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Democracy Dies in Darkness

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Embassies, airports close as violence worsens



Smoke rises from an Israeli airstrike Tuesday in Beirut. The conflict has spread to Lebanon after Hezbollah fired missiles at Israel.

STATE DEPT. SCRAMBLES TO AID AMERICANS

Middle East in upheaval as Iran steps up retaliation

BY ADAM TAYLOR,
DAN LAMOTHE
AND SAMMY WESTFALL

The State Department is scrambling amid the fallout from President Donald Trump's high-stakes military assault on Iran and Tehran's blistering response, with at least three embassies in the Middle East shuttered as of Tuesday as violence worsened and U.S. citizens were left with limited means to escape.

The U.S. government was working to charter flights for American citizens in the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia and Jordan, and seeking to help people stranded elsewhere book tickets on commercial flights, according to the State Department. Speaking to reporters, Secretary of State Marco Rubio said that almost 1,600 Americans were seeking help to leave the region and that the department also was identifying "military flight options."

It was not immediately clear when the flights would become available — or whether they would be arranged for Americans in any of the 11 other countries and territories included in an urgent warning issued by the U.S. government late Monday.

Spokespeople for the State Department did not immediately respond to requests for comment. The Pentagon referred questions to the White House, which did not provide any clarity on the situation.

A U.S. official, speaking like some others on the condition of anonymity to discuss sensitive information, said that some military family members stationed in Bahrain have been flown to safety and that it is possible the military will be asked to do more for stranded Americans elsewhere in coming days but that no evacuation flights were imminent as of Tuesday morning.

American citizens in the Middle East have expressed frustration with what they say has been a lack of clarity from the administration as violence has reverberated across the region in the days since Trump approved the military operation against Iran. Iranian missiles and attack drones have struck Kuwait, Qatar, Israel, the UAE and other locations, including civilian targets.

The U.S. embassies in Kuwait, Lebanon and Saudi Arabia were closed as of Tuesday, and U.S. citizens were told to stay away until further notice.

SEE AMERICANS ON A11

President and aides have offered varying justifications for the attack

BY WARREN STROBEL,
KAREN DEYOUNG,
ELLEN NAKASHIMA
AND MICHAEL BIRNBAUM

Days into an expanding Middle East war, the Trump administration gave shifting rationales for its decision to attack Iran, even as U.S. officials with access to intelligence reports said they saw no sign the country had posed an imminent threat to the United States.

President Donald Trump and his top national security aides, defending a conflict that has tepid public backing and is incurring escalating risks, emphasized Iran's arsenal of ballistic missiles rather than its nuclear program as the principal threat. But they provided different descriptions of the danger.

At his first public event since the attack began, Trump on Monday never mentioned a key part of his original rationale for the war: deposing Iran's theocratic regime.

Instead, he emphasized that Iran would "soon" have missiles that could hit targets inside the United States.

What Trump had outlined over the weekend as an effort to devastate Tehran's rulers so that the Iranian people could take over was, by Monday, "not a so-called regime change war," in the words of Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth.

Hegseth told reporters at the Pentagon that the Islamic republic was building sophisticated missiles and other conventional weapons to shield its plans for

SEE NUCLEAR ON A10



YAMAM AL SHAAR/REUTERS

Syrians living in Lebanon wait at the border Tuesday as they return home to Syria amid the escalating violence. Israel said Tuesday that it had moved additional troops into southern Lebanon.

Shaping opinion: Trump is flooding news outlets with one-on-one calls. A8

In Riyadh: The CIA's station at the U.S. Embassy is hit in a drone strike. A11

Trump acknowledges economic toll, concedes pump prices likely to rise

BY MICHAEL BIRNBAUM

President Donald Trump acknowledged for the first time on Tuesday the economic toll for Americans of his assault on Iran, saying that oil prices were likely to spike as a result of the fighting in the Persian Gulf but insisting they would eventually dip.

It was a measure of the political consequences of the war as the White House reinforced its effort to justify the surprise attack that started Saturday. The conflict — the largest U.S. military action since the invasion of Iraq in 2003 — is pushing oil prices higher and weighing down the stock market as midterm elections loom later this year.

The president and his allies have offered shifting justifications for the decision to launch the joint

attack with Israel, and they have also declared a range of goals for the outcome.

