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Responding to your message

1 message

Senator Chuck Grassley <Senator@grassley.senate.gov>
To: paul.deaton@gmail.com

Fri, Mar 6, 2026 at 1:35 PM

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March 6, 2026

Dear Paul:

Thank you for taking the time to contact me regarding Operation Epic Fury and Iran. As your senator, it is important to me that I hear from you.

In the early hours of February 28, 2026, the White House posted a video statement from President Trump where he states:

A short time ago the United States military began major combat operations in Iran. Our objective is to defend the American people by eliminating imminent threats from the Iranian regime, a vicious group of very hard, terrible people. Its menacing activities directly endanger the United States, our troops, our bases overseas, and our allies throughout the world. For 47 years, the Iranian regime has chanted 'Death to America' and waged an unending campaign of bloodshed and mass murder targeting the United States, our troops and the innocent people in many, many countries. Among the regime's very first acts was to back a violent takeover of the U.S. Embassy in Tehran, holding dozens of American hostages for 444 days. In 1983, Iran's proxies carried out the Marine barracks bombing in Beirut that killed 241 American military personnel. In 2000, they knew and were probably involved with the attack on the USS Cole.

You may view the entirety of that speech here: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/videos/president-donald-j-trump-on-the-united-states-military-major-combat-operations-in-iran/>.

In the afternoon of February 28, 2026, President Trump announced on Truth Social that the Supreme Leader of Iran, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, was killed. In his post he shared, "Khamenei, one of the most evil people in History, is dead. This is not only Justice for the people of Iran, but for all Great Americans, and those people from many Countries throughout the World, that have been killed or mutilated by Khamenei and his gang of bloodthirsty THUGS. He was unable to avoid our Intelligence and Highly Sophisticated Tracking Systems and, working closely with Israel, there was not a thing he, or the other leaders that have been killed along with him, could do. This is the single greatest chance for the Iranian people to take back their Country."

You can read the entire post here: <https://truthsocial.com/@realDonaldTrump/posts/116150413051904167>.

Following these strikes, Iran began a reckless and indiscriminate retaliation effort against countries across the entire Middle East region. This led to a joint statement being released on March 1, 2026, against the Iranian regime's senseless attacks:

The United States, Bahrain, Jordan, Kuwait, Qatar, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates strongly condemn the Islamic Republic of Iran's indiscriminate and reckless missile and drone attacks against sovereign territories across the region, including Bahrain, Iraq — including the Iraqi Kurdistan Region — Jordan, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates. These unjustified strikes targeted sovereign territory, endangered civilian populations, and damaged civilian infrastructure. The Islamic Republic's actions represent a dangerous escalation that violates the sovereignty of multiple states and threatens regional stability. The targeting of civilians and of countries not engaged in hostilities is reckless and destabilizing behavior.

You can read the full statement here: <https://www.state.gov/releases/office-of-the-spokesperson/2026/03/joint-statement-on-irans-missile-and-drone-attacks-in-the-region/>.

I have also heard concerns about the reported strike on a school in Minab. Captain Tim Hawkins, a spokesperson for the U.S. Central Command, said "We are aware of reports concerning civilian harm resulting from ongoing military operations. We take these reports seriously and are looking into them." Secretary of State Rubio also told reporters that U.S. forces "would not deliberately target a school" and shared that the Department of Defense "would be investigating that if that was our strike."

I would like to take this opportunity to state emphatically that civilian casualties of any number are heartbreaking. The loss of innocent life, especially that of children, is a profound tragedy. I intend to closely monitor the investigation into this incident by the Department of Defense.

In response to Operation Epic Fury, some have mentioned the War Powers Resolution. The War Powers Resolution of 1973, commonly referred to as the War Powers Act, describes the current understanding of the division of power between Congress and the Executive Branch with respect to engaging in a military conflict. The Constitution divides the war powers of the United States between Congress and the President. Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution grants to Congress the responsibility of raising and paying for a standing army, as well as the authority to declare war. Article II, Section 2, of the Constitution names the President Commander in Chief.

Since the early days of our republic, Presidents have asserted their Article II war powers to repel attacks against the United States. More recently, and more controversially, Presidents have cited their inherent Article II powers as an authority to initiate hostilities without prior congressional approval. Actions subject to the narrow limitations within the War Powers Resolution or outside the President's vested Article II authority to undertake actions to protect the security of the United States require congressional approval either through a formal declaration of war or an Authorization for the Use of Military Force (AUMF). Since the end of WWII, Congress has relied primarily on authorizations for the use of military force rather than a formal declaration of war.

