

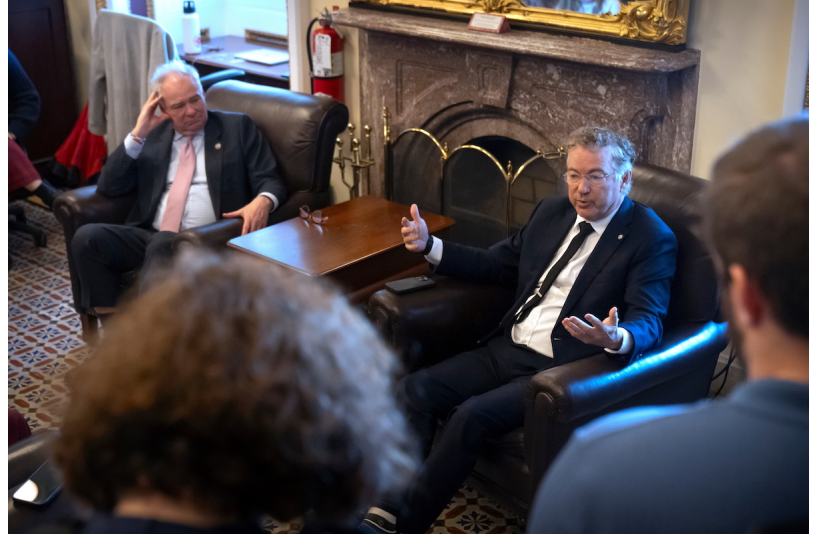


Written by [Michael Tennant](#) on January 9, 2026

Senate Advances Resolution Opposing Further Military Action in Venezuela; Trump Fumes

The Senate, with five Republicans voting in favor, advanced a measure Thursday morning that would prohibit President Donald Trump from engaging in further use of the military in Venezuela absent congressional authorization.

The upper chamber voted 52-47 to force a floor vote on a [war powers resolution](#) introduced by Senator Tim Kaine (D-Va.), a longtime critic of executive warmaking. Joining all Democrats in voting yea were Senators Rand Paul (R-Ky.), Josh Hawley (R-Mo.), Todd Young (R-Ind.), Susan Collins (R-Maine), and Lisa Murkowski (R-Alaska). Paul cosponsored the measure.



AP Images
Tim Kaine and Rand Paul speak with reporters

The Senate is expected to vote on final passage of the resolution next week. If it passes, the resolution would then have to pass the GOP-controlled House of Representatives and be signed by Trump, neither of which is likely.

The Kaine Mutiny

The White House, in a Thursday [policy statement](#) urging senators to oppose the resolution, has already declared that Trump will veto it if it reaches his desk.

Claiming the Venezuelan “strikes were in furtherance of” a “law enforcement operation,” the administration wrote that captured Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro’s “crimes and other hostile actions” posed a “substantial and ongoing danger to” the United States. Therefore, it contended, Trump had the “constitutional authority” to order the incursion.

“I think it’s a crazy notion to say we’re going to call something that looks like war, not war, and call it a law enforcement operation, simply because we want to redefine it that way so we don’t have to ask Congress for permission,” Paul [told](#) reporters. “I think it’s a clear violation of the Constitution.”

Similarly, before the vote, Kaine [told](#) his colleagues:

Instead of responding to Americans’ concerns about the affordability crisis, President Trump started a war with Venezuela that is profoundly disrespectful to U.S. troops, deeply unpopular, suspiciously secretive, and likely corrupt. How is that “America First”?

Trump’s war is also clearly illegal because this military action was ordered without the congressional authorization the Constitution requires.

Kaine also addressed his colleagues directly, saying, “You were sent here to have courage and to stand up for your constituents. That means no war without a debate and vote in Congress.”



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The Trump Tantrum

In typical fashion, Trump lashed out at the Republican senators who voted for the resolution.

“Republicans should be ashamed of the Senators that just voted with Democrats in attempting to take away our Powers to fight and defend the United States of America,” he [wrote](#) on Truth Social Thursday afternoon.

Those senators “should never be elected to office again,” Trump thundered, because of their “stupidity.”

The president further contended that “the War Powers Act is Unconstitutional” because it “totally violat[es] Article II.”

If anything, the act is unconstitutional not because it somewhat restrains the president but because it allows him to initiate offensive military action without obtaining a declaration of war from Congress as required by Article I.

“Make no mistake, bombing another nation’s capital and removing their leader is an act of war, plain and simple,” Paul told his colleagues before the vote. “No provision in the Constitution provides such power to the presidency.”

Trump asserted that the War Powers Act’s unconstitutionality can be inferred from the fact that his predecessors declared it unconstitutional and thus ignored it. This was essentially Senator Mitch McConnell’s (R-Ky.) argument for voting against Kaine’s resolution.

“I’ve consistently opposed resolutions like these aimed at constraining presidents’ constitutional authority,” he [said](#). “And I’ve done it on behalf of presidents of both parties.”

Republicans rightly pointed out that many senators’ votes on such resolutions vary depending on which party controls the executive branch.

McConnell recalled that Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.), who cosponsored Kaine’s resolution, was opposed to taking “the military option off the table” during the Obama administration.

Senate Majority Leader John Thune (R-S.D.) told the [Daily Caller](#), “Anything that Trump does, they’re opposed to, no matter how much in the past they may have been supportive of getting Maduro out of there.”

The Five’s Feedback

That obviously does not apply to the GOP five who voted for the resolution Thursday, especially Hawley.

According to the [Daily Caller](#), Hawley

told reporters that he had no reaction to the president calling for an end to his political career.

“I think the president is great,” Hawley said. “I certainly support him.”

However, he averred, “If the president should determine that he needs to put troops on the ground of Venezuela, I think then that Congress would have to be on the hook for that.”

Young, in a post-vote [press release](#), said:



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President Trump campaigned against forever wars, and I strongly support him in that position. A drawn-out campaign in Venezuela involving the American military, even if unintended, would be the opposite of President Trump's goal of ending foreign entanglements. The Constitution requires that Congress first authorize operations involving American boots on the ground, and my vote today reaffirms that longstanding congressional role.

In a [statement](#), Collins said she "support[ed] the operation to seize ... Maduro" but argued that "the President's comments about the possibility of 'boots on the ground' and a sustained engagement 'running' Venezuela" were cause for her vote in favor of the resolution.

As to Trump's desire to see her lose her reelection bid, Collins remarked, referring to her potential opponents, "I guess this means that he would prefer to have [Democratic] Governor [Janet] Mills or somebody else with whom he's not had a great relationship."



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