"So if we have a little high oil prices for a little while, but as soon as this ends, those prices are going to drop, I believe, lower than even before," Trump told reporters in an Oval Office appearance alongside German Chancellor Friedrich Merz, after a reporter asked both leaders how worried they were about the rising prices of oil and gas.

Merz offered a more sober assessment of the war's impact, saying that "this is of course damaging our economies. This is true for the oil prices, and this is true for the gas prices as well. So that's the reason why we all hope that this war will come to an end as soon as possible."

SEE TRUMP ON A8

Father of Ga. shooting suspect guilty of murder

He ignored red flags, gifted rifle used in 2024 massacre, authorities say

BY DANIEL WU

The father of a teenager accused of killing four people at a Georgia high school in 2024 was convicted of second-degree murder Tuesday, a landmark victory for prosecutors in their first-in-the-nation effort to bring murder charges against the parent of an alleged school shooter.

Colin Gray, 55, faces a maximum of 180 years in prison after a Barrow County jury found him guilty on 29 counts, including two counts of second-degree murder and two counts of involuntary manslaughter. The jury deliberated for less than a day following an emotional two-week trial.

Gray took the stand Friday, testifying through tears that he gave his son Colt Gray a rifle as a Christmas gift in 2023 and saw no warning signs it could be used in a mass shooting. Jimmy Berry, an attorney for Gray, said he is a loving parent who struggled at times but was "wired to see the best" in his son.

Prosecutors argued that Gray should be held responsible for failing to secure the weapon he purchased and ignoring clear red flags about his son's deteriorating mental health amid a turbulent home life.

"He was the one person who could have connected all the dots that pointed exactly at what Colt was going to do," Barrow County Assistant District Attorney Patricia Brooks said in closing arguments Monday. "And he was the one person who could have simply taken the rifle away, and he never did."

Gray was silent and looked impassive as the verdict was read

SEE APALACHEE ON A2

ICE training slashed as hiring surged, files show

BY SARAH BLASKEY



STEPHEN B. MORTON

Previously undisclosed records obtained by The Washington Post show that Immigration and Customs Enforcement last year removed about 240 hours from its basic training program.

Immigration and Customs Enforcement dramatically cut its basic training program amid a hiring spree meant to speed up the Trump administration's deportation efforts, records obtained by The Washington Post show, corroborating a whistleblower's claim.

After former ICE instructor Ryan Schwank testified during a congressional hearing last week, the Department of Homeland Security denied any reduction in the amount or quality of training provided to ICE recruits. The previously undisclosed records obtained by The Post show that, as the whistleblower said, ICE last year removed about 240 hours from its basic training program, or more than 40 percent of instructional time.

The documents also offer new insight into how and when the training program was reduced. The vast majority of the cuts occurred in August, the records show, as the Trump administration

SEE TRAINING ON A16

IN THE NEWS

Epstein probe Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick, a former Manhattan neighbor of the convicted sex offender, has voluntarily agreed to testify before a House committee. A2

Law firms targeted In a reversal, the White House will now seek to defend the president's orders sanctioning several law firms. A3

THE NATION

The high court blocked enforcement for now of California policies that discourage educators from telling parents about a student's sexual orientation or identity without consent. A3

THE WORLD

Across Tehran, explosions rang out as the U.S. and Israel continued strikes. Iran and its allies have hit back against Israel, gulf states and targets critical to oil production. A9

THE ECONOMY

As Iran tensions shake markets, here's what you should (and shouldn't) do, Michelle Singletary writes. A12
A sell-off for stocks wrapped around the world, while oil prices climbed even higher due to worries about widening war with Iran. A12

STYLE

The 'Scrubs' reboot on ABC is all about the medicine of nostalgia. Millennial cringe? Sure. So is adult life now. B1

SPORTS

As the Big Ten tournament for women's hoops gets underway, it's top-seeded UCLA — and a chase pack of talent. B7

THE REGION

The Commanders will pay D.C. \$1 million to settle a 2022 lawsuit over accusations of misleading fans. B12

FOOD

Are European groceries better and cheaper than American ones? Prices, variety, income and habits factor in.

BUSINESS NEWS.....A12
COMICS.....B4
OBITUARIES.....B15
OPINION PAGES.....A13
TELEVISION.....B6
WORLD NEWS.....A9

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