Additionally, the War Powers Resolution was passed over the veto of President Nixon and no president since has accepted it as fully constitutional, even while generally following the congressional notification requirements. On March 4, 2026, the Senate voted 47-53 to reject a War Powers Resolution introduced by Senator Kaine to require the withdrawal of U.S. forces " from hostilities within or against the Islamic Republic of Iran."

With regard to the congressional notification requirements, specifically, the War Powers Resolution requires the president to submit within 48 hours to the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the President pro tempore of the Senate a report outlining the circumstances necessitating the introduction of United States Armed Forces; the constitutional and legislative authority under which such introduction took place; and the estimated scope and duration of the hostilities or involvement. I received such a notification from President Trump regarding Operation Epic Fury in my capacity as President pro tempore of the Senate.

You can view that notification here: https://www.grassley.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/03-02-26_iran_war_powers_-_white_house.pdf.

In this notification, President Trump outlined the continued threats posed by Iran's malign behavior, despite the administration's repeated diplomatic efforts. For example, on February 6, 2026, the U.S. and Iran had indirect talks in Oman, and on February 17, 2026, a second round of indirect talks took place in Switzerland. While the U.S. engaged in these talks in good faith efforts to reach diplomatic solutions, Iran's former Supreme Leader followed the talks by threatening U.S. naval assets in the region. You can read his tweet here: https://x.com/khamenei_ir/status/2023707826011378060.

On February 20, 2026, President Trump told members of the press that Iran has “10 days to two weeks” to reach an agreement, or Iran may face consequences. A third round of talks took place on February 26, 2026, in Geneva. Unfortunately, the Iranian regime continued to express that they had no desire to find a diplomatic solution, and instead remained committed to enriching and rebuilding their nuclear program.

I would like to take this opportunity to discuss Iran and its nuclear program more broadly. Iran continues to pose significant threats to the United States, its interests, and those of our allies in the region and beyond. Iran's influence stems from its oil reserves, its status as the world's most populous Shia Muslim country, and its active support for political and armed groups, including several U.S. designated terrorist organizations. Of particular concern are the Iranian government's nuclear program, its military capabilities, its partnerships with Russia and China, and its support for armed factions and terrorist groups.

With regard to its nuclear program, on October 18, 2023, the restrictions set forth in UN Security Council resolution 2231 (2015) to constrain Iran's ballistic missile program expired. Resolution 2231 was based on the assumption that Iran would take the necessary steps towards restoring confidence in the exclusively peaceful nature of its nuclear program. This has not happened. In this context, it is imperative that all states continue to take steps to counter Iran's destabilizing ballistic missile-related activities through ongoing counter-proliferation cooperation.

There have been various views over recent administrations about how best to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon. I opposed what I thought was a weak deal under the Obama administration that provided sanctions relief for unenforceable promises to delay development of a number of weapons. The “maximum pressure” campaign under President Trump's first admin successfully deprived the regime of the resources to make progress on a weapon, but the relaxation of pressure and the constant attempts to lure Iran into another deal under the Biden administration were not effective.

Ultimately, without strong bipartisan support in Congress, the deals did not survive. In March 2022, sanctions were designated on five Iranian individuals and entities for their involvement in ballistic missile activities. Months later in September, sanctions were announced targeting Iran's Morality Police and dozens of other government entities and officials for their role in the arrest, and reported beating of Mahsa Amini, a 22 year old who allegedly violated Iran's oppressive mandatory hijab law.

Following President Trump's second inauguration in January 2025, the President made clear his position on Iran. Within the first two weeks of his Presidency, he signed a National Security Presidential Memorandum (NSPM) to restore maximum pressure on Iran, deny all paths to nuclear weapons, and counter Iran's influence abroad. You can read the NSPM by visiting: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/02/national-security-presidential-memorandum-nspm-2/>, and you can read a fact sheet here: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/fact-sheets/2025/02/fact-sheet-president-donald-j-trump-restores-maximum-pressure-on-iran/>.

Prior to the February 2026 talks, the U.S. and Iran engaged with each other in April and May of 2025 in four direct nuclear talks with the U.S. Envoy to the Middle East, Steve Witkoff, leading negotiations. In an interview with press, Witkoff said "Washington's red line is: 'No enrichment. That means dismantlement, no weaponization,' requiring the complete dismantling of Iran's nuclear facilities in Natanz, Fordow, and Isfahan." President Trump also travelled to the Middle East in May, continuing efforts to make deals with Iran, which included giving up hopes of obtaining nuclear weapons.

