

CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

(Mr. SPANO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SPANO. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to celebrate the life of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Dr. King lived a life dedicated to serving and being a voice for the oppressed across our Nation. His message of nonviolence resonated with many Americans during a tumultuous period of our history when basic civil rights were being denied to many based on the color of their skin.

Drawing inspiration from his Christian faith, Dr. King believed his protests were the strongest weapon to achieve freedom and equality. In the end he paid the ultimate price, choosing courage over fear to overcome hatred and ignorance.

He famously preached: "Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that."

Because of Dr. King's influence, all Americans can gather together to celebrate diversity and the growth of human rights for each of us. I hope that everyone will join me in commemorating and remembering Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., for his leadership, his sacrifices, and his legacy.

UNDER ROE V. WADE WE ARE KILLING A BABY A MINUTE

(Mr. WEBER of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. WEBER of Texas. Mr. Speaker, because of Roe v. Wade, we are killing a baby a minute.

Mr. Speaker, another baby just lost its life.

JOHN WALCZAK'S RETIREMENT FROM FAA

(Mr. VAN DREW asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. VAN DREW. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to recognize John Walczak. He is retiring after an impressive 37 years and 2 months at the FAA. He started working at the FAA in 1982 as a student through Stockton State College now called Stockton University.

He learned three computer languages: Ultra, JOVIAL, and Basic Assembly Language. He started working full-time in 1984 as a computer programmer and worked his way up the ranks over the years to become STARS DT&E Test Director, which eventually would become IDQT Test Director. He was also the application lead for requirements. John retired on January 3, 2020.

I thank John, his community thanks him, and his country thanks him for

his service. Our world is safer because of John and the work that he has done.

We are so unbelievably proud of your accomplishments, John. Congratulations, and may God bless you.

CONGRESSIONAL PROGRESSIVE CAUCUS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2019, the gentlewoman from Michigan (Ms. TLAIB) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Ms. TLAIB. Mr. Speaker, I am very proud to represent the Congressional Progressive Caucus where we have close to 100 members all across the country that are pushing forward our progressive values that I think are extremely important, especially in a district like mine, frontline communities and many communities of color that are suffering from issues around poverty, jobs, environment, education, disinvestment, and so forth. So I am very honored to be representing our caucus today with the Special Order.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from New Jersey (Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN), who is my good colleague from New Jersey.

Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentlewoman for yielding.

I rise in support of the resolutions presented by my friends from California, Congresswoman LEE and Congressman KHANNA. They are long overdue.

The actions of this President over the last few weeks are an escalation of the reckless, arrogant, and ignorant foreign policy of this White House, if you can even call these hasty decisions a policy. The President's actions lack a coherent strategy. He lacks an understanding of history, and he lacks the foresight to see the consequences of his actions.

Last week, the House and the Senate received briefings that failed to answer our questions about the basic facts behind the decision to kill Major General Qasem Soleimani. Republican Senators themselves said the briefing was so poorly presented that they left more opposed to the President's actions than before they were briefed.

In other words, the more we learn about this debacle, the less faith anyone has in the White House's ability to make these decisions.

Some of the questions asked by Members of Congress in that briefing went unanswered for so-called security reasons. Yet they were later addressed in interviews and press conferences by members of the administration as they tried to cover for the President's lies and obfuscations.

That is why I will join Democrats, and hopefully any Member of the House unwilling to watch us enter another endless war, in voting for these bills to limit the President's ability to engage in further aggression with Iran and

keep American troops out of harm's way.

The President has spent the days since his ill-advised attack blustering to reporters and on twitter, including threatening to attack cultural sites, a war crime of which the only outcome would be maiming and killing civilians.

Just last week he ticked off a list of Iranian aggressions that he claimed were the result of the Iran deal. In fact, each event he cited occurred only after his foolish decision to pull out of the deal. These resolutions are critical to curtailing any further misguided action by President Trump.

The fact is, this action that he has taken makes Americans less safe. It threatens our diplomats abroad with retribution, it threatens our military personnel in the region, and it threatens Americans working in the region.

Many, many years ago, Senator George McGovern said: "I am fed up to the ears with old men dreaming up wars for young men to die in." Well, I am fed up too, and so are the American people.

Reports suggest the President thought this move would be celebrated by Americans. But I speak for myself and the hundreds of constituents who have messaged me when I say: No more, Mr. Trump. We don't want this war. We don't want war with Iran. No continuing escalation, no more killings, and no more sending our daughters and sons into harm's way to appease the fragile egos of the men in the White House.

I call on all my colleagues to support the resolutions of my colleagues, Ms. LEE and Mr. KHANNA.

And I send a clear message to the White House: Your days of reckless misadventures with the lives of Americans are over.

□ 1730

Ms. TLAIB. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Rhode Island (Mr. CICILLINE), my colleague and good friend.

