

WIN WITHOUT WAR



Progressive Foreign Policy Debrief

Intel for Advocacy

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SL: Congress Acts to Reclaim Role on Foreign Policy

BIPARTISAN MAJORITIES IN CONGRESS REJECT TRUMP'S ARMS SALE POWER GRAB

The United States Congress made history this week. On Wednesday, the House joined the Senate in passing **S.J.Res. 36, S.J.Res. 37, and S.J.Res.38** – bipartisan joint resolutions to block Donald Trump's move to bypass Congress (through a fake "emergency") and sell a whopping \$8 billion worth of arms to Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and other countries.

Three years ago, this result was unthinkable. In the fall of 2016, only 27 Senators voted against arms sales to the Saudi-led coalition for their atrocities in Yemen. Six months later in June 2017, nearly half the Senate voted to block bomb sales to Saudi Arabia, but failed to muster a majority to send the resolution disapproving of the sales to the House. This week's successful passage is, of course, in part due to Donald Trump's actions to do everything possible to protect Saudi Arabia and the UAE from being held accountable for their actions that violate our values, interests, and common human decency, and the executive branch's outrageous power grab to sell these arms. But Trump's actions have simply provided fodder for larger forces already in play.

Indeed, House and Senate passage of these resolutions would not have been possible without the pressure of countless everyday Americans across the country who helped stiffen congressional spines to say that enough is enough. In passing these bills, Congress took action not only to rebuke Trump's foreign policy and close alliance with Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, but also to reassert its own vital role in foreign policy. This grassroots activism directly challenges conventional establishment thinking that the American people do not care about foreign policy.

Not only do they care, they are organizing and winning unprecedented fights to radically reshape U.S. foreign policy. Here's why:

- The Saudi/Emirati-led coalition has used U.S. weapons to kill and maim thousands of civilians, target vast swaths of the country's civilian infrastructure with impunity, and severely exacerbate the world's largest humanitarian crisis with no end in sight.

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- These sales would only make the U.S. further complicit in the war and humanitarian crisis in Yemen, while rewarding Saudi Arabia and the UAE for their war crimes.
- Continuing U.S. weapons sales sends a dangerous signal to the coalition, as well as other capitals arming the coalition, that no amount of death or destruction will end U.S. support for Saudi Arabia or the UAE and that they can continue to prosecute the intervention with impunity.
- Congress has a responsibility to stand up to Donald Trump's blatant disregard for its role in overseeing foreign policy decisions. In May, Trump invoked an Arms Export Control Act provision that allows for the arms sales without congressional review in the event of an "emergency." Yet Trump has not provided a clear justification for this move, apart from vague references to his favorite boogeyman, Iran, as the emergency.
- Blocking arms sales provides oversight and accountability of broader U.S.- Saudi and U.S.-Emirati relationships. Since Donald Trump took office, there has been no accountability for Saudi Arabia's assassination of journalist Jamal Khashoggi, the U.A.E. and Saudi Arabia's jailing of peaceful activists and academics, or the schoolbus bombing that killed 40 children in Yemen last August.
- Congress must begin to reassert its authority over matters of war and peace. For nearly two-decades, the legislative branch has provided the President a blank check to launch and expand endless, post-9/11 wars. Now that Congress is canceling the White House's blank check in Yemen, it can build on that momentum to end the United States' other senseless, forever wars.

While we are not optimistic that Trump will sign these bills into law, the message is clear: **the millions of dedicated activists who oppose our role in this conflict will not quit in the face of a veto.** We will use every legislative opportunity to finally end U.S. complicity for war crimes and the war in Yemen.

FROM VOTING TO END WAR TO VOTING TO PREVENT WAR

On Tuesday, July 16, pro-diplomacy advocates inside and outside Congress held a press conference on Capitol Hill to oppose a war of choice with Iran and ensure the inclusion of the bipartisan Khanna-Gaetz House FY2020 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) [amendment](#) that prohibits funds for an illegal, unauthorized war with Iran. Nearly a dozen Members of Congress, including Representatives Khanna (CA), Lee (CA), Schakowsky (IL), Connolly (VA), Levin (MI), Eshoo (CA), and McGovern (MA) and Senators Sanders (VT), Murphy (CT), Merkley (OR), and Udall (NM) attended. Members of Congress celebrated the success of and broad support for the amendment, and highlighted why it is critical that Congress retain the amendment in the final version of the NDAA.

Here are some highlights from the event:

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- Senator Bernie Sanders (VT) argued that war with Iran would be an [“unmitigated disaster”](#) even in comparison to the U.S. invasion of Iraq, reminding that it was “the worst foreign policy blunder in the modern history of this country. It cost [the United States] thousands of young men and women—trillions of dollars in terms of endless wars.” War with Iran would be [even worse](#).
- Similarly, Representative Barbara Lee (CA) underscored that it is “so important right now that Congress reasserts its [constitutional responsibility](#) in matters of war and peace.”
- Representative Jan Schakowsky (IL) stated that “Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution of the United States makes it absolutely clear it is the role of congress to declare war and we are making it clear now in this legislation that has passed the House of Representatives.”

Organizations in attendance included [Foreign Policy for America](#), [Friends Committee on National Legislation](#), [J Street](#), [Move On](#), National Security Action, [NIAC Action](#), [Peace Action](#), [Ploughshares Fund](#), [VoteVets](#), and Win Without War. **A full video of the press conference can be found [here](#)**. For more on what the passage of this amendment means, check out [this analysis](#) from Win Without War’s policy director, Kate Kizer.

BURIED LEDES

With Trump sparing no illegal, immoral, or racist policy move to prevent Central Americans from seeking asylum in the US, **one bold asylum officer says [she will not be enforcing the new regulations](#)**.

Speaking of immoral, can we talk more about how **ordinary, Iranian citizens are paying the price, [literally](#), for [U.S. sanctions on Iran](#)**?

Since imposing sanctions, pulling out of our own nuclear agreement, and bringing our country to the brink of war, the Trump administration has struggled to find allies willing to join **the anti-Iran coalition**. But has Pompeo [finally found some takers](#) in Latin America?

As Congress grapples with how to save money without risking national security, one point of **consensus has emerged** among experts, scholars, and organizations alike – [close Cold War-era overseas bases](#).

Speaking of saving money, [read Fareed Zakaria](#) on **the dumpster fire that is the unaccountable Pentagon budget** and the failed bipartisan consensus that supports its ever expansion.

When it comes to national security, the Secretary of Defense is a major player in setting priorities and driving national security decisions. [Here are some of the main takeaways](#) from **Mark Esper's confirmation hearing** Tuesday.

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Raise your hand if you think there should be **less oversight for the nuclear industry in the U.S.?! The Nuclear Regulatory Commission would like to do [just that](#) and are **deliberately keeping the U.S. public in the dark** about the changes.**

SAY WHAT NOW: The Department of Homeland Security is **[dismantling](#) programs designed to prevent nuclear terrorism.**

WWW's Policy and Advocacy Program Manager, Mariam Iskajyan, joined immigration justice advocates this week in **denouncing the administration's failure to grant Temporary Protected Status for Venezuela.** "We urge Congress to condemn the administration's cruelty and put forward values-driven solutions that protect, not jeopardize and harm, the lives of human beings," [she said](#).

One area where the left is winning in Congress: [foreign policy](#). The Barbara Lee's of Congress have gone from being one lone dissenter to a coalition getting anti-war legislation into massive bills like the NDAA.

And finally, after 18 years of endless war and the U.S. military "combatting terrorism" in 80 countries, **[it's time to end endless war once and for all.](#)**