other industries recently surpassed oil. Think of it, all of your other industries now have surpassed oil. I don't know if a lot of people will understand what that means, it's so big. To make up a majority of the Saudi economy for the very first time ever, so think of that. Other industries are now bigger even than oil, which is always going to be a big monster. It's a big one. But that's a great tribute to you and economic development properly used.

In other cities throughout the peninsula, places like Dubai and Abu Dhabi, Doha, Muscat, the transformations have been unbelievably remarkable. Before our eyes a new generation of leaders is transcending the ancient conflicts of tired divisions of the past and forging a future where the Middle East is defined by commerce, not chaos; where it exports technology, not terrorism; and where people of different nations, religions, and creeds are building cities together, not bombing each other out of existence. We don't want that.

And it's crucial for the wider world to note this great transformation has not come from Western interventionists or flying people in beautiful planes giving you lectures on how to live and how to govern your own affairs. No, the gleaming marvels of Riyadh and Abu Dhabi were not created by the so-called nation-builders, neocons or liberal nonprofits like those who spent trillions and trillions of dollars failing to develop Kabul, Baghdad, so many other cities.

The birth of a modern Middle East has been brought by the people of the region themselves, the people that are right here

Instead, the birth of a modern Middle East has been brought by the people of the region themselves, the people that are right here, the people that have lived here all their lives — developing your own sovereign countries, pursuing your own unique visions, and charting your own destinies in your own way. It's really incredible what you've done.

In the end the so-called nation-builders wrecked far more nations than they built, and the interventionists were intervening in complex societies that they did not even understand themselves. They told you how to do it, but they had no idea how to do it themselves.

Peace, prosperity and progress ultimately came not from a radical rejection of your heritage, but rather from embracing your national traditions and embracing that same heritage that you love so dearly

Peace, prosperity and progress ultimately came not from a radical rejection of your heritage, but rather from embracing your national traditions and embracing that same heritage that you love so dearly, and it's something only you could do.

You achieved a modern miracle the Arabian way. That's a good way.

Today, the Gulf Nations have shown this entire region a path towards safe and orderly societies with improving quality of life, flourishing economic growth, expanding personal freedoms, and increasing responsibilities on the world stage. After so many decades of conflict, finally it is within our grasp to reach the future that generations before us could only dream about — a land of peace, safety, harmony, opportunity, innovation and achievement, right here in the Middle East.

So beautiful. It's such a beautiful thing that's happening. I guess the people that are here can't even really appreciate it because you see it happening, and it's when you come to a place that you haven't seen in five years or 10 years or 20 years, that it's even more incredible.

When I left office just over four years ago, that future seemed almost impossible, what you've done. Together, we had obliterated the killers of ISIS. We wiped them out, and terminated its founder and leader, al-Baghdadi. We had healed the divide in the Gulf Cooperation Council. It's a very big deal, and united the nations of the region to stand against the enemies of all civilization.

We'd imposed unprecedented sanctions on Iran and starved the regime of resources to fund terror. They were unable to fund anything because they had no money left. They had no money, but the

new administration came in and let them have a lot of money, and you saw what happened. It was not money well spent.

It's my fervent hope, wish, and even my dream that Saudi Arabia, a place I have such respect for... will soon be joining the Abraham Accords

And with the historic Abraham Accords that we're so proud of, all the momentum was aimed at peace, and it aimed very successfully. It's been an amazing thing, the Abraham Accords. And it's my fervent hope, wish, and even my dream that Saudi Arabia — a place I have such respect for, especially over the last fairly short period of time, what you've been able to do — but will soon be joining the Abraham Accords. I think it'll be a tremendous tribute to your country, and it will be something that's really going to be very important for the future of the Middle East.

I took a risk in doing them, and they've been an absolute bonanza for the countries that have joined. The Biden administration did nothing for four years. We would have had it filled out. But it will be a special day in the Middle East, with the whole world watching, when Saudi Arabia joins us. And you'll be greatly honoring me, and you'll be greatly honoring all of those people that have fought so hard for the Middle East, and I really think it's going to be something special. But you'll do it in your own time, and that's what I want, and that's what you want, and that's the way it's going to be. When I left office, the only thing still standing between this region and its unbelievable potential was a small group of rogue actors and violent thugs seeking constantly to drag the Middle East backward and into havoc, mayhem, and indeed into war. Unfortunately, instead of confronting these destructive forces, the last US administration chose to enrich them and empower them and give them billions and billions of dollars.