Mr. CICILLINE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for organizing this Special Order on this really important topic.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday, we held a hearing in the House Committee on Foreign Affairs on the administration's actions in Iran. Over the past few weeks, the United States and Iran have come closer to outright war than any time in our history. However, despite the seriousness of the situation, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo refused to appear.

The Framers of the Constitution gave the power to declare war solely to the Congress of the United States, the elected representatives of the people. The reason they did that is they wanted to prevent a President from making the decision to take the country to war without the support of the American people.

As we think about the President's decision, the only lens through which we

should view it is whether or not those actions made Americans safer and strengthened America's national security interests in the region and around the world.

The fact that Soleimani got what he deserved does not mean that this decision was strategically wise or that it enhanced American security.

I, frankly, have been shocked by some of the arguments being put forth by my colleagues in support of the President's actions and the criticism being directed at Members of Congress for taking our war powers responsibility seriously.

Have we become so completely partisan that Members of Congress no longer care at all about the checks and balances put in place to protect our democracy? I heard Members on the other side describe the idea of even holding a hearing on the administration's actions against Iran as absurd.

The idea that we, as Congress, would sit back and allow this administration or any administration to take our country to the brink of war and just trust them, despite conflicting explanations, obvious falsehoods, and a complete lack of strategy and planning, is what is absurd.

What is absurd is the Secretary of State spending nearly 2 years agitating for armed conflict with Iran and then refusing to come to explain himself after he succeeds in convincing the President to engage in military action.

If you are Secretary of State while the country enters into a tense military conflict, you should expect to clear your schedule and get up to Congress to make your case. Yet, the Secretary had somewhere more important to be yesterday.

That is a shocking abrogation of his duty to report to this body, which has the sole power to declare war on behalf of the American people.

One would think that if the Secretary was so confident in his intelligence, so confident in his justification, and so confident in his strategy that he would be eager to present it and defend it to Congress.

We know he has been making the rounds on television, yet he fails to appear under oath where he can be held accountable. Perhaps that has something to do with the conflicting stories that have been coming out of the administration concerning their justification for the strike against Qasem Soleimani.

First, we were told that there was an imminent threat against the United States, but Secretary Pompeo couldn't say when or where that attack might occur and presented no underlying or raw intelligence to support that conclusion.

Then, the President said Soleimani was plotting to attack up to four American Embassies in the region. Yet, this was not mentioned in briefings to Congress, and other senior officials in the administration were unaware of such a plot.

Other officials have linked the Soleimani killing to past and future attacks Soleimani might have been plotting with no specificity, while others have reported that the killing was first planned as long as 7 months ago.

The conflicting explanations coming out of this administration, combined with their unwillingness to share details with Congress or the American people, leave us no choice but to conclude that the President acted outside of the authority under the War Powers Resolution and took unilateral military action against a senior government official without proper authorization.

I have heard others make the argument that none of this matters. Soleimani is a bad guy and got what he deserved. The Iranians have backed off so it is all fine.

That is today. What about the next time? When an administration believes it can launch a military strike that might lead to war with no information-sharing, no legal justification, and no oversight, who knows what they will do next.

Nearly every step taken over the past 2 years by President Trump and Secretary Pompeo has seemed designed to create conflict with Iran by asserting maximum pressure. Without any option or plan for a negotiated solution, armed conflict became more and more likely.

There is no evidence that we are safer today than we were before the killing of Soleimani. In fact, we know we are less safe.

We have stopped the training of Iraqis in the fight against ISIS. There are more American troops that have been sent to the region. We have now suffered two attacks on bases that house American and allied forces. This notion that we are safer today is simply belied by the facts.

So we are here today, and it doesn't appear that the administration has any strategy or plan for next steps, other than the farfetched wish that Iran will be so cowed in the face of their bluster that it will agree to all of their demands. That seems unlikely and doesn't represent any thoughtful or coherent planning.

Forgive me if I don't want to repeat the mistakes of the past and put my trust in officials when they march us to war and claim: "Trust us. This is necessary."

I will not be responsible for sending the men and women of Rhode Island—or any other State, for that matter—into harm's way so that the President can feel like a big shot and his advisers can finally achieve the war they seem to have been building toward since he took office.

I am disgusted by the Secretary's absence yesterday. He should appear before the committee as soon as possible, and that means within days, to explain himself, the administration's position, and their plan for preventing Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon and pro-

moting America's national security and keeping America safe.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding me time.

Ms. TLAIB. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. SCHAKOWSKY).

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, I thank Congresswoman TLAIB for leading this conversation today. I am seeing some of my colleagues on the floor today who remember the story that I want to tell.

This was the fall of 2002, and there was a vigorous debate going on whether or not we should be sending our troops to declare war on Iraq and take out Saddam Hussein. The story went that there were weapons of mass destruction.

