

## Top U.S. Counterterror Official Quits Over Iran War, Says Israel Lobby Pushed U.S. Into Conflict

**Joseph Kent said Iran posed “no imminent threat” and that “we started this war due to pressure from Israel and its powerful American lobby,” as the war has killed and wounded troops, left children among the dead, and helped shut the Strait of Hormuz.**

World / **Published On March 17, 2026 11:24 AM /**

Staff Consortium **March 17, 2026**

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### Joseph Kent.

Joseph Kent, director of the National Counterterrorism Center, resigned over the Trump administration’s war in Iran, becoming the highest-ranking U.S. official known to step down over the conflict. In a letter addressed to President Trump, Kent said Iran did not pose an imminent threat to the United States and blamed pressure from Israel and its lobby for the war. The full

resignation letter goes further, stating: "I cannot in good conscience support the ongoing war in Iran. Iran posed no imminent threat to our nation, and it is clear that we started this war due to pressure from Israel and its powerful American lobby."

The letter also says, "Early in this administration, high-ranking Israeli officials and influential members of the American media deployed a misinformation campaign that wholly undermined your America First platform and sowed pro-war sentiments to encourage a war with Iran." Kent wrote that Trump had once understood "that the wars in the Middle East were a trap that robbed America of the precious lives of our patriots and depleted the wealth and prosperity of our nation," but said that changed in 2025. He added that he was resigning as "a veteran who deployed to combat 11 times and as a Gold Star husband who lost my beloved wife Shannon in a war manufactured by Israel."

Kent's departure comes as the military and humanitarian costs of the war continue to mount. Reuters reported Monday that about 200 U.S. troops have been wounded in the conflict and 13 have been killed. U.S. Central Command said most of the injuries were minor and around 180 troops had already returned to duty, though 10 were described as serious. U.S. personnel have been hit in Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Jordan, Bahrain, Iraq and Israel.

Children have also been caught in the widening violence. UNICEF said on March 11 that more than 1,100 children had been killed or injured across the region since the war began on Feb. 28, including 200 reportedly killed in Iran, 91 in Lebanon, four in Israel and one in Kuwait. Reuters separately reported, citing U.N. agencies, that at least 84 children had been killed in Lebanon and more than 667,000 people displaced there as of March 10, while the World Health Organization said 486 people had been killed and 1,313 injured in Lebanon, including 259 children.

The war has also disrupted health care and civilian infrastructure. Reuters reported on March 11 that the World Health Organization had confirmed 18 attacks on healthcare sites in Iran since the start of the war, resulting in eight health worker deaths. In Lebanon, Reuters said the WHO had documented 25 attacks on health facilities that caused 16 deaths and 29 injuries, while 49 primary health care centers and five hospitals had closed because of evacuation orders and fighting.

At sea, one of the war's biggest consequences has been the closure of the Strait of Hormuz, the strategic channel through which roughly a fifth of the world's oil and gas shipments usually pass. Iran has largely blocked the waterway, stranding tankers and roiling energy markets, while Trump has called on allies to help escort ships through the passage. But that appeal has been rebuffed by several U.S. partners. Germany, Spain and Italy declined to send warships, joining Japan and Australia in resisting pressure to participate.

The strain on Washington's coalition has become more visible as the war drags on. Trump has grown frustrated with allies' refusal to provide naval support in Hormuz, while Canada, France, Germany, Italy and Britain issued a joint warning against a major Israeli ground offensive in Lebanon, saying it could produce devastating humanitarian consequences and prolong the fighting. Israel is preparing for at least three more weeks of military operations against Iran, while Tehran has vowed further retaliation.

Kent's resignation has now placed one of the sharpest internal criticisms of the war directly in the public record. Reuters reported that intelligence officials were stunned by his departure and that the White House and the Office of the Director of National Intelligence did not immediately respond. With American troops dead and wounded, children among the casualties, hospitals under attack, and the world's most important energy chokepoint still largely shut, the resignation adds

new pressure to a war whose justification and consequences are being questioned both abroad and now from within Trump's own national security apparatus.

Kent also grounded his resignation in personal loss and the cost of war. In the letter, he described himself as "a veteran who deployed to combat 11 times and as a Gold Star husband who lost my beloved wife Shannon in a war manufactured by Israel," adding that he could not support sending "the next generation off to fight and die in a war that serves no benefit to the American people nor justifies the cost of American lives." Earlier in the letter, Kent wrote that Middle East wars had "robbed America of the precious lives of our patriots and depleted the wealth and prosperity of our nation," tying his objection not only to American lives already lost, but also to the nation's treasure and long-term prosperity.

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