



### [House Announces Plans for a War Powers Resolution](#)

Speaker Nancy Pelosi announced that the House would be introducing a War Powers Resolution this week that seeks to limit the actions President Trump can take against Iran without prior congressional approval. Speaker Pelosi's announcement came on the heels of the President deciding to kill Iranian General Qassem Soleimani without notifying Congress prior to the strike. The War Powers Act was initially passed in 1973 to limit military action a president could take without congressional approval. It has previously been used by Congress to check President Clinton's actions in Kosovo and President Obama's actions in Libya. The resolution is likely to pass the Democratic-controlled House of Representatives, but faces a firmer test in the Republican-held Senate.

Speaker Pelosi's decision to introduce the War Powers Resolution in the House comes amid a wave of backlash to the President's decision to kill General Soleimani. Congressional Democrats have called the strike a dangerous escalation and have been advocating for a diplomatic resolution to the escalating tensions with Iran. The decision to go ahead with the attack without notifying congressional leaders also incensed Democrats, as it is not the first time that the President has conducted a serious military operation without notifying key Democrats. Should the resolution pass, the Trump Administration would be legally mandated to cease hostilities with Iran within thirty days, unless further congressional action was taken. Essentially, Congress would have to vote to allow the President to continue military action against Iran.

In Speaker Pelosi's letter to her Democratic colleagues, she stressed that the President targeting high-level foreign officials was a dangerous escalation that placed American "servicemembers, diplomats, and interests" at risk throughout the Middle East. She also said that as elected representatives it was their duty to protect American lives at home and abroad, and that she was trying to prevent unnecessary bloodshed. Speaker Pelosi's comments were echoed by Democratic Senator Tim Kaine, who introduced a similar resolution in the Senate.

In a series of tweets, President Trump argued that giving prior notice to Congress was not legally required, but that his social media posts would serve as notification that if Iran retaliated, the United States would also escalate through potentially "disproportionate" methods. The President reiterated this threat of disproportionate retaliation both on Twitter and to reporters aboard Air Force One, saying that Iran's cultural sites were not out of bounds and could be targeted. This statement caused more alarm to Democrats on Capitol Hill, as the targeting of cultural heritage sites is constituted as a war crime under the Geneva Convention of 1949 and the Hague Convention of 1954.

Should the resolution pass both the House and Senate, it would impact President Trump's ability to strike Iran on a whim. It would also likely serve to deescalate tensions between the United States and Iran, as any military action would be properly vetted by Congress where Democrats would most likely push back against the Trump Administration conducting disproportionate or unnecessary attacks.