

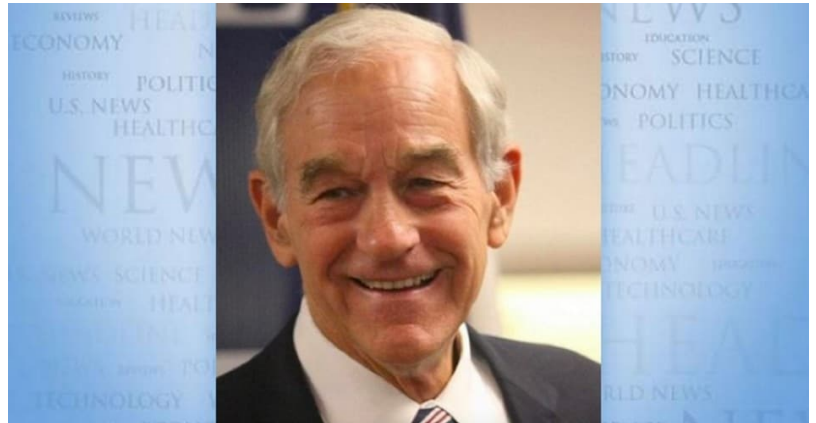


Written by [Ron Paul](#) on April 14, 2025

Standing at the Edge of the Iran War Cliff

Millions of people around the world were at the edge of their seats over the weekend, waiting to hear whether Trump special envoy Steve Witkoff's indirect talks with the Iranian foreign minister would ratchet down tensions or would break down and bring on a major Middle East war.

If it seems bizarre that the outcome of a meeting between a US president's designated negotiator and a foreign government minister could determine whether we plunge into possibly our biggest war since World War II, that's because it is bizarre. In fact, this is an excellent example of why our Founders were so determined to keep warmaking authority out of the Executive Branch of government. No one person — much less his aide — should have the power to take this country to war.



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That is why the Constitution places the authority to go to war firmly and exclusively in the hands of the representatives of the people: the US Congress. After all, it is the US people who will be expected to fight the wars and to pay for the wars and to bear the burden of the outcome of the wars. When that incredible power is placed in the hands of one individual — even if that individual is elected — the temptation to use it is far too great. Our Founders recognized this weakness in the system they were rebelling against — the British monarchy — so they wisely corrected it when they drafted our Constitution.

Unless the US is under direct attack or is facing imminent direct attack, the Constitution requires Congress to deliberate, discuss, and decide whether a conflict or potential conflict is worth bringing the weight of the US military to bear. They wanted it harder, not easier, to take us to war.

When wars can be started by presidents with no authority granted by Congress, the results can be the kinds of endless military engagements with ever-shifting, unachievable objectives such as we've seen in Afghanistan and Iraq.

We are currently seeing another such endless conflict brewing with President Trump's decision to start bombing Yemen last month. The stated objectives — to end Houthi interference with Israeli Red Sea shipping — are not being achieved so, as usually happens, the bombing expands and creates more death and destruction for the civilian population. In the last week or so, US bombs have struck the water supply facilities for 50,000 civilians and have apparently blown up a civilian tribal gathering.

Starting a war with Iran was the furthest thing from the minds of American voters last November, and certainly those who voted for Donald Trump were at least partly motivated by his promise to end current wars and start no new wars. However, there is a strange logic that to fulfill the promise of no new wars, the US must saber rattle around the world to intimidate others from crossing the White



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House. This is what the recycled phrase “peace through strength” seems to have come to mean. But the real strength that it takes to make and keep peace is the strength to just walk away. It is the strength to stop meddling in conflicts that have nothing to do with the United States.

That is where Congress comes in. Except they are not coming in. They are nowhere to be found. And that is not a good thing.

Ron Paul is a former U.S. congressman from Texas. This [article](#) originally appeared at the Ron Paul Institute for Peace and Prosperity and is reprinted here with permission.



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