

Hawks and doves agree: Trump is right to not retaliate against Iranian missile strike

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In a rare moment of agreement, hawks and doves concur that President Trump's decision not to retaliate against Iran for Tuesday night's missile strikes targeting U.S. forces is the right course of action.

In a speech on Wednesday, Trump remained unapologetic for killing Qassem Soleimani, an [Iranian general](#) who helped terrorist groups kill U.S. forces, but he did not announce plans for payback.

The Department of Defense referred the *Washington Examiner* to Trump's speech when asked in any retaliatory strikes against Iran's missile sites were in the works.

"Iran appears to be standing down, which is a good thing for all parties concerned and a very good thing for the world," Trump said, adding that no American forces were killed thanks to precautions taken and an early warning system "that worked very well."

Speaking to Iran directly, Trump said he wants the country to have a great future.

"The United States is ready to embrace peace with all who seek it," he said.

Behnam Ben Taleblu, a fellow at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies who studies Iran, said he normally might support some kind of retaliation outside Iran, but in this instance, he felt Trump made the right decision.

"He was quite presidential because he's taking the opportunity not to just get even, but he's taking the opportunity to build a broader coalition for max pressure," Taleblu said.

"I think there's an opportunity to pause, take a breath, and use this to broaden the coalition. And if you can't, and the Iranians respond or escalate further — and there's a chance that they will — then you have the opportunity there to deploy force as needed."

The Trump Doctrine is one where we strike and then move, not invade and then try to persuade people that we're liberators. <https://t.co/awoTBNriXH>

— Rep. Matt Gaetz (@RepMattGaetz) January 8, 2020

Republican Rep. Matt Gaetz, a known Trump ally, praised the president's restraint in a tweet on Wednesday.

"The Trump Doctrine is one where we strike and then move, not invade and then try to persuade people that we're liberators," Gaetz said.

Christopher Preble, a former Navy officer who serves as vice president for defense and foreign policy studies at the Cato Institute, advocates restraint in the U.S.-Iranian relationship, said he appreciates the presidential moderation.

“I’m grateful, in fact, that he did not take this latest incident last night as an excuse to escalate further, and perhaps he recognizes that yet another war in the greater Middle East would be disastrous for American security and for him personally and politically,” Preble told the *Washington Examiner*.

The usual hawkish voices that would advocate an aggressive stance with Iran have been noticeably quiet, according to John Allen Gay, executive director of the John Quincy Adams Society.

“It’s in great part because conflict involves uncertainty,” Gay told the *Washington Examiner*. “But it’s particularly strong in situations where both sides have very little communication, don’t trust each other, assume the worst about each other’s intentions. That makes it very hard to get these messages through clearly and really adds the risk of things getting out of control.”

Despite Trump’s decision to avoid escalation, House Democrats said on Wednesday they are prepared to vote on a war powers resolution in an effort to impose restraint.

“It’s going to be sooner rather than later,” House Majority Leader Rep. Steny Hoyer told CNN on Wednesday.