



[President Trump's State of the Union Fact and Fiction!](#)

President Trump delivered his State of the Union address to a joint session of Congress earlier this week on Tuesday evening. The speech comes as lawmakers face big decisions on domestic spending, national security, and the direction of U.S. engagement abroad. As with past addresses, several of the president's assertions prompted immediate examination from policy analysts and fact checkers. Throughout the remarks, the president returned several times to the topic of Iran, warning that the country is "closer than ever before to a nuclear weapon" and using the longstanding debunked claim – which war hawks have sought to peddle for decades as a guise for pushing military action against Iran – to try to justify a hardline stance in U.S. foreign policy. To many, it was evident that Trump was attempting to lay the groundwork for the potential use of military force against Iran.

This portion of the speech raised several concerns. Independent experts and intelligence assessments have repeatedly found that Iran is not currently building a nuclear weapon or close to one. In fact, its leadership has consistently denied seeking nuclear weapons capability. Over recent years, international inspectors from the International Atomic Energy Agency have been present in the country and have not detected activities that would signal an imminent weapon. Public reporting from multiple intelligence agencies and analysts has stressed that Tehran may have the technical capacity to enrich uranium to higher levels, but there is no direct evidence that it is pursuing a weapons program. These longstanding assessments have been widely reported and verified. More importantly, they stand in contrast to the president's framing in the speech. This gap between political rhetoric and established expert analysis may contribute to misperceptions among the public, especially as national security fears tend to resonate strongly with audiences. The Iran portion of the address also referenced regional aggression, citing support for proxy groups and hostility toward neighboring states. However, the leap from regional influence operations to an imminent nuclear threat is not supported by current evidence.

The president also addressed immigration, trade, and economic growth during his address. On the economy, he reiterated that unemployment is low and that wages are rising. For many workers, wages have indeed grown in recent years, but inflation adjusted income gains have been uneven. When adjusted for inflation, median household income in the United States was

essentially flat over the past decade. In 2024 it was about \$83,730, only slightly above its 2019 level of roughly \$83,260.

On immigration, the president presented border security as a cornerstone of national sovereignty and public safety. He argued that increased enforcement would reduce crime and drug trafficking. It is true that border authorities have seen record levels of apprehensions in recent years, and that smuggling networks remain a serious concern. However, multiple studies have found that immigrants are incarcerated at significantly lower rates than native born citizens. For example, an analysis of U.S. Census data found that immigrants are about 30 percent less likely to be incarcerated than people born in the United States.

The president also touched on international trade. He claimed that new agreements and tariffs have improved the U.S. trade balance and benefited domestic manufacturers. Trade numbers do show periods of improvement in certain sectors, but the overall picture remains mixed. Consumer prices for some imported goods rose as tariffs were applied, and some companies absorbed costs rather than passing savings to consumers. Export levels to key markets remain vulnerable to global demand swings and shifts in currency values.

There were moments in the address that seemed intended to appeal directly to the president's political base. Several members of Congress were invited as honored guests when specific policy areas were discussed. These moments, though emotionally charged, did not always include data to support the narratives presented.

The president highlighted new investments in roads, bridges, and broadband expansion, and several lawmakers from both parties applauded those elements. Independent analysts have noted that infrastructure investment is one of the few areas where agreement persists in Washington. Still, the scale of planned investments presented in the speech will require further negotiation with Congress, and the final outcomes may look different from what was outlined.

On foreign policy beyond Iran, the president reaffirmed commitments to longstanding alliances in Europe and Asia. He cited contributions to NATO and increased military cooperation with key partners. These aspects of U.S. foreign policy have generally received support from bipartisan majorities in Congress. Yet even here, the speech glossed over complex debates about cost sharing and strategic priorities in the face of rising competition from other powers.

Fact checking organizations have already identified several other specific claims in the speech that do not align with available data. For example, the president stated that violent crime has risen nationwide. In fact, while some cities have seen increases, the national crime rate has fluctuated and, in many categories, remains below peaks from decades ago. Similarly, assertions about job creation in certain sectors did not fully account for labor force participation trends and shifts in employment patterns.

All told, the segment on Iran in particular will likely draw sustained attention. By repeating an assertion that has been widely investigated and found lacking in evidence, the president

created a sense of imminent threat that is not backed by current authoritative assessments. The manner in which that framing influences foreign policy decisions, public opinion, and congressional oversight remains to be seen.