United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 10, 2026

President Donald Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

Eleven days ago, the American people unexpectedly found themselves at war with Iran. Since then, despite the public's overwhelming concern about this war, your administration has provided shifting, and at times conflicting, objectives for this war, refused to define the scope of U.S. operations or the measurements for success, and failed to articulate an end game. Therefore, we write to demand that your key cabinet officials appear before the Senate, participate in public hearings, and provide answers to fundamental questions.

Despite your own admission that you controlled the timing for when the U.S. launched strikes on Iran, your administration failed to prepare for the predictable risks that U.S. military action would create for our personnel and assets abroad. As a result, thousands of Americans have been stranded overseas as drones and missiles strike hotels and airports. Diplomatic facilities have been damaged. And tragically, American servicemembers have lost their lives. At the same time, because of this conflict American families are now grappling with skyrocketing gas and energy prices at a moment when they're already facing a national affordability crisis. The mounting cost of this war requires answers to Congress and the public.

Beginning on February 24, at the State of the Union address, you neglected a critical opportunity to propose your objectives with respect to Iran and to make a case to the American people. Since the war began on February 28, your cabinet officials have refused to testify publicly before Congress. Meanwhile, your administration's public justifications for the war have shifted daily. You initially appeared to encourage the Iranian people to rise up and overthrow the regime. Then your administration described its objectives to be limited to strikes against Iranian military sites. Then, incredibly, you called for installing a compliant regime figure modeled on Venezuela. Most recently, you claimed the goal was "unconditional surrender" and suggested "possibly" sending U.S. ground forces into Iran.

These ever-shifting goals and explanations suggest there is no clear plan. Further, this raises the risk of mission creep which, based on history, would likely lead to more U.S. casualties and escalating costs for taxpayers. The American people – including our men and women in uniform – deserve clear answers about the war and accountability from your administration. Public hearings featuring cabinet-level witnesses has been a standard part of congressional oversight throughout our history, including recent military conflicts, as well as during the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. After all, our founders were clear about the role of Congress in matters of war as the representatives of the American people.

As such, we request that your key cabinet secretaries – including Secretaries Rubio and Hegseth – immediately appear under oath in public hearings to answer the questions the American people have about the goals, scope, and end game for this war.

Public hearings would be a small but important first step to uphold your oath, to inform Congress, and to explain your actions to the American people whose sons and daughters are on the front lines of this war.

Sincerely,

Charles E. Schumer
Democratic Leader

Jack Reed
Ranking Member, Committee on Armed Services

Jeanne Shaheen
Ranking Member
Senate Foreign Relations Committee