Yes, we had briefings. They were in the north. They were in the south, the west, and the east. They were there all right, we were told.

A vote was going to come up on the Authorization for Use of Military Force, AUMF, in Iraq. There was one voice in particular that stood out and still stands out to me, a woman who was the ranking Democrat on the Intelligence Committee. Her name was NANCY PELOSI. She stood up at our meetings and said, no, there is no intelligence to justify that we go to war in Iraq.

A group of us got together. I see Congresswoman BARBARA LEE, the only Member who, because we were already in Afghanistan, voted against that war, who put together a group called the Out of Iraq Caucus. We went door-to-door, literally, and asked our Democratic friends in the House to say no to this war because it was not necessary.

At the end of the day, even though the press story had already been written that somehow it was almost a unanimous vote, 60 percent of the Democrats in the House of Representatives voted against that war in Iraq.

That was over 17 years ago. We still have troops in Iraq. We spent trillions, literally trillions of dollars, and the loss of life on all sides, including our precious American soldiers that we sent—most Americans today agree that that war was a disaster and that we shouldn't have done it. We learned a lesson.

When it came time to talk about the threat that we knew was there, the nuclear weapons program in Iran, we worked with President Barack Obama in a diplomatic way to pass the Iran agreement that actually stopped Iran from developing nuclear weapons that would threaten not only the United States and the region but the rest of the world. And it was working. There were inspectors that would report to us. Every month, we got a report that said it was working.

Along comes Donald Trump, who had said even in the campaign that this is a really bad idea, that this is a terrible agreement. Lo and behold, just a few weeks ago, he decided—it seems like a long time. Not long ago, he decides, all

of a sudden, that it is a really important thing for us to go after Iran while Soleimani, the general, who is part of the government, is in Iraq.

No one is crying over the death of Soleimani. The question is: Is the United States safer now than it was? The answer is a resounding no.

That is why I am in strong support of the legislation by BARBARA LEE that says we will sunset that 2002 Authorization for Use of Military Force in Iraq and the legislation by RO KHANNA that will prohibit the use of Federal funds for military action in or against Iran unless Congress specifically authorizes it or declares war or such actions are undertaken consistent with the War Powers Resolution of 1973.

In other words, come to Congress. That is who we are. That is our job. We are the ones who are supposed to say war or peace. The most important thing we could do is decide whether we send our young men and women into harm's way to sacrifice their lives.

We have to exert our authority. We have to exert our authority right now. I stand in support of that legislation.

We don't need, and the American people don't want, another endless war in Iran or anywhere in the Middle East. It is time to say no, to say that Congress is going to make those decisions, and to do it now.

Ms. TLAI. Mr. Speaker, I yield to my colleague from California (Ms. LEE), my mentor. The original squad member is what I like to call her. I so appreciate the leadership role that she plays in the Congressional Progressive Caucus, especially in trying to suspend and stop all war efforts by our country.

Ms. LEE of California. Mr. Speaker, first, I thank my colleague, who is a bold and brilliant progressive here, Congresswoman RASHIDA TLAI. I thank her for organizing this Special Order tonight, but I also thank her for her leadership and for hitting the ground running in the House of Representatives. It has been quite remarkable to work with her and to see how she understands the issues around peace and justice, that peace and justice go together.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Congresswoman SCHAKOWSKY for her speech tonight and for her presentation, for laying out the chronology and historical record for how we got here and how we, unfortunately, were misled by the lies of the Bush administration into this tragic, endless war. I thank her very much for her leadership, for her friendship, and for staying the course because this has been, what, 19 years now? We have to repeal this authorization.

Mr. Speaker, let me just say to Representatives PRAMILA JAYAPAL and MARK POCAN, who co-chair our Progressive Caucus, their tireless leadership in the Progressive Caucus has really helped with making sure that the public understands all the issues that we are dealing with as it relates to global peace and security.

I chair the Progressive Caucus' Global Peace and Security Task Force, and

we are very clear on why we must stop a possible catastrophic war with Iran and reassert our constitutional duty over matters of war and peace.

Mr. Speaker, I invite all of my colleagues and the rest of the CPC to support the repeal of the 2001 and 2002 Authorizations for Use of Military Force. I am pleased that the House leadership has agreed to bring my repeal of the 2002 AUMF to the floor in 2 weeks, and I encourage Members on both sides of the aisle to cosponsor that legislation.

First, with regard to the 2001 authorization, 19 years ago, Congress passed a 2001 Authorization for Use of Military Force, AUMF. It was supposedly against Afghanistan, as it relates to the horrific events of 9/11.

□ 1745

It was a blank check, however, for endless war. It was a 60-word authorization. It was totally open-ended.

Now we have a Congress where—or at least the House—less than 25 percent of current Members actually voted on that authorization, which, of course, I adamantly opposed.

