



Written by [R. Cort Kirkwood](#) on August 12, 2026

Trump Takes Air Force Plane Due to Alleged Iranian Threat; Leaves Cabinet Secretaries and Journalists Aboard Air Force One

A supposed Iranian threat persuaded President Donald Trump to depart from the NATO Summit in Turkey last month in a military aircraft instead of Air Force One.

But left aboard the threatened president's jet were two Cabinet secretaries and the cadre of journalists who routinely fly on the plane.

Had the threat been carried out, they might have been blown to kingdom come.



The Washington Post/X

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Breaking news: An Iranian assassination threat against President Trump prompted an operation in which he flew secretly from Turkey on an alternate military aircraft while the White House said he was aboard Air Force One, The Post has learned.



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Contradicting public statements, Trump took secret flight from Turke...
The White House said the president was aboard Air Force One as he left a NATO summit. Instead, his departure included an elaborate ruse...

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Details

Iranians likely wouldn't have threatened to kill Trump by targeting Air Force One — if indeed such a threat was real — had the United States not killed Iran's top leaders on orders from Israel.

But that not insignificant fact aside, *The Washington Post* disclosed the president's secret flight out of Turkey on July 8.

"The clandestine mission ... was carried out unbeknownst to journalists and some White House staff members who believed they were on the same plane as the president, according to material reviewed by The Post, a U.S. official familiar with the operation and another person with knowledge of the



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president's travel," the [newspaper reported](#).

Those officials spoke anonymously to the *Post*.

"The administration has claimed that Trump departed Turkey on July 8 on the former Air Force One," the [newspaper continued](#):

Trump announced on social media that he would use the "former Air Force One" rather than the plane that flew him there, a newer Boeing 747-8 gifted to the United States by Qatar. The security of the Qatar-provided aircraft has been called into question, and Trump said last month after the trip that it would undergo additional upgrades.

In Ankara, Trump boarded the old Air Force One jumbo jet in view of television cameras. He was secretly shuttled minutes later to a smaller plane — an [Air Force C-32A](#) — via an airport catering truck typically used to load meals and other supplies preflight, according to the U.S. official and corroborating material reviewed by The Post. That made Air Force One a "decoy" with media and some White House staff aboard, the official said.

Those facts mean that some top officials didn't know where the president was for some time.

The president's whereabouts aside, Trump, as the *Post* observed, claimed on Truth Social that he would fly on the old Air Force One "for old time's sake."

"To honor our brave men and women of the Military, we are sending the brand new, and truly spectacular, Air Force One to Mildenhall Air Force Base, in the United Kingdom, to give them a chance to tour the Aircraft — Everybody is so excited, and we thought that they should be the first," [Trump wrote](#):

For old time's sake, we'll be taking the former Air Force One, from Turkey to Mildenhall, a short trip that is totally worth doing in order to give our Great Military Heroes a chance to appreciate our beautiful new addition to the Air Force Fleet!

Dead Ducks

Trump and Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth, who accompanied the president, were safe. But Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent and Secretary of State Marco Rubio, along with the White House journalists, might have been sent to Earth in a fireball, [CBS News reported](#).

Along with Hegseth and Trump, "White House aides Natalie Harp, Walt Nauta and Dan Scavino were also on the catering truck and the flight with Mr. Trump," the network reported.

"Rubio and Bessent ... were aware the president was on another, secret plane," CBS continued, and "several other White House aides were on the decoy flight, including Stephen Miller, Will Scharf, Steven Cheung, Mike Needham, Ross Worthington and Monica Crowley."

Trump told CBS's Nancy Cordes that "the military and Secret Service ... 'wanted me to go in a different flight.'"

Said CBS, "Asked why it was too dangerous for him to fly on Air Force One, but not members of the press, he said: 'I think, actually, the plane that I flew on was at greater risk.'"

The [network continued](#):



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Video footage captured by the press showed the president walking up the stairs of the old Air Force One and disappearing into the plane, with a catering truck visible on the other side of the jet.

That truck took Trump to the Air Force jet, which flew him to England, where he picked up the new Air Force One donated by Qatar.



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A top Cabinet secretary was with Trump when he took secret flight from Turkey



cbsnews.com

Rubio, Bessent took decoy Air Force One, Hegseth flew on secret flig...
Secretary of State Marco Rubio and Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent were on the decoy flight last month when President Trump secretly ...

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The reporters aboard Air Force One in Ankara received orders to keep their shades pulled down, the [Post disclosed](#):

Asked why reporters had been instructed to lower the window shades on the plane in Turkey, Trump said that it was “because you’re probably on a dangerous flight because of the sleaze bags that we have to deal with.” Trump said that he has a “threat all the time” against his life, and that he is “number one” on Iran’s “list.”



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“But if I go, you go. Right?” Trump suggested to reporters. “Perhaps someday you want to change professions.”

Multiple news accounts and Trump [reported that](#) Israeli intelligence warned U.S. officials about an impending attack on Air Force One.

Israeli involvement raises the question of whether the threat was real, or whether the Israelis manufactured it to frighten Trump and stiffen his resolve to continue the war with Iran.

UPDATE: President Trump was secretly taken off the plane in an airport catering truck.

According to multiple reports, Israeli intelligence had warned the US of a specific Iranian plot to shoot down Trump's plane using shoulder-fired missiles, from as close as half a mile away.... pic.twitter.com/ofnnO1fjie

— Donald J Trump Posts TruthSocial (@TruthTrumpPost) [August 11, 2026](#)

Ridicule Ensues

Understandably, ridicule ensued.

“The leader of the free world had to sneak out of a NATO summit hidden in an airport catering truck,” Mario Nawfal wrote:

This wasn't a war zone or hostile territory. It was Ankara, at a gathering of the most powerful military alliance on the planet, surrounded by the exact people whose entire job is keeping him safe.

And still the big plan was to fold Trump into a food cart, wheel him past the cameras like a low-budget spy movie, and quietly slip him onto a different plane.

Meanwhile the reporters were parked on a decoy Air Force One with the shades pulled down, thinking they were flying with the president. They had no idea he'd snuck out after boarding.

All of this because Iran made a threat credible enough that the most protected man on earth looked at his options and went, you know what, the catering truck it is.

Trump spends half his time talking tough on Iran, big words, big threats, and when it came to actually leaving Turkey, the move was to hide in the sandwiches.

□□□□□ ICYMI: The leader of the free world had to sneak out of a NATO summit hidden in an airport catering truck. You cannot make this up.

This wasn't a war zone or hostile territory. It was Ankara, at a gathering of the most powerful military alliance on the planet, surrounded...

— Mario Nawfal (@MarioNawfal) [August 11, 2026](#)

“Trump thought he was going to be attacked in Turkey by Iran on Air Force One, so they snuck him off



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AF1 and onto a catering truck, and left all the journalists who were traveling with him behind on Air Force One, which at that point was being used as a decoy,” [The Patriotic Blonde wrote](#). “What a f***ing coward.”

“Totally what Patton and MacArthur would have done, right?” [another user wrote](#), referring to Trump’s comparing himself to the two World War II hero generals.



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