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Operation Midnight Hammer: peace through strength

By Steve Bakke  July 14, 2025



JCPOA: The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) negotiated by Obama's administration ten years ago supposedly controlled Iran's nuclear weapons development. The "deal" was more like a blank piece of paper than an agreement. President Obama signed it, but Senate democrats blocked its ratification as a full treaty. Iran never signed it.

America had to rely on the U.N.'s inspectors for information. We were barred from participating. Wisely, during his first term, President Trump disassociated the U.S. from this ineffective, unenforceable agreement. The JCPOA permitted uranium enrichment to very near "weapons grade" over the agreement period. It could only delay nuclear weapon development.

Misdirected "Kindness": During their presidencies, Obama and Biden resorted to cooperation and appeasement in an effort to induce Iran's cooperation. Both administrations released frozen Iranian cash assets and Biden's loosening of sanctions on petroleum sales provided many tens of billions of dollars. Iran used that "windfall" to help fund international terrorism. This included financing proxies such as Hamas, Hezbollah, and the Houthis.



Existential threat: Iran is the leading source of international instability and sponsor of terrorism. The commitment to "no Iranian nuclear weapons" has been shared by Bill Clinton, Hillary Clinton, George W. Bush, Barack Obama, Joe Biden, Kamala Harris, and many others.

For over four decades the Iran regime had sworn death to the U.S. and Israel. A fatwa was issued against Donald Trump, and an assassination attempt almost succeeded. America has lost over 1,000 lives directly due to Iran. Iranian proxies have attacked American troops at least 151 times since January 2021.

There are too many incidents to list. For example: 1983, Hezbollah militants blew up the U.S. Embassy in Lebanon, killing 63, and also the U.S. Marine barracks in Beirut, killing

241. Incidents continued in the decades since, including in Iraq and Afghanistan. The attacks on Israel by Iran and its proxies, are too numerous to count.

What motivates Iran to take such extreme risks to its very survival? Michael Youssef, an Egyptian-born pastor, now in the U.S., offered potential theological motivations for Iran's leaders. They believe in the twelfth Imam, the Mahdi. They also believe global destruction and war will hasten the Mahdi's return. This could motivate the ruling elite "to start a nuclear war, regardless of the consequences."

Dropping Bombs: Inevitably, Iran produced enriched uranium and almost became a nuclear power. The press, along with most progressives, continue to criticize the bombing of Iran's nuclear weapons facilities. Some in Congress believe impeachment is warranted because no Congressional approval was obtained.

While only Congress can declare war, military actions don't necessarily require a declaration. In our nation's history there have been only five congressional declarations of war. For comparison, since the Korean conflict, presidents have ordered more than 125 military actions without congressional approval.

In 2016 alone, Barack Obama, America's "Nobel Peace Prize President," dropped over 26,000 bombs on Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya, Pakistan, Somalia, and Yemen without congressional approval. Many bombs have been "dropped" by recent presidents: Obama over 92,000; Trump, almost 75,000.



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If not now, when? Since the surprise attack on Israel on that infamous "October 7th," retaliatory Israeli attacks on Iran had severely weakening Iran's military. And retaliation against its proxies, Hamas, Hezbollah, and Houthis, added to Iran's vulnerability. Add to that Syria's Assad regime collapsing, and the Mideast peace prospects had improved significantly.

This was an opportunity for Trump to achieve a major international goal while at the same time avoiding a foreign war, as he had promised. And America possessed the only weapon that could get the job done.

After advising Congressional leadership, Trump ordered dropping fourteen "bunker buster" bombs and firing of approximately thirty Tomahawk missiles on Iran's nuclear weapons facilities. Operation Midnight Hammer was fast, limited and successful.

Iran has now indicated a readiness for nuclear talks. However, its insistence on continuing weapon-level uranium enrichment is unacceptable. Iran should know that it would risk another "fast, limited, and successful" attack if it again becomes a nuclear weapon threat. This was a perfect demonstration of "peace through strength."

We can't be sure, but it appears President Trump's decision brought us closer to a peaceful Mideast, and hopefully this progress toward peace becomes contagious throughout the world.