

Trump opts for sanctions against Iran

No American deaths during missile strikes

By **ZEKE MILLER**
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The U.S. and Iran stepped back from the brink of possible war Wednesday, as President Donald Trump indicated he would not respond militarily after no one was harmed in Iran’s missile strikes on two Iraqi bases housing U.S. troops.

Speaking from the White House, Trump seemed intent on deescalating the crisis, which reached a new height after he authorized the targeted killing last week of Gen. Qassem Soleimani, the head of Iran’s elite Quds Force. Iran retaliated overnight with its most direct assault on America since the 1979 seizing of the U.S. Embassy in Tehran, firing more than a dozen missiles from its territory at the installations in Iraq.

Trump credited an early warning system “that worked very well” for the fact that no Americans or Iraqis were killed. He added that Americans should be



President Donald Trump addresses the nation from the White House on the ballistic missile strike that Iran launched against Iraqi air bases housing U.S. troops on Wednesday.

“extremely grateful and happy” with the outcome. Trump, facing one of the greatest tests of his presidency, said Wednesday that Iran appeared to be “standing down” and said the U.S. response would be to put in place new economic sanctions “until Iran changes its behavior.”

The strikes had pushed Tehran and Washington per-

ilously close to all-out conflict and put the world’s attention on Trump as he weighed whether to respond with more military force. The Republican president delivered his remarks surrounded by his national security advisers in the foyer of the White House. His comments came after a late-night tweet in which he insisted “All is well!” after

the strikes. Despite the conciliatory talk, the region remained on edge Wednesday. Americans forces, including a quick reaction force dispatched over the weekend, remained on high alert. The conflict could still play out in unpredictable ways in the weeks and months to come, with Tehran’s proxies in the region

able to carry out attacks. And there was no obvious route toward a rebooting of diplomatic engagement, as Trump pledged to ratchet up the “maximum pressure” campaign of economic sanctions that helped bring on the recent escalation.

Iran, for days, had promised to respond forcefully to Soleimani’s killing, but its limited strike on two bases — one in the northern Iraqi city in Irbil and the other at Ain al-Asad in western Iraq — appeared to signal that it was also uninterested in a wider clash with the U.S. Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif tweeted that the country had “concluded proportionate measures in self-defense.”

Trump, who is facing reelection in November, campaigned for president on a promise to keep the United States from engaging in “endless war.”

On Wednesday he said the United States is “ready to embrace peace with all who seek it.” That marked a change in tone from his Tuesday warning, “If Iran does anything that they shouldn’t be doing, they’re going to be suffering the consequences, and very

strongly.” Trump opened his remarks by reiterating his promise that “Iran will never be allowed to have a nuclear weapon,” even as that country announced in the wake of Soleimani’s killing that it would no longer comply with any of the 2015 nuclear agreement’s limits on enrichment that had been put in place to prevent it from building a nuclear device.

He seized on the moment of calm to call for new negotiations to replace the deal from which he withdrew the U.S., objecting that it didn’t limit Iran’s ballistic missile programs or constrain its regional proxy campaigns like those led by Soleimani.

The president spoke directly to Iran, saying, “We want you to have a future and a great future.”

Trump also announced he would ask NATO to become “much more involved in the Middle East process.” While he has frequently criticized NATO as obsolete and has encouraged participants to increase their military spending, Trump has sought to have the military alliance refocus its efforts on modern threats.

Ukrainian airliner crashes in Iran, killing all 176 aboard

By **MOHAMMAD NASIRI, NASSER KARIMI and JON GAMBRELL**
Associated Press

SHAHEDSHAHR, Iran — A Ukrainian airliner carrying 176 people crashed on the outskirts of Tehran during a takeoff attempt Wednesday hours after Iran launched its missile attack on U.S. forces, scattering flaming debris and passengers’ belongings across farmland and killing everyone on board.

The Iranian military disputed any suggestion the

plane had been blown out of the sky by a missile, and Iranian aviation authorities said they suspected a mechanical problem brought down the 3½-year-old Boeing 737. Ukrainian officials initially agreed but later backed away and declined to offer a cause while the investigation is going on.

The Ukraine International Airlines jet was en route to the Ukrainian capital of Kyiv with 167 passengers and nine crew members from several countries, including 82 Iranians, at least 63 Canadians and 11 Ukrainians, according to officials.

Many of the passengers were believed to be international students attending universities in Canada; they were making their way back to Toronto by way of Kyiv after visiting with family during the winter break. The manifest included several teenagers and children, some as young as 1 or 2.

Ukraine’s President Volodymyr Zelenskiy cut short a visit to Oman to return to Kyiv and said a team of Ukrainian experts would go to Tehran to help investigate the crash.

“Our priority is to find the truth and everyone responsi-

ble for the tragedy,” he wrote in a Facebook statement.

In Canada, where the crash ranked among the worst losses of life for Canadians in an aviation disaster, the flag over Parliament in Ottawa was lowered to half-staff, and Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said the country is “shocked and saddened.” He vowed the government will work to “ensure that this crash is thoroughly investigated and that Canadians’ questions are answered.”



A rescue worker searches the scene where a Ukrainian plane crashed in Shahedshahr, southwest of the capital Tehran, Iran, on Wednesday.

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Karl Marlantes, author of the novel “Deep River”

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Karl Marlantes is the best-selling author of “Matterhorn,” “What It Is Like to Go to War” and his latest novel, “Deep River.” He grew up in Seaside, commercial fishing with his grandfather and attended Seaside schools. Marlantes graduated from Yale University and was a Rhodes Scholar at Oxford University before serving as a Marine in Vietnam.

Deep River is a family epic of three Finnish brothers who in the early 1900s are forced to flee Finland to the United States, settling among other Finns in a logging community in southern Washington. The novel explores the place of immigrants in pioneering the industries and labor unions that came to define the Lower Columbia region.

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