

WIN WITHOUT WAR



Progressive Foreign Policy Debrief

Intel for Advocacy

DATE: 5/8/2020

SL: Trump, Iran, and the Power to Make War

The Takeaway:

- This week, Donald Trump vetoed a bipartisan War Powers Resolution that would have blocked an unauthorized war with Iran. Yesterday, Congress tried, and failed, to override the veto.
- This is just one more entry in a long record of Trump rejecting Congress's efforts to rein in his reckless foreign policy. The powers of war are no longer in balance. Congress must reassert its sole constitutional authority to wage war.
- Tearing up the JCPOA, enacting deadly sanctions, and now calling for UN snapback sanctions — Trump's "maximum pressure" policy has been a maximum failure. There is much to be done to stop Trump, prevent conflict, and save lives.

Trump Vetoed the Iran War Powers Resolution: What does that mean, and what's next?

Just a few months ago, Donald Trump led the United States to the brink of war with Iran, and not for the first time. In an effort to stop it, a bipartisan majority in Congress passed [S.J.Res.68](#): a War Powers Resolution clarifying that Trump requires congressional authorization to start a war with Iran — an authorization that does not currently exist. This week, Trump vetoed that bill. Though a bipartisan majority once again voted in support, Congress couldn't muster the two-thirds majority required to override a veto.

This week's veto should be a wake-up call. If a reckless president can unilaterally trample the will of Congress and the people in order to wage catastrophic war with another country, something is horribly wrong. It's long past time for Congress to reassert its constitutional authority of warmaking, rein in the imperial presidency, and put an end to Trump's destructive campaign of "maximum pressure."

Mobilizing For Peace

With Trump's assassination of Iranian Major General Qasem Soleimani in January, the United States and Iran seemed to be set on a collision course. So Win Without War jumped into action. Working with movement partners, leaders in Congress, and hundreds of thousands of grassroots activists, we organized coordinated protests [across the entire country](#). Our message

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was simple: No war with Iran. Thanks in no small part to the mass movement that erupted in the face of yet another endless war of choice, Congress was moved to pass S.J.Res 68 — the Iran War Powers Resolution. The House even took the [remarkable step](#) of passing two additional bills to block all of Trump's avenues to war, despite having already passed a war powers resolution (those bills languish in McConnell's legislative graveyard). Congress spoke, and it spoke clearly: Trump cannot start a war with Iran.



Nothing New for Trump

Trump, however, has refused to listen. With this week's veto, he again put his own agenda before that of the people. This week's veto was the seventh out of seven times Trump has overridden Congress's attempts to check his reckless misuse of executive national security powers. [One such veto](#) was yet another War Powers Resolution championed by Win Without War — that time, a bipartisan majority in Congress demanded that Trump end U.S. military involvement in the catastrophic war in Yemen. Again, Congress told Trump he had no authority to keep the U.S. military involved in a conflict. Again, Trump refused.

Putting War Powers Back in Balance

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The U.S. Constitution vests Congress with the sole authority to declare war. This is intentional: while Congress is far from perfect, it's a closer representative to the will of the people, and far less likely to launch headlong into reckless conflict on a whim, than a president alone. Over the past decades, however, the executive branch has slowly usurped that authority, claiming more and more warmaking powers for itself.

Congress is not blameless in this power shift. Shrugging their shoulders and enabling presidential warmaking when it suited them, many in Congress have lacked the courage to hold or take back the authority that's rightfully theirs. That's why we find ourselves where we are today: where Trump can steamroll a bipartisan majority of Congress and unilaterally plunge our country into war. This week's votes make it all the more clear: Congress must reassert its sole constitutional power and rein in the imperial presidency.

Maximum Failure

In the meantime, with tensions once again [on the rise](#), Trump continues to wage war with Iran by other means. In a few short years in office, Trump has enacted excruciatingly violent sanctions, unilaterally withdrawn from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, and is now [claiming](#) to have never withdrawn in the first place in an attempt to force wider UN "snapback" sanctions. This "maximum pressure" campaign would have been deadly and counterproductive in the best of times, undermining efforts from grassroots Iranian human rights and democracy activists and rallying support for the government's hardliners. But in the time of COVID-19, as U.S. sanctions destroy lives and [fuel the spread](#) of a pandemic, it's downright monstrous.

Trump is doing everything in his power to make Iranians suffer, and the world less safe. Now, he even trampled upon the will of the people in order to increase his ability to wage war. This week's veto was a setback, but it's far from the end. It's time to *end* the "maximum pressure" campaign and for Congress to reassert its constitutional authority to declare war.

Help Build a More Progressive U.S. Foreign Policy (Without Paying A Dime)!

Got 30 seconds? Vote in [this poll](#) to help Win Without War win a share of a \$150,000 grant from CREDO. More votes means more funding to end endless war — your vote really does count!

BURIED LEDES

We've got good news and bad news. Good news first: **Marshall Billingslea — a Bush administration torture advocate — was [denied](#) a top human rights post in the State Department.** Now the bad news: Billingslea, also an opponent of arms control, has been [nominated](#) for the top arms control post at State. Can his confirmation be thwarted again?

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Ban landmines. Period. After the Trump administration issued a new policy in January allowing for the deployment and production of deadly, indiscriminate landmines, over 100 members of Congress, led by Senator Pat Leahy (D-VT) and Congressman Jim McGovern (D-MA) [sent a letter](#) to DOD demanding answers. Thousands of Win Without War activists have spoken out against the new policy.

After being turned away by Malaysia due to fears sparked by the pandemic, **Rohingya refugees who've been stranded at sea were forced to seek refuge [on a small island](#)** off the coast of Bangladesh.

A global alliance led by Canada, Germany, the U.K. and others **has [pledged \\$8 billion to support efforts to develop treatment for COVID-19](#)**. In an unfortunate (but unsurprising) move, the United States chose not to participate.

Native American women and girls deserve safety and justice. Tuesday marked the fourth National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Native Women and Girls. Domestic violence, sexual assault, and sex trafficking are the causes of many of these disappearances and murders. Read the [statement](#) published by the National Indigenous Women's Resource Center to learn more.

Need more proof that the Pentagon's pandemic profiteering is harmful? **Mexican and Indian factory workers' lives are being [put at risk](#) so the arms industry can continue to amass profits.**

Here's a [\(not so\) fun fact](#): before Trump made the (reckless) decision to cut funding, **the United States already owed the WHO \$81 million in payments from last year.**

The Trump administration's approach to the Korean Peninsula has been... inconsistent. Given recent developments, [a difficult question](#) has reemerged: **can the United States build peace with North Korea?**

And finally, we're not lion about this cool feature from the South African company WildEarth — **they're offering daily [virtual safaris](#)** with the help of a 24-hour live camera hidden at a waterhole.