This authorization gives any President authority to wage limitless war at any time, anywhere, for any reason, in perpetuity. According to the Congressional Research Service, the AUMF has been used as a blank check by three administrations to justify military force more than 40 times in 18 countries.

Mr. Speaker, I include the CRS report in the RECORD.

[From the Congressional Research Service, February 16, 2018]

MEMORANDUM

Subject: Presidential References to the 2001 Authorization for Use of Military Force in Publicly Available Executive Actions and Reports to Congress.

From: Matthew Weed, Specialist in Foreign Policy Legislation, 7-4589.

This memorandum was prepared to enable distribution to more than one congressional office.

This memorandum sets out information and analysis concerning presidential references in public official notifications and records to the Authorization for Use of Military Force (2001 AUMF; Public Law 107-40; 50 U.S.C. §1541 note), enacted in response to the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States, in relation to military and other action. It contains very brief discussions of the relevant provisions of the 2001 AUMF, and the uses of U.S. armed forces connected with 2001 AUMF authority, as well as excerpted language and other information from the notifications.

USE OF MILITARY FORCE AUTHORIZATION LANGUAGE IN THE 2001 AUMF

Section 2(a) of the 2001 AUMF authorizes the use of force in response to the September 11 attacks:

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SEC. 2. AUTHORIZATION FOR USE OF UNITED STATES ARMED FORCES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—That the President is authorized to use all necessary and appropriate force against those nations, organizations, or persons he determines planned, authorized, committed, or aided the terrorist attacks that occurred on September 11, 2001, or harbored such organizations or persons, in order

to prevent any future acts of international terrorism against the United States by such nations, organizations or persons.

The 2001 AUMF does not include a specified congressional reporting requirement, but states that the authorization is not intended to supersede any requirement of the War Powers Resolution, which does require congressional reporting for initial and continuing deployments of U.S. armed forces into imminent or ongoing hostilities.

EXECUTIVE BRANCH POLICY CONCERNING UTILIZATION OF 2001 AUMF AUTHORIZATION

Prior to the U.S. military campaign against the Islamic State that began in summer 2014, executive branch officials made statements that included certain interpretations concerning the 2001 AUMF, including the following:

The 2001 AUMF is primarily an authorization to enter into and prosecute an armed conflict against Al Qaeda and the Taliban in Afghanistan.

The 2001 AUMF authorizes the President to use military force against Al Qaeda and the Taliban outside Afghanistan, but such uses of force must meet a higher standard of threat to the United States and must use limited, precise methods against specific individual targets rather than general military action against enemy forces.

Because the 2001 AUMF authorizes U.S. involvement in an international armed conflict, the international law of armed conflict informs the authority within the 2001 AUMF. This law permits the use of military force against forces associated with Al Qaeda and the Taliban as co-belligerents; such forces must be operating in some sort of coordination and cooperation with Al Qaeda and/or the Taliban, not just share similar goals, objectives, or ideologies.

This interpretation of the scope of 2001 AUMF authority can be seen to fit within the overall framework of presidential power to use military force against those posing a threat to U.S. national security and U.S. interests. In situations where the 2001 AUMF or other relevant legislation does not seem to authorize a given use of military force or related activity, the executive branch will determine whether the President's Article II powers as Commander in Chief and Chief Executive, as interpreted by the executive branch itself, might authorize such actions. In this way, similar U.S. military action to meet U.S. counterterrorism objectives might be interpreted to fall under different authorities, of which the 2001 AUMF is just one, albeit important, example.

DECEMBER 2016 LEGAL FRAMEWORK REPORT ON USE OF MILITARY FORCE

President Obama issued a report in December 2016 entitled, "Report on the Legal and Policy Frameworks Guiding the United States' Use of Military Force, and Related National Security Operations." Among other matters, the Report deals with the legal justification for the United States' ongoing use of military force against the Islamic State, which according to the Report has taken place in the form of airstrikes, military advising and training of Iraqi security forces and Syrian rebel groups, and military activities of U.S. special operations forces in Iraq, Syria, and Libya. The Report asserts that such use of force is authorized by the 2001 AUMF, arguing certain factors as determinative:

1. The 2001 AUMF authorizes the President to use military force "in order to prevent any future acts of international terrorism against the United States by such nations, organizations, or persons" who perpetrated or harbored those who perpetrated the September 11, 2001 terror attacks against the United States.

2. Al Qaeda was identified as the primary organization responsible for the September 11, 2001 attacks.

3. Organized, armed groups that are co-belligerent with Al Qaeda against the United States are targetable under the 2001 AUMF pursuant to the law of international armed conflicts as “associated forces.”

4. With specific regard to the Islamic State, the United States determined in 2004 that Al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI), the predecessor organization of the Islamic State, was either part of Al Qaeda itself or an associated force in 2004 and has used force against the group under 2001 AUMF authority since that time, including after AQI changed its name to the Islamic State (or ISIL or ISIS).