The Biden administration, the worst administration in the history of our country, by the way, spurned our most trusted and longstanding Gulf partners. And I can say partners worldwide. One of our great, great partners, no matter who we look to, and we have great partners in the world, but we have none stronger and nobody like the gentleman that's right before me. He's your greatest representative, greatest representative.

And if I didn't like him, I'd get out of here so fast. You know that, don't you? He knows me well. I do, I like him a lot. I like him too much. That's why we give so much, too much. I like you too much. Great guy.

They lifted sanctions on Iran in exchange for getting nothing and sent the regime tens of billions of dollars to fund terror and death all over the world, and they laughed at him. They laughed at our leader, and they're still laughing at our leader. They thought him a fool, and they made nothing but trouble ever since, including the funding of October 7th, one of the worst days ever in the history of the Middle East, a horrible day.

Biden removed the Houthis from the list of foreign terrorist organizations even while missiles and drones were being launched right here at your beautiful city of Riyadh, and launched at ships if they happened to be sailing in the wrong location. The Biden administration's extreme weakness and gross incompetence derailed progress toward peace, destabilized the region, and put at risk everything we had worked so hard to build together.

And when you think of the great achievements that you've made, to do it in light of a pretty hostile administration, an administration that was not a believer, it makes your achievements even greater. It makes them even greater. You know that.

Working with the vast majority of people in this region who seek stability and calm, our task is to unify against the few agents of chaos and terror that are left and that are holding hostage the

dreams of millions and millions of great people. The biggest and most destructive of these forces is the regime in Iran

But in a few short months since taking office, we have achieved the swift return of American strength at home and abroad. Now, working with the vast majority of people in this region who seek stability and calm, our task is to unify against the few agents of chaos and terror that are left and that are holding hostage the dreams of millions and millions of great people.

The biggest and most destructive of these forces is the regime in Iran, which has caused unthinkable suffering in Syria, Lebanon, Gaza, Iraq, Yemen and beyond.

There could be no sharper contrast with the path you have pursued on the Arabian Peninsula than the disaster unfolding right across in the Gulf of Iran. Think of that. They wanted to name it that, I said, “They’re not going to let them do that. Do you mind if I stop that?” I stopped it. We’re not going to let that happen.

While you have been constructing the world’s tallest skyscrapers in Jeddah and Dubai, Tehran’s 1979 landmarks are collapsing into rubble and dust. They had it going for a little while under a much different system, but those buildings are largely falling apart, falling down, while you’re building some of the world’s biggest and most incredible infrastructure projects, buildings, all sorts of things you’re building that nobody’s ever even seen before. Iran’s decades of neglect and mismanagement have left the country plagued by rolling blackouts, lasting for hours a day. All the time, you hear about it.

While your skill has turned dry deserts into fertile farmland, Iran’s leaders have managed to turn green farmland into dry deserts, as their corrupt water mafia, let’s call it the water mafia, causes droughts and empty riverbeds. They get rich, but they don’t let the people have any of it.

And then of course there’s the key difference at the root of it all: While the Arab states are focused on becoming pillars of regional stability and world commerce, Iran’s leaders have focused on stealing their people’s wealth to fund terror and bloodshed abroad. The most tragic of all, they have dragged down an entire region with them.

Countless lives were lost in the Iranian effort to maintain a crumbling regime in Syria. Look at what happened with Syria.

In Lebanon, their Hezbollah proxies have pillaged the hopes of a nation whose capital Beirut was once called the Paris of the Middle East. Can you imagine — all of this misery and so much more was entirely avoidable, absolutely avoidable. And Mohammed knew that. He knew that. Smart people knew that. If only the Iranian regime had focused on building their nation up instead of tearing the region down.

Yet I’m here today not merely to condemn the past chaos of Iran’s leaders, but to offer them a new path and a much better path toward a far better and more hopeful future. As I’ve shown repeatedly, I am willing to end past conflicts and forge new partnerships for a better and more stable world, even if our differences may be very profound, which obviously they are in the case of Iran.

I have never believed in having permanent enemies. I am different than a lot of people think. I don’t like permanent enemies, but sometimes you need enemies to do the job and you have to do it right. Enemies get you motivated. In fact, some of the closest friends of the United States of America are nations we fought wars against in generations past, and now they’re our friends and our allies.

If Iran's leadership rejects this olive branch and continues to attack their neighbors, then we will have no choice but to inflict massive maximum pressure

I want to make a deal with Iran. If I can make a deal with Iran, I'll be very happy if we're going to make your region and the world a safer place. But if Iran's leadership rejects this olive branch and continues to attack their neighbors, then we will have no choice but to inflict massive maximum pressure, drive Iranian oil exports to zero, like I did before.

