



● **Live:** America 250    Trending: **SAVE America Act**    Birthright citizenship    Iowa

## SENATE

# 'Breathtaking': Independent senator deplors Rubio's explanation for Iran attacks

BY RYAN MANCINI - 03/03/26 1:17 PM ET

31



Listen to audio version of this article



# THE HILL

King and Sen. [Jack Reed](#) (D-R.I.), the Senate Armed Services Committee's ranking member, pressed Under Secretary of Defense Elbridge Colby about Iran as he testified on the U.S. national defense strategy. King referred to [Rubio's briefing](#) with members of Congress on Monday where he said Israel's strike plan pushed the U.S. to take preemptive action against an ["imminent threat."](#)

The senator, who caucuses with Democrats, read Rubio's remarks in which the secretary of State said "We knew there was going to be an Israeli action. We knew that that would precipitate an attack against American forces, and we knew that if we didn't preemptively go after them before they launched these attacks, we would suffer higher casualties."

"Have we now delegated the most solemn decision that can be made in our society, the decision to go to war, to another country?" King asked Colby. "That's the implication, the breathtaking implication of Secretary Rubio's statement."

King later added that Rubio "inadvertently told the truth" that Israeli Prime Minister [Benjamin Netanyahu](#) pushed for war with Iran. The Maine senator said he supports Israel but added that no one should drive the U.S.'s decision to go to war.

Colby pushed back and said [President Trump](#) made the decision.

"Well, he made the decision, but it appeared to be based upon the fact that Israel was going to strike," King replied.

Reed pressed Colby on the administration's national defense strategy and the posture that the U.S. will "empower regional allies and partners to take primary responsibility for deferring and defending against Iran and its proxies."

"This national security strategy was published, by my count, about 39 days ago," Reed said. "So, Secretary Colby, the military operations unfolding in the Middle East are completely contrary to the strategy the department has put forth. Why has the department abandoned the strategy after 39 days?"

Colby pushed back, saying Israel and the Gulf allies "are really leaning in" by helping with military operations in Iran.

"We obviously want allies and partners throughout to be able to take responsibility," Colby said. "But, you know, we're looking as a general — it's not a kind of straightjacket, if you

# THE HILL

objective in Iran and asked that if regime change was not part of the agenda, “why was the first objective in the campaign, the attack and death of [Ayatollah Ali] Khamenei and key leaders of the regime?”

“He sets our agenda and he directed these military goals,” Colby replied.

Trump, during a meeting with German Chancellor [Friedrich Merz](#) in the Oval Office on Tuesday, told reporters that Israel did not force the U.S. into launching strikes against Iran.

“No, I might have forced their hand,” the president said. “You see, we were having negotiations with these lunatics and it was my opinion that they were going to attack first,” he said of Iran. “They were going to attack if we didn’t do it. They were going to attack first, I felt strongly about that.”

**ADD AS PREFERRED SOURCE ON GOOGLE** 

---

Copyright 2026 Nexstar Media Inc. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed.



---

CONTENT CONTINUES BELOW SURVEY

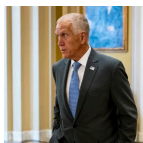
# THE HILL

## More Senate News



### Democrats demand HHS reinstate cancelled teen pregnancy prevention grants

**HEALTHCARE**



### Tillis: SAVE America Act is 'dead' as time has run out to implement new voting rules

# THE HILL



**Medics responded to report of 'cardiac arrest' at McConnell's home on day he was hospitalized**

**SENATE**



**Democrat Josh Turek leading by 4 points in Iowa Senate race polling**

**CAMPAIGN**



## Video/Hill.TV



**Rising: July 2, 2026**

**THE HILL TV**

# THE HILL



Rising: July 1, 2026

THE HILL TV



# THE HILL

THE HILL TV

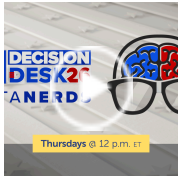
## Top Stories



**Tillis: SAVE America Act is 'dead' as time has run out to implement new voting rules**

SENATE

# THE HILL



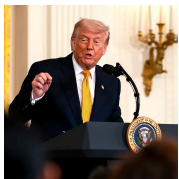
## New polling reveals the Senate battleground map



## FOR INSIDERS | As Trump rails against mail ballots, GOP lawmakers suggest voters are unfazed



## FOR INSIDERS: Democrats come under attack from within: 'Horrible time to be an incumbent'



## FOR INSIDERS: Trump sees opportunity on birthright citizenship in Brett Kavanaugh opinion

### Most Popular

1

**Air Force major arrested after calling for Trump impeachment on Capitol steps**

2

**Tillis: SAVE America Act is 'dead' as time has run out to implement new ...**

# THE HILL

4

**Democrat Josh Turek leading by 4 points in Iowa Senate race polling**

5

**Justice Barrett faces conservative ire, sexist attacks after birthright ...**

People were interested in these podcasts



Morning Report • 16min  
Supreme Court's explosive final week: Here's the bigge...

Play Episode



Morning Report • 17min  
Trump has mixed primary night; Progressives romp...



Morning Report • 16min  
GOP critics aren't buying Trump's Iran sales pitch



Morning Report • 16min  
Vance on the clock with Iran deal under fire



Morning Report • 21min  
Mamdani rolls up sweeping victories for...



Morning Report • 18min  
Iran negotiators report progress, but obstacles...



Powered by **JAMX**

**DON'T MISS A BRIEF.**

# THE HILL



THE  
HILL

**Resources**

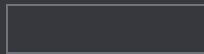
**Other Areas**

**Contributors**

**About Us**

# THE HILL

Get the App



THE HILL 400 N CAPITOL STREET NW, SUITE 650 WASHINGTON DC 20002

© 1998 - 2026 NEXSTAR MEDIA INC. | ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.