5. The fact that the Islamic State has asserted a split between itself and Al Qaeda does not divest the President of his previous authority to use force against the Islamic State, as the Islamic State’s conflict with the United States and its allies has continued.

6. Congress has supported military action against the Islamic State by specifically funding the military campaign and providing authority to assist groups fighting the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria.

RECORDS OF EXECUTIVE ACTIONS AND PRESIDENTIAL REPORTING TO CONGRESS REFERENCE THE 2001 AUMF

Since 2001, Presidents George W. Bush, Barack Obama, and Donald Trump have referenced in public notifications the 2001 AUMF in connection with initiating or continuing certain military or related actions (including non-lethal military activities such as detentions and military trials), as U.S. armed forces continue to counter Al Qaeda, the Taliban, and violent extremist and terrorist groups designated as associated with those two organizations. The notifications reference both statutory and constitutional authority for the President to take such action, as well as statutory provisions requiring congressional notification, including reference to provisions in the 2001 AUMF. As will be discussed in detail below, the manner in which Presidents have presented information on military deployments and actions in these notifications, the constitutional and statutory authority for such actions, and the reporting requirements for such actions, have changed over time, making it difficult to aggregate such information.

NOTIFICATIONS OF DEPLOYING U.S. ARMED FORCES AND/OR USING MILITARY FORCE INVOLVING REFERENCE TO THE 2001 AUMF

Presidents Bush, Obama, and Trump have provided formal notifications of military deployments and/or action to Congress at various times since enactment of the 2001 AUMF, referring to that authorization to various degrees and ends. While presidential reports to Congress concerning the use of military force and other activities undertaken by the U.S. armed forces initially provided a fairly simple and straightforward discussion of actions and related authorities, over time these reports became increasingly detailed, complicated, and difficult to decipher with regard to determining applicable presidential authority. At all times, both Presidents have relied primarily on their constitutional Article II powers as Commander in Chief and Chief Executive. In many instances, reference to 2001 AUMF authority has been supplementary and indirect; in only a few cases has a President relied directly on 2001 AUMF authority as justification for a military operation, deployment, or other action.

Below are provided several tables of information concerning presidential notifications and records of other executive action referencing the 2001 AUMF. Each table provides:

a date of each notification or record; the relevant military activity, location, and/or purpose of such activities, as available;

the constitutional and statutory authority provided in the notification or record as provided; and

the reference to applicable reporting requirements precipitating each respective notification or record.

For Tables 1-8, each set out in its own section with accompanying analysis, each table includes a group of notifications that are similar in composition and content. Each subsequent table and section, therefore, denotes a change in composition of the notifications referencing the 2001 AUMF in some way.

INITIAL REPORTING IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE SEPTEMBER 11, 2001 ATTACKS

President Bush’s reports to Congress concerning military deployments in the weeks following the September 11, 2001 terror attacks were relatively concise, focusing on the need to address the terrorist threat in the immediate aftermath of the attacks, and the deployments and actions taken in response to such threat. The first notification on September 24, 2001 references deployments to “a number of foreign nations” in the “Central and Pacific Command areas of operations.” Major military operations in Afghanistan had not yet commenced. The second notification on October 9, 2001 includes similar information but also notifies Congress of the commencement of combat against Al Qaeda and the Taliban in Afghanistan. In these two notifications, President Bush stated that he had taken the actions described pursuant to his constitutional authority as Commander in Chief and Chief Executive. In both notifications, he referred to the 2001 AUMF as evidencing the continuing support of Congress, but did not specifically state he had taken such action pursuant to 2001 AUMF authority. The President stated in these notifications that he was reporting on these actions to Congress consistent with both the War Powers Resolution and the 2001 AUMF. It is possible to conclude that reporting action consistent with the 2001 AUMF would mean that the action was considered taken pursuant to 2001 AUMF authority. See Table 1 below for more information and precise language related to 2001 AUMF references in these notifications.

Ms. LEE of California. Mr. Speaker, I hope you look at this map, and you will see exactly where the 2001 authorization has been used for military strikes and force.

Two decades later, as outlined in the Afghanistan Papers, which I hope the Speaker has read, published in *The Washington Post*, I believe this was in December, the false justifications and inconsistencies led to a 19-year, endless war—*Washington Post*, *Afghanistan Papers*.

The Pentagon consistently misled and lied to the American people about our progress in Afghanistan. This endless war has caused countless deaths of servicemembers, innocent civilians. It has cost trillions of dollars. It has created repercussions throughout the region and the world.

It is truly concerning, and I urge my colleagues to read through the details of this report. Our own generals and ambassadors did not know then, and still do not know what our strategy was or why we are still involved in this war.

We must ask ourselves: Why are we putting our servicemembers into harm’s way?

Why are innocent civilians’ lives in flux?