Did you know that — they were a virtually bankrupt country because of what I did. They had no money for terror, they had no money for Hamas or Hezbollah... And take all action required to stop the regime from ever having a nuclear weapon. Iran will never have a nuclear weapon.

We want them to be a wonderful, safe, great country, but they cannot have a nuclear weapon

But with that said, Iran can have a much brighter future but we'll never allow America and its allies to be threatened with terrorism or nuclear attack. The choice is theirs to make. We really want them to be a successful country. We want them to be a wonderful, safe, great country, but they cannot have a nuclear weapon.

This is an offer that will not last forever. The time is right now for them to choose. Right now. We don't have a lot of time to wait. Things are happening at a very fast pace, they're happening right here. They're happening at a very fast pace. So they have to make their move right now, one way or the other. Make your move.

As I said in my inaugural address, my greatest hope is to be a peacemaker and to be a unifier. I don't like war.

We have the greatest military, by the way, in the history of the world. And I rebuilt our military in my first four years and rebuilt it into the most powerful military there is, and you saw that when I knocked out ISIS in three weeks. People said it would take four years, five years. I did it, we did it, in three weeks.

Just days ago, my administration successfully brokered a historic ceasefire to stop the escalating violence between India and Pakistan, and I used trade to a large extent to do it. I said, fellas, "Come on. Let's make a deal. Let's do some trading. Let's not trade nuclear missiles. Let's trade the things that you make so beautifully."

And they both have very powerful leaders, very strong leaders, good leaders, smart leaders, and it all stopped. Hopefully, it'll remain that way, but it all stopped. I was very proud of Marco Rubio and all of the people that worked so hard. Marco, stand up. What a great job you did on that. Thank you. JD Vance, Marco, the whole group worked with you, but it was a great job.

And I think they're actually getting along. Maybe we can even get them together a little bit, Marco, where they go out and have a nice dinner together. Wouldn't that be nice?

But we've come a long way and it could be millions of people could have died from that conflict that started off small and was getting bigger and bigger and bigger by the day.

I've also been working relentlessly to end the terrible bloodshed between Russia and Ukraine, and very importantly, talks are being held in Turkey later this week, probably on Thursday, and they could produce some pretty good results. Our people are going to be going there. Marco's going to be going there, others are going to be going, and we'll see if we can get it done.

5,000 people, young people for the most part, soldiers from Ukraine, soldiers from Russia — they're not from here and they're not from the United States, but they're souls. They're souls. I think usually, mostly they're young, beautiful souls that left their parents waving goodbye, left their brothers and sisters, "Goodbye. I'll see you soon." And they got blown to pieces. 5,000 on average a week are dying.

And people are dying elsewhere in the region, but tremendous numbers like we haven't seen since World War Two are dying and I want to stop it. I want to stop it. It's a horrible war. It would've never happened if I were president. That's a war that would've never happened.

October 7th would have never happened if I were president because Iran had no money to pay Hamas or anybody else. They had no money. They were not looking to take care of them, they had to take care of themselves. They had no money. We stopped their oil effectively with the embargoes and sanctions.

But let me take this opportunity to thank the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for the constructive role that you've played in facilitating the Ukraine talks, and it really is. You've been amazing. You've made everything available to us. Thank you very much. Thank you. And if we get that settled, we'll pay a special tribute to what you've done. You really did lay a great groundwork. Thank you very much. Appreciate it.

The West should not be dragging itself backward into another endless war in Europe, yet another endless war. We should stop the killing and work together to address the biggest long-term threats as one unbeatable team. Think of us as an unbeatable team.

I mean, when you look at what you've done here, that's much more difficult than stopping stupidity. Think of it, it's stupidity. What you've done is much more difficult, and you did it better than anybody else has ever done it.

As President of the United States, my preference will always be for peace and partnership, whenever those outcomes can be achieved. Always, it's always going to be that way. Only a fool would think otherwise

As President of the United States, my preference will always be for peace and partnership, whenever those outcomes can be achieved. Always, it's always going to be that way. Only a fool would think otherwise.

In recent years, far too many American presidents have been afflicted with the notion that it's our job to look into the souls of foreign leaders and use US policy to dispense justice for their sins. They loved using our very powerful military. And now it's really the most powerful it's ever been. We just are getting a budget approved, \$1 trillion, the highest budget we've ever had in history for military, \$1 trillion, and we're getting the greatest missiles, the greatest weapons, and you know I hate to do it, but you have to do it because we believe in peace through strength. You have to have the strength, otherwise bad things could happen.

