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# Washington Weekly: Iran

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**Washington this week was preoccupied with the impact of and reactions to the US's (and Israel's) attacks on Iran last Saturday. John Nolan and the Governmental Affairs US team discuss this topic and others in this week's Washington Weekly.**

## **Iran.**

While a major departure from President Trump's criticisms of prior administrations' "forever wars" in the Middle East, these actions reflect an increasingly aggressive foreign policy stance that has included last year's bombing of nuclear facilities in Iran and the more recent interventionism in Venezuela. The attacks resulted in the death of Iran's leader (Ayatollah Ali Khamenei), but they have not resulted in an overthrowing of the existing government, as President Trump urged the Iranian people to do. Iran has responded with attacks on military and economic targets aligned with the US throughout the region that raise concerns about the disruption of energy supplies and the potential for protracted conflict not only in Iran, but in the Middle East. President Trump and administration officials have provided varied and sometimes conflicting views on the rationales for the attacks (including preemptive action against Iran's nuclear capabilities and regime change), on next steps, and on the nature, level, and timing of the US's ongoing engagement.

## **Congressional Response.**

The attacks prompted debate in Congress and votes on resolutions that would require Congressional authorization for further US military operations against Iran. The war powers resolutions failed in both the Senate and the House, mostly along party lines. Democrats criticized the operation as unlawful, arguing that the Trump administration failed to seek congressional authorization before initiating hostilities. Despite some unease, Republicans largely maintained a united front in support of President Trump. Nevertheless, concerns about the duration of the conflict and the potential deployment of US ground forces have exposed some divisions. Complicating matters, the Trump administration may shortly need more money to continue its campaign against the Iranian regime. Congress will have to approve it. To pass,

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it will need 60 votes in the Senate. Any vote for further funding will be difficult given razor-thin margins of Republican control in the House and Senate.

**Public Skepticism.**

Early polling suggests President Trump's decision to launch US strikes against Iran is not resonating with the American public. More voters disapprove than approve of the military action just days into the conflict. Multiple surveys show that Americans remain unconvinced by the administration's shifting rationales for the attacks, reflecting broader unease about escalation in the Middle East and the prospect of another prolonged engagement. The data also underscore the limits of the traditional "rally around the flag" effect. In a highly polarized political environment, this effect has been muted in recent conflicts. With US casualties already reported and the administration signaling that operations will continue, the polling points to a potential political vulnerability for the White House. The Trump administration is on thin ice with the public, and it wouldn't take much for the entanglement to become a drag upon the entire party.

Download the full report, or visit the [Washington Weekly website](#) for more.

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