On June 12, 2025, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) declared that Iran was not complying with its nuclear nonproliferation obligations. While there had been many such indications in the past, this is the first time this United Nations agency has passed a resolution against Iran in 20 years. Iran reacted angrily and vowed to establish a new enrichment facility "in a secure location" and to substantially increase enrichment. The IAEA has determined that Iran had amassed enough uranium enriched just short of weapons grade to potentially make nine nuclear bombs and it could not provide assurance that the Iranian nuclear program was exclusively peaceful because Iran was not complying with its investigation into man-made uranium particles discovered by inspectors at three undeclared nuclear sites.

This led to a serious of strikes between Iran and Israel, and was followed by the U.S. striking Iran's nuclear facilities.

On June 21, 2025, the United States successfully conducted 3 precision strike attacks on Iran's nuclear facilities. In a nighttime address from President Trump, he stated the following:

A short time ago, the U.S. military carried out massive, precision strikes on the three key nuclear facilities in the Iranian regime: Fordo, Natanz and Esfahan. Everybody heard those names for years as they built

this horribly destructive enterprise.

Our objective was the destruction of Iran's nuclear enrichment capacity and a stop to the nuclear threat posed by the world's number one state sponsor of terror.

Tonight, I can report to the world that the strikes were a spectacular military success. Iran's key nuclear enrichment facilities have been completely and totally obliterated. Iran, the bully of the Middle East, must now make peace. If they do not. Future attacks would be far greater and a lot easier.

You can view his address by visiting: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/videos/president-trump-delivers-address-to-the-nation-june-21-2025/>.

You may be interested to know that I also received a War Powers notification from President Trump regarding these June 2025 strikes on Iranian nuclear facilities. You can view it here: https://www.grassley.senate.gov/download/potus-to-grassley_-war-powers.

The Iranian people have overwhelmingly been supportive of action taken by the United States. In fact, weeks prior Iranian citizens were themselves protesting the regime. Sadly, these protests turned violent with the regime turning to brutality and violence against its own people in an attempt to quiet opposition.

On December 28, 2025, protests started in various cities in Iran due to inflation, currency devaluation, and a worsening economic situation. The protests started when merchants closed their shops in Tehran's Grand Bazaar, due to the Iranian currency, rial, hitting a record low against the U.S. dollar. Thousands of Iranian citizens followed suit and took to the streets to protest. In response, Iranian authorities responded with repression and a brutal crackdown against their own people. It has been reported that Iranian security forces have resorted to violence, using live ammunition against protestors. Furthermore, due to the ongoing internet blackout that the Iranian government has implemented, it is unclear how many protestors have been injured or killed.

In light of this, President Trump issued a post on Truth Social asking for the killing of protestors to stop. You can view that here: <https://truthsocial.com/@realDonaldTrump/posts/115888317758045915>.

On January 10, 2026, Secretary of State Rubio also voiced his support for those protesting in Iran. You can read his post here: <https://x.com/marcorubio/status/2009860483143102793>.

On January 15, 2026, the Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Asset Control announced it would be sanctioning Iranian individuals who are involved in the violence against their own people. You can read more about the Department of the Treasury's actions here: <https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/sb0364>.

Additionally, on January 13, 2026, I put out a statement in support of the protestors in Iran. You can view that post here: <https://x.com/ChuckGrassley/status/2011215117929889934>.

On February 10, 2026, I spoke on the Senate floor in support of the Iranian protests and denounced the Iranian regime's brutal repression against its own citizens. You can watch my speech here: <https://www.grassley.senate.gov/news/remarks/grassley-speaks-in-support-of-iranian-protestors-denounces-regimes-brutal-repression>. You may also be interested to know that I am an original co-sponsor of S.Res.606, a resolution that condemns the Iranian government for suppressing the right of Iranians to peacefully assemble.

I feel for the Iranian people and earnestly hope for a better future for them. However, as we saw after the Iran deal orchestrated by the Obama administration, known as the JCPOA, Iran does not use the inflow of revenue after the relaxation of sanctions and the release of assets to improve the lives of its people, but instead puts that money towards its network of terrorist proxies. That is why I continue to support the Trump administration's actions that deprive Iran of the resources to continue its campaign of terror, and that is why Iranians have been seen welcoming the decisive action taken by the U.S. against Iran.

Rest assured, I have been and will continue to follow closely what is happening in Iran. On March 3, 2026, I attended a classified briefing with my fellow senators over the situation in Iran.

Barbara and I have been and will continue to be praying for the safety of all our service men and women. I was deeply saddened to learn of the passing of several brave soldiers, including Sergeant Declan Coady, a young man from West Des Moines, and Major Jeffrey O'Brien, a man from Indianola. These heroes have paid the ultimate price to protect us, and we will never forget their service and sacrifice.

Again, thank you for taking the time to contact me. Please keep in touch.

Sincerely,



Chuck Grassley
United States Senator



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