I believe it is God's job to sit in judgment; my job, to defend America and to promote the fundamental interest of stability, prosperity, and peace. That's what I really want to do

But hopefully, we'll never have to use any of those weapons. It seems to be an awfully big waste of money if you're never going to use them, but hopefully we'll never have to use them, because the destructive power of some of those weapons are like nobody's seen before. I believe it is God's job to sit in judgment; my job, to defend America and to promote the fundamental interest of stability, prosperity, and peace. That's what I really want to do.

I will never hesitate to wield American power if it's necessary to defend the United States or to help defend our allies. And there will be no mercy for any foe who tries to do us or them harm. We will have no mercy. They understand that. That's why I've been pretty lucky. A lot of people think, "He's looking to fight. He's looking to fight," and things get settled. It's an amazing thing when they really think you mean it, but we do. We have the greatest military, the strongest military, stronger than any. Nobody's even close.

We have the best weapons in the world, but we don't want to use them. If you threaten America or our partners, however, then you'll be faced with overwhelming strength and devastating force. We have things that you don't even know about, you don't hear about, and if you did, you'd say, "Wow."

In recent weeks, following repeated attacks on American ships and freedom of navigation in the Red Sea, the United States military launched more than 1,100 strikes on the Houthis in Yemen. As a result, the Houthis agreed to stop. They said, "We don't want this anymore." It's the first time you've heard that from them too. They're tough, they're fighters. But just days ago we were asked to cease targeting commercial... They were not going to be targeting commercial ships in any way, shape or form, or anything American, and they were very happy that we stopped, but we had 52 days of thunder and lightning like they've never seen before.

This was a swift, ferocious, decisive and extremely successful use of military force. Not that we wanted to do it, but they were shooting down ships. They were shooting at you. They were shooting at Saudi Arabia. We don't want them shooting in Saudi Arabia, if that's okay. So we hit them hard. We got what we came for, and then we got out.

Since January 20th, the US military has terminated 83 terrorist leaders operating across Iraq, Syria, and Somalia, including ISIS's number two global leader. You read about that just recently. With the help of Pakistan, we apprehended the ISIS terrorists responsible for the attack on 13 American service members at Abbey Gate. That horrible, horrible disaster. During this Afghanistan withdrawal, that's another thing that we don't even think about so much anymore. 13 died, but 42 were horribly wounded, but hundreds of people died overall, because I count the people on the other side. Hundreds of people, just grossly incompetent.

It's probably why Putin decided to go into Ukraine, something he never would've done if I were president. But we wouldn't have had the problems of October 7th if I were president. We wouldn't have had Ukraine, Russia, if I were president. We wouldn't have had Abbey Gate because there wouldn't have been any reason. We were getting out, but we were getting out with dignity and with strength and power, but the way they got out was not good. I think it was the most embarrassing moment in the history of our country.

All civilized people must condemn the October 7th atrocities against Israel

And we've been working tirelessly to bring back all hostages held by Hamas. We brought back a lot already, but we're bringing back more. This weekend, we successfully negotiated the release of the last American hostage. Edan Alexander just came out a few hours ago, and we continue to work to get that war ended as quickly as possible. It's a horrible thing that's taking place.

The people of Gaza deserve a much better future, but that will or can not occur as long as their leaders choose to kidnap, torture and target innocent men, women and children for political ends

All civilized people must condemn the October 7th atrocities against Israel, which would never have happened, again, if you had, probably, a different president, but definitely if you had me as president. The people of Gaza deserve a much better future, but that will or can not occur as long as

their leaders choose to kidnap, torture and target innocent men, women and children for political ends.

The way those people are treated in Gaza, there's not a place in the world where people are treated so badly. It's horrible.

After years of suffering, two of the nations most ravaged by terror are finally beginning to end their long nightmares under the new generation of leaders in Lebanon, where a friend of mine has just become the ambassador. He's going to be great.

I said, "You know, that could be a very dangerous job." He said, "I was born there. I'm Lebanese. I love that country."

I said, "But it's very dangerous." This is a friend of mine from New York. I said, "But it's very dangerous. Are you sure you want to do it?"

I never thought of him as being a warrior, but he is a warrior. He loves his country.

He said, "If I'm injured or die, I'm dying for a country that I love." He grew up there. It's horrible what's happened in Lebanon, but you have a great ambassador, I can tell you that.