Why are we making our country less safe?

But it wasn’t just in 2001 when we passed an open-ended authorization. Next, in 2002, I stood here with my colleagues to urge us not to rush to war in Iraq based on false intelligence, mostly, weapons of mass destruction, and to vote against the 2002 AUMF.

I offered then an amendment to this authorization that would have prevented this war by requiring that the inspectors go to verify that there were weapons of mass destruction before military action. That seemed reasonable. At least we should have had the data and the information to justify the use of force.

But, of course, my amendment only received, I believe it was, 72 votes. Shame on us.

But if it had passed, it would have exposed the lie that the war was based on. There were no weapons of mass destruction in Iraq.

So it is time to repeal that outdated authorization. And as I stand here, as I have stood here so many times to say, the American people do not want another catastrophic war of choice in the Middle East.

Make no mistake: The dangerous and reckless actions taken by President Trump have brought us to the brink of an all-out war with Iran. Since day one, Trump and his warmongering administration have inched us closer to war with Iran. They have completely neglected diplomacy at every turn.

Secretary Pompeo is the Secretary of State and should be our chief diplomat. Instead, we see our chief diplomat promoting the use of force in the Middle East.

Ending the effective and successful Iran nuclear deal, known as the JCPOA, once again, this administration has made us less safe and has allowed Iran to move forward to begin to look at how to develop a nuclear weapon. That is outrageous, when we had verified the fact that they had stopped this.

We have also, unfortunately, increased troop presence in the Middle East and promoted a dangerous and maximum pressure campaign with Iran and increasing economic sanctions.

This administration is giving Members of Congress and the American people conflicting and contradictory information. We were told the President authorized the assassination of General Soleimani due to an “imminent threat,” as permitted by the War Powers Act.

Now Secretary of Defense Mark Esper is saying that he has seen no evidence of an “imminent threat” and conducted the strike for “deterrence.”

Unfortunately, they can’t even keep up with their lies.

Now, more than ever, Congress needs to exercise our constitutional responsibility to stop these endless wars. That

is why I am proud to have voted last week in support of Congresswoman SLOTKIN's War Powers Resolution to limit the President's military action regarding Iran and prevent this crisis from spiraling out of control.

I am also pleased that my bipartisan bill, H.R. 2456, would repeal the 2002 authorization. That is going to be taken up in 2 weeks.

The administration has falsely claimed that they can justify the use of force against Iran by conducting assassinations and strikes in Iraq. It doesn't make any sense.

My amendment to repeal the 2002 AUMF was included in the House-passed fiscal 2020 NDAA, National Defense Authorization Act, and voted on a bipartisan basis, but it was stripped by Republicans from the final bill. And now, unfortunately, we know why Senator MCCONNELL and the Trump administration took that out of the NDAA. We understand their strategy now as it relates to that and what happened in Iraq.

When Congress passed the 2002 AUMF before the invasion of Iraq, many of us did not support it. It was intended, again, to address the perceived threat posed by Saddam Hussein as it related to weapons of mass destruction. U.S. military deployments and operations carried out pursuant to the 2002 AUMF, dubbed Operation Iraqi Freedom—remember that?—officially concluded in 2011, no more.

Almost 18 years after the resolution's passage, we still have this authorization on the books, and that isn't even being used in any current military operations, and it shouldn't be used.

In 2 weeks, we will take up Congresswoman KHANNA's bill, which I am proud to cosponsor, to prohibit funds from being used for a war with Iran absent explicit congressional authorization. We must do our job.

Mr. Speaker, we have known for years that there is no military solution in the Middle East, and it is past time to return to a diplomatic strategy with our allies.

We cannot allow this President's irresponsible and irrational decision-making to drag us into an unnecessary and catastrophic war in the Middle East. We must protect our national security, our brave troops, our allies, people in the region, Iraqis, Iranians, everyone who lives in the midst of harm's way, and we must protect the American people.

So we ask the question each and every day now: Are we safer or less safe than before this assassination and military strike? I suggest that we are less safe, and we need to repeal the 2002 authorization to use force.

We need to pass Congressman KHANNA's resolution, and we also need to look at a strategy and insist that this administration come to Congress if, in fact, they intend to use force anywhere in the world.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Congresswoman TLAIB for her leadership and for this Special Order.

Ms. TLAIB. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER).

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the gentlewoman's courtesy in permitting me to speak on this and bringing us together, and I have enjoyed listening to my colleagues walk us down memory lane.

BARBARA LEE, JAN SCHAKOWSKY, these are painful memories, but we were here when the United States made the single biggest foreign policy blunder in our history, costing hundreds of thousands of lives in the Middle East—not just thousands of Americans—costing trillions of dollars.

We are watching every day in America the price being paid by men and women who come back with injuries, both visible and those that aren't: PTSD, missing limbs, lost opportunities, and troubled families.

