

U.S. Strikes Key Iranian Nuclear Sites in Major Escalation

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In a dramatic escalation of tensions in the Middle East, the United States launched coordinated airstrikes early Sunday on three of Iran's primary nuclear facilities. The operation, code-named "Midnight Hammer," targeted the heavily fortified sites at Fordow, Natanz, and Isfahan using B-2 stealth bombers and long-range Tomahawk cruise missiles. Former President Donald Trump, speaking shortly after the attack, claimed the strike "obliterated" Iran's nuclear infrastructure.

While initial assessments suggest the strikes inflicted significant damage, U.S. defense officials have stopped short of confirming whether Iran's nuclear program has been fully disrupted. Fordow and Natanz, in particular, are known for their deep underground bunkers and robust defenses, raising questions about the long-term impact of the operation.

Iran responded swiftly on the international stage, condemning the strikes during an emergency session of the United Nations Security Council. Tehran accused the United States and Israel of jointly orchestrating an "unprovoked act of aggression" and warned of serious consequences. Although Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has yet to comment publicly, Iranian state media has signaled that a formal military response is under consideration.

Despite the scale and scope of the attack, Trump insisted the U.S. does not seek war with Iran. He urged Tehran to "choose peace," but also warned that further military action was possible if Iran continues to pursue its nuclear ambitions. Notably, he suggested that regime change in Iran could be "on the table" if diplomatic efforts fail, remarks that are likely to draw global concern.

International reaction has been mixed. European allies have expressed alarm over the potential collapse of remaining diplomatic frameworks, while Russia and China have called for immediate de-escalation and dialogue. In Israel, the operation has been welcomed as a decisive step against a long-standing regional threat.

The strikes represent a critical turning point in U.S.-Iran relations and raise the stakes in an already volatile region. Whether this bold move leads to renewed diplomacy or a dangerous cycle of retaliation will depend largely on Tehran's next step and whether cooler heads can prevail in the days ahead.