



Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei died following a major attack by Israel and the United States.

The attack opened a stunning new chapter in U.S. intervention in Iran, carried the potential for retaliatory violence and a wider war, and represented a startling flex of military might for an American President who swept into office on an “America First” platform and vowed to keep out of “forever wars.”

Iran’s Supreme Leader is the highest political and religious authority in the Islamic Republic of Iran, positioned above the President and Parliament within the country’s unique theocratic-republican system. Established under the 1979 Iranian Constitution following the Islamic Revolution, the office embodies the principle of *Velayat-e-Faqih* (Guardianship of the Islamic Jurist), which grants ultimate authority to a senior Islamic cleric to safeguard Islamic governance.

The Supreme Leader exercises control over the armed forces, appoints key judicial and military officials, oversees state broadcasting, and influences foreign and security policy. The Leader also appoints members of powerful institutions such as the Guardian Council, which vets legislation and election candidates, thereby shaping