Three days ago, there was a quotation describing what was going on with Boeing's design of the 737 MAX, where one of their engineers said it was designed by clowns and supervised by monkeys. I think that act, sadly, is what we are looking at, the clown act that is going on now, trying to sort out a rationale for another rash act that has, in fact, left us less safe.

Now, Donald Trump campaigned taping into the antiwar sentiment and professed to be against endless wars. He professed to have been against the war in Iraq. Of course, an examination of his record finds out, like most things, he is on both sides of that question.

But he has taken a step that puts us in harm's way again. It recalls the Beirut tragedy, where there was the largest loss of life since World War II in a single day, October 23, 1983. 241 marines were lost in that car bombing in the barracks in Beirut.

But that was preceded by what some, at this point, would, I think, fairly assess reckless action on behalf of the United States in terms of heavy shelling of Hezbollah positions in Lebanon, things that we could have done many times before but cooler heads prevailed because of some of the potential backlash. That was, indeed, a serious backlash, and we ended up not only having the loss of Marine lives; we had to withdraw and further unsettle that troubled area of the country.

Well, what we have seen now is that, with one reckless act—the execution, the assassination of General Soleimani is something that we could have done. Prior Presidents knew his location. They could have assassinated him, and they certainly had no love lost for a truly reprehensible human being. But they knew that they needed to exercise restraint because the consequences could be grave.

The act of assassination has been fascinating to watch because what we have seen now is that the Iraqis, in their Parliament, have disinvited us, told us to leave.

We have watched in Iran where just weeks before there were violent dem-

onstrations that were put down by that repressive regime against their own people. People were demonstrating at great personal peril as the forces for reform were bubbling up.

But wasn't it interesting. Immediately after that assassination by the United States in Iraq, not only did it consolidate Iraqis wanting us to leave, but it—at least, temporarily—united the Iranian people against us.

But for the tragedy of shooting down a civilian airliner which was mistaken for an American bomber, there would have been—that has generated more hostility toward the regime, and it was their own ineptness that did that, no thanks to this administration.

Watch what has been happening lately. We had a series of briefings that were scheduled to finally give information to some of the committees. I am under no illusion that they would be detailed, but at least they would have gone through the motions.

They have been canceled, a series of them, with no good reason, after they had been scheduled, and people were looking forward to that conversation.

□ 1800

Perhaps it is because this administration can't get its act together, can't get its stories straight. For the last 10 days, we have watched late night comedians use film clips of the Secretary of Defense, of the Secretary of State, of Donald Trump dissembling, tripping over themselves in not just fractured rhetoric and syntax but contradicting what, in fact, was their rationale, why, when, and where. It makes for good comedy, but unfortunately, this is serious. We are talking about a very fragile state in the Middle East.

I was in the White House being briefed by Secretary of State Condi Rice and George Tenet, head of the CIA, telling us about an imminent danger then, but at least we had White House briefings, at least they went through the pretext. They were wrong, and they didn't persuade me or a number of my colleagues, some of whom you have heard from tonight, who voted against their authorization, voted against their reckless efforts. We have seen this movie before. I hope it doesn't spiral out of control again.

It is important, Mr. Speaker, that Americans understand the stakes that are involved. It is important for Congress to finally reassert itself. I think knowing what we know now, those of us who opposed the Iraq war would have been overwhelmingly supported, and we would have rejected it. But we have had the benefit of history to be able to hopefully learn from our mistakes.

We have legislation coming forward when we return to Washington in 2 weeks. H.R. 5543, the No War Against Iran Act sponsored by Representative RO KHANNA, a number of us are original cosponsors, agitating for this moving forward. It would prevent any funds from being used for military force

against Iran, unless legislation is passed to specifically authorize such military action and clarify that Congress has not already authorized the use of force against Iran, specifically indicating those 2001 and 2002 Authorizations for Use of Military Force do not authorize war with Iran. We need to pass that.

The bill's text matches an amendment that passed on the House floor with 251 votes just last summer. And I would hope that we would find members of the House in both parties who voted for it last summer to add their voice and urge their Republican colleagues in the Senate to join us to permit a vote.

We have H.R. 2456 to repeal the Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Iraq, the resolution of 2002 led by Congresswoman BARBARA LEE, who spoke so eloquently here a few moments ago. Again, I am proud to co-sponsor and support it. It would eliminate the authorization for the use of force against Iraq resolution of 2002. And again, this matches a bipartisan amendment passed last summer with 242 votes in the House.

These are simple, commonsense, bipartisan, and it is time for us to enact them into law. These were stripped out in the process of the budget that Republicans in the Senate and the administration would not go along with, but it is time, especially given the reckless acts of this administration recently, to go back, revisit, and approve each of these elements when we are given an opportunity on the floor of the House.