And Lebanon, which has been endlessly victimized by Hezbollah and their sponsor, Iran, a new president and prime minister brought the first real chance in decades for a more productive partnership with the United States, and we're going to work with their new ambassador and everybody else, Marco, and we're going to see if we can really help them out and let them get over that very high grid that they're going to have to get over.

My administration stands ready to help Lebanon create a future of economic development and peace with its neighbors. You have tremendous people in Lebanon, doctors, lawyers, great professional people. I hear it so many times.

Likewise, in Syria, which has seen so much misery and death, there is a new government that will hopefully succeed in stabilizing the country and keeping peace. That's what we want to see in Syria. They've had their share of travesty, war, killing, many years. That's why my administration has already taken the first steps toward restoring normal relations between the United States and Syria for the first time in more than a decade.

I will be ordering the cessation of sanctions against Syria in order to give them a chance at greatness

And I'm very pleased to announce that Secretary Marco Rubio will be meeting with the new Syrian foreign minister in Turkey later this week. And very importantly, after discussing the situation in Syria with the Crown Prince, your Crown Prince, and also with President Erdogan of Turkey who called me the other day and asked for a very similar thing, among others and friends of mine, people that I have a lot of respect for in the Middle East, I will be ordering the cessation of sanctions against Syria in order to give them a chance at greatness.

Oh, what I'd do for the Crown Prince. The sanctions were brutal and crippling and served as an important, really an important function, nevertheless, at the time, but now it's their time to shine. It's their time to shine. We're taking them all off, and I think they're going to have, based on the people and the spirit and everything else that I'm hearing about, so I say good luck, Syria. You show us something very special like they've done frankly in Saudi Arabia. Okay? They're going to show us something special. Very good people.

We're still just at the dawn of the bright new day that awaits for the people of the Middle East

Everywhere we can, my administration is pursuing peaceful engagement, offering a strong and steady hand of friendship to all that will take it in good faith. Together we have made unprecedented strides and tremendous progress, and we're still just at the dawn of the bright new day that awaits for the people of the Middle East, the great, great people of the Middle East.

If the responsible nations of this region seize this moment, put aside your differences and focus on the interests that unite you, then all of humanity will soon be amazed at what they will see right here in this geographic center of the world. It really is. It's like a center of the world, and the spiritual heart of its greatest faiths.

For the first time in a thousand years, the world will look at this region not as a place of turmoil and strife and war and death, but as a land of opportunity and hope

For the first time in a thousand years, the world will look at this region not as a place of turmoil and strife and war and death, but as a land of opportunity and hope, just like you've done right here — a cultural and commercial crossroads of the planet. Security and stability will lift millions into lives of safety and success, and the nations of this region will be free to realize your highest destinies, honor your proud histories, harness amazing new opportunities, and bring incredible glory to Almighty God.

People will come from all over the globe to be inspired by the cities you build, the businesses you create, the technologies you invent, and the beauty, talent and potential you unleash right in the hearts of your citizens. Each of you will be able to take tremendous pride in the legacy you will leave to your children because you will have given them the ultimate blessings of prosperity and peace. So important.

In the United States, we've launched the Golden Age of America. It's the Golden Age. We see it. We see it with all that money, trillions and trillions of dollars pouring in, hundreds of thousands of jobs coming in with it. And with the help of the people of the Middle East and the people in this room, partners throughout the region, the golden age of the Middle East can proceed right alongside of us.

We will work together, we will be together, we will succeed together, we will win together, and we will always be friends. Thank you.

So Mohammed, I want to thank you again very much for having me. And as a representative of what I think is the greatest nation in the world, we are with you all the way, and you have a tremendous future.

Thank you very much, and please pay my respects to your father. Thank you very much. Thank you.

Appendix 2**SECRETARY RUBIO'S TRAVEL TO GERMANY, ISRAEL, SAUDI ARABIA, AND THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES****Press Statement:**

"Secretary of State Marco Rubio will travel to Munich on February 13 to participate in the Munich Security Conference, where he will discuss a range of U.S. priorities with international partners. While in Munich, Secretary Rubio will also participate in the G7 Foreign Ministers' Meeting. He will then travel to Israel, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates from February 15-19. Secretary Rubio's engagements with senior officials will promote U.S. interests in advancing regional cooperation, stability, and peace. The trip will center on freeing American and all other hostages from Hamas captivity, advancing to Phase II of the ceasefire agreement in Gaza, and countering the destabilizing activities of the Iranian regime and its proxies."