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MIDDLE EAST

PENTAGON SEEKS \$200B FOR IRAN WAR



MANUEL BALCE CENETA, ASSOCIATED PRESS

Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth speaks Thursday during a briefing at the Pentagon in Washington.

Request for extra funding will require Congressional approval

LISA MASCARO AND KEVIN FREKING
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Pentagon is seeking \$200 billion in additional funds for the Iran war, a sizable amount that is certain to be met with questions from Congress, which would need to approve any new money.

The department sent the request to the White House, according to a senior administration official who spoke on condition of anonymity. Asked about the figure at a press conference Thursday, Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth did not directly confirm the amount, saying it could change.

“It takes money to kill bad guys,” Hegseth said.

But he said “we’re going back to Congress and our folks there to ensure that we’re properly funded.”

Big price tag

It’s an extraordinarily high number and comes on top of extra funding the Defense Department already received last year in President Donald Trump’s big tax cuts bill. Such a request would need to be approved

by Congress, and it is not at all clear such spending would have political support.

Congress has been bracing for a new spending request but it is not clear the White House transmitted the request for consideration.

Lawmakers didn’t authorize the war, and Congress is showing growing unease with the military operation’s scope and strategy.

The new funding request was first reported by The Washington Post.

Trump said the administration is asking for the money for other reasons beyond Iran.

“This is a very volatile world,” the president said from the Oval Office. He said the emergency spending would be a “very small price to pay” to ensure the nation’s military stays in top shape.

Since the U.S. and Israel launched the war on Feb. 28, Iran’s top leaders were killed in airstrikes and the country’s military capabilities were severely degraded. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said late Thursday that Iran no longer has the ability to enrich uranium

or make ballistic missiles.

While the House and Senate are controlled by the president’s Republican Party, many of the more conservative lawmakers are also fiscal hawks, with little political appetite for big spending. Most Democrats are likely to reject such a request and demand more detailed plans from the Trump administration about the U.S. military’s goals and objectives.

Rep. Ken Calvert, R-Calif., the chair of the House subcommittee with oversight of defense spending, said he was already advocating for a supplemental spending bill to allow the Pentagon to replenish munitions.

“That was going to happen, and now we have this conflict with some additional costs. So, that’s where we’re at,” Calvert said Thursday.

“I know there are peripheral issues out there that people are concerned about, but right now, this is about our national security and it’s important that we get this done.”

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Lawmakers struggle to make headway on Homeland Security

Democrats looking to force House to take up bill to fund TSA

KEVIN FREKING
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Lawmakers appear far from ending a funding lapse at the Department of Homeland Security even as the president’s nominee to run the department, Republican Sen. Markwayne Mullin of Oklahoma, pleaded with colleagues to resolve the impasse.

Democrats, for more than a month, have refused to fund certain agencies within the department, saying there must be accountability after immigration officers

killed U.S. citizens Alex Pretti and Renee Good in Minneapolis. Two key enforcement agencies, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement and U.S. Customs and Border Protection, are part of Homeland Security.

Meanwhile, Transportation and Security Administration officials warned that delays at airports could get worse as more screeners working without pay call out or, in some cases, quit.

The DHS partial shutdown entered Day 34 on Thursday.

House Democrats are signing a petition that would force the House to take up a bill from Rep. Rosa DeLauro, D-Conn., to fund the TSA and other DHS agencies but not ICE, CBP and the office of the secretary.

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MANUEL BALCE CENETA, ASSOCIATED PRESS

Sen. Markwayne Mullin, R-Okla., President Donald Trump’s pick for Homeland Security secretary, testifies Wednesday during a Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs hearing on Capitol Hill in Washington.