I am absolutely convinced, based on conversations I have had with friends of mine, well-meaning Members of Congress at the time, who voted for that authorization, who voted for the war who felt that that was one of the worst votes they ever cast. We have an opportunity to unwind some of that now when we come back by approving those two pieces of legislation.

I deeply appreciate my colleague organizing this conversation tonight. For some people it may seem like it is beating a dead horse. I think not. These are lessons that we learn too slowly. These are lessons that we have paid for in blood, in treasure, in upset in our communities, in pain and suffering in the United States and around the world. I hope that Congresswoman TLAIB will continue in her effort at being such a strong voice for peace and rationality, because we have to continue to amplify this message for the American people.

I thank the congresswoman again for allowing me to participate in this conversation this evening.

Ms. TLAIB. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his incredible leadership. It is a blessing here.

This administration's rogue attempt to start a war with Iran has endangered countless lives around the world. We are farther away from global peace and bringing our troops home.

Just as the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have been disastrous, resulting in

deaths of millions of people and costing trillions of dollars, a war with Iran and Iraqi Shia militias would destabilize the region and cause untold human suffering.

Congress must act swiftly to reclaim our authority over declarations of war and uphold the will of the American people who loudly say no to war with Iran.

Our residents want us focused on ensuring everyone in America has the opportunity to thrive. Trillions of dollars have been spent on death and destruction instead of on education and healthcare that communities like Michigan's 13th District Strong so desperately need. Instead we have wars now that have become political campaign moves.

I represent the third poorest congressional district in the country. My residents don't want more endless wars in the Middle East. They want good jobs, affordable healthcare, and good schools for their children.

We must reclaim our government from those who pushed the war, and we must dismantle the military industrial complex once and for all.

From day one this administration has antagonized Iran, tearing up the successful nuclear deal, imposing crippling unilateral sanctions that hurt everyday people a lot more than they hurt the Iran leadership.

Our foreign policy has been driven by warmongers obsessed with regime change, despite a long and bloody American track record of failed regime changes across the globe. Fueled by a military industrial complex that demands new targets for its weapons, we have roamed from continent to continent destabilizing governments and learning no lessons. We have made it actually so much worse.

The American people have seen what happens when we in Congress fail to live up to our duty as their representatives. When we don't ask the tough questions of those hungry for war, our soldiers, our men and women are sent to fight and die in Iraq for weapons of mass destruction that do not exist. Families from Vietnam to Libya are torn apart by bombs and bullets, and children across Southeast Asia are born without arms and legs because weapons like Agent Orange poison innocent civilians to this day.

Let us finally, mercifully learn our lesson now. We must solve our differences with diplomacy, not missiles. No war with Iran now, not ever. We live in a country where endless wars have been normalized, but it is not normal. It shouldn't be normal.

When we demand a debt-free college education or healthcare for all, the establishment, folks in this Chamber ask how much will it cost and who will pay for it? However, we throw billions of dollars away on broken weapons systems. We spend trillions on sending our Armed Forces to die in rich people's wars.

When we demand basic dignity and opportunity to thrive, that is when the

establishment starts pretending to care about deficits and debt.

We are awake to this game, and we are not playing it anymore. We must dismantle our war economy and reinvest in the people's economy.

Last week's vote on the War Powers Resolution is a great first step toward reigning in the war machine, but we must go further. We need to pass Representative LEE's bill to repeal the 2002 Authorization for Use of Military Force, which this administration is pretending authorizes their military maneuvers. And we need to pass Representative KHANNA's bill to prohibit military spending on a war with Iran, right now, before another attack is ordered.

We must all keep up the pressure and ask those tough questions and keep up the fight for the American people who are still to this day saying: Stop lying to us before you go to war. Stop using our men and women as campaign moves, rather than trying to keep our Nation safe.

We can stop this march to war, but it is going to take all of us and take courage in this Chamber.

I thank my good colleagues from the Congressional Progressive Caucus for their amazing and incredible courage to stand up and tell the truth that is sometimes lacking in this Chamber. We must do that. And sometimes staying silent or not asking those tough questions is the same as lying.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the 13th District for their faith and support in the work that I am doing in this Chamber. I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to refrain from engaging in personalities toward the President and to address their remarks to the Chair.

THE 47TH ANNUAL MARCH FOR LIFE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2019, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, next week tens of thousands of women and men from around the country will March For Life, making clear to the country and to the world that women and unborn babies deserve the utmost respect, love, and protection from the violence of abortion.

Sadly, Mr. Speaker, since 1973 over 61 million unborn babies have been killed by either dismemberment, a procedure where the child is decapitated and torn apart arms, legs, and torso or by chemical poisoning. The loss of children's lives in America is staggering, a death toll that equates with the entire population of Italy.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the distinguished gentleman from Indiana, Congressman JIM BANKS, who has been a leader in defending the innocent and most vulnerable.