



U.S. House of Representatives
COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET
Washington, DC 20515-6065

March 5, 2026

The Honorable Phillip Swagel, PhD
Director
Congressional Budget Office
402 Ford House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Dr. Swagel,

On February 28, 2026, the Trump administration launched a war against Iran without first notifying Congress or seeking authorization under the Constitution or the War Powers Act. President Trump has said the war may last 4-5 weeks and could go longer. He has also not ruled out deploying U.S. troops on the ground in Iran. Further, President Trump and his administration have provided shifting reasoning for engaging in this military conflict and have not provided clear objectives for the conflict.

To help Congress understand the implications of the war in Iran, I request that to the extent possible, the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) conduct the following analysis:

- The operational, logistical, and sustainment costs of the war in Iran, including any additional direct or indirect costs associated with the use of military forces for this purpose.
- Given the history of recent military operations, such as Operation Iraqi Freedom, what other types of additional costs might be involved in a war with Iran? For example, diplomatic operations and foreign aid costs. To the extent possible, can CBO estimate those additional costs?
- The opportunity costs of operations in Iran. For instance, how would moving an aircraft carrier from near Taiwan to off the coast of Iran impact the United States responding to potential Chinese aggression?
- The effect on prices from the economic disruption caused by the war in Iran.

Please conduct this analysis under several scenarios, including scenarios of the war lasting longer than 4 to 5 weeks and deploying U.S. troops on the ground in Iran.

I appreciate that because of the administration's various and contradictory stated objectives and potential timeline, the exact extent of operations is uncertain. Additionally, I recognize that CBO will need assistance from the Department of Defense. It has previously tried to hinder Congress' power of the purse and oversight responsibilities by declining to provide CBO certain data. Please provide a response as CBO has answers and provide updates as more information becomes available.

The Constitution grants Congress both the power of the purse and the responsibility of declaring war. A timely and comprehensive estimate from CBO will support Congress in the conduct of its constitutional responsibilities. Congress should ensure we are spending taxpayer dollars to improve the quality of life for the American people, not paying for another endless war in the Middle East.

Thank you for CBO's work on this analysis. The staff contact for this analysis is Sam Wice, who can be reached at 202-226-7200.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Brendan F. Boyle". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Brendan F. Boyle
Ranking Member