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DIRECTING THE PRESIDENT, PURSUANT TO SECTION 5(c) OF THE WAR POWERS RESOLUTION, TO REMOVE UNITED STATES ARMED FORCES FROM HOSTILITIES WITH PRESIDENTIALLY DESIGNATED TERRORIST ORGANIZATIONS IN THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE

Mr. MAST. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to the order of the House of December 16, 2025, I call up the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 61) directing the President, pursuant to section 5(c) of the War Powers Resolution, to remove United States Armed Forces from hostilities with presidentially designated terrorist organizations in the Western Hemisphere, and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the title of the concurrent resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of December 16, 2025, the concurrent resolution is considered as read.

The text of the concurrent resolution is as follows:

H. CON. RES. 61

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That, pursuant to section 5(c) of the War Powers Resolution (50 U.S.C. 1544(c)), Congress directs the President to remove United States Armed Forces from hostilities with any presidentially designated terrorist organization in the Western Hemisphere, unless authorized by a declaration of war or a specific congressional authorization for use of military force against such presidentially designated terrorist organization.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The concurrent resolution shall be debatable for 1 hour, equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs or their respective designees.

The gentleman from Florida (Mr. MAST) and the gentleman from New York (Mr. MEEKS) each will control 30 minutes.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. MAST. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the resolution under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Florida?

There was no objection.

Mr. MAST. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, right now we have cartels operating in our backyard. They are kidnapping Americans, extorting families, trafficking women and children, and flooding our towns with fentanyl to maximize death and addiction on American soil.

Someone tell me that I am wrong. I don't hear anything. Just look at the images next to me. It is not photoshopped. None of this is new. It is just new that it is being defeated by President Trump and brought to an end

by President Trump. This violence comes from the Sinaloa and Jalisco cartels. It comes from Tren de Aragua, MS-13, and Cartel of the Suns, headed by Nicolas Maduro, just to name a few.

The President has every bit of Article II authority to defend the United States of America from these imminent threats. These cartels that are doing this are an imminent threat. These cartels have tens of thousands of members who wake up every day and see it as their sole mission to flood the United States with lethal drugs. My Democrat colleagues want to ignore that.

Sinaloa and Jalisco alone have 45,000 members combined. The Gulf Cartel has 50,000 members. MS-13 has another 30,000. They are coming across the Gulf constantly. Mr. Speaker, 365 days a year, 7 days a week, they are coming to the United States of America with their violence. That is the definition of "imminent."

These drug cartels are highly organized and militarized. They are terrorist networks that have convinced my colleagues they are nothing more than small street gangs.

They control territory, run armed convoys, use drones for surveillance, and communicate through encrypted networks like the military. They terrorize entire countries with extreme violence, and they terrorize the United States of America and our people. They spread carnage wherever they go, not just across the border but on our side of the border, as well, right here in the United States of America.

Look at this morbid scene we will put up here. These two men are about to be decapitated literally out in the open by the Gulf Cartel. The tactics of these cartels are the same as those used by al-Qaida and ISIS. These are terrorist networks. Some are given safe haven by foreign governments. Others, like Tren de Aragua, take orders from Nicolas Maduro. Americans have paid the price for it.

Laken Riley, a 22-year-old nursing student, was murdered in Georgia by a confirmed member of Tren de Aragua. Claretha Daniels and Justin Lawless were executed outside of their Bronx apartment by six Tren de Aragua terrorists. These were neighbors of my ranking member.

Mr. Speaker, a 74-year-old American rancher was killed in Brownsville, Texas, when his truck hit an IED planted by the cartel. That is exactly the same kind of thing that took off my legs.

Democrats don't want the President to be able to defend America from these terrorists. Even more tragic is the fact that nearly 80,000 Americans overdosed last year on fentanyl, cocaine, and other drugs trafficked by cartels. Democrats don't want to protect us from that either.

In fact, yesterday, after we had a classified briefing, the gentleman on my left, the ranking member, went directly to the press to claim that these

strikes were not protecting America. He literally said that these strikes were not stopping drugs. Everything that he said is very easy for me to prove wrong.

Every drug boat sunk is literally drugs not coming to the United States of America. Every narcoterrorist killed is an American life, like Laken Riley or Claretha Daniels, saved. The threat is pressing, and it is frequent.

In November, the Coast Guard announced it seized 510,000 pounds of cocaine in the eastern Pacific and the Caribbean since the start of 2025. This is enough cocaine to harm nearly 170 million Americans. Congressional authorization is not required to carry out precise, limited strikes.

My colleagues did not object when prior Presidents conducted military operations in Yemen and Libya and Syria, operations which were also limited and successful.

This resolution is also reckless and poorly written. It prevents the President from acting against any foreign terrorist organization in the Western Hemisphere. Under this resolution, the President could strike al-Qaida or ISIS in the Middle East. If those same terrorists came across into the Western Hemisphere, they could be untouchable and free to kill as many Americans as they want.

Democrats are not putting forward an authorized use of military force, telling the President how to combat any of these issues. Democrats are putting forward a resolution to say the President cannot do anything about MS-13 or Tren de Aragua and every other cartel. That is giving aid and comfort to narcoterrorists. That is ignoring an imminent threat.

The cartels are relentless and ruthless. They have military capabilities and use them every day against the American homeland. When a threat poses immediate danger to Americans, the Constitution gives the President the authority to act.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume for the purpose of speaking in favor of H. Con. Res. 61.

Mr. Speaker, I will get to the chairman's remarks later about his incorrect statements. What I want to point out is, since September 2, the administration has carried out 25 known strikes, killing 95 people. Among these was a so-called double-tap strike where U.S. Forces killed two survivors clinging to the wreckage of a destroyed vessel in open sea.

The administration now refuses to release the video of this strike, denying the American people the ability to see for themselves what is being done in their names. In fact, they are denying Members of this House, including me and I believe the chairman himself, from seeing that video. Many believe this strike may constitute a war crime.

Following another strike, on October 16, the Department of Defense repatriated two survivors to their home countries rather than prosecute them in the United States courts, as we would expect if these individuals were, in fact, dangerous drug traffickers bound for the United States.

The fact of the matter is a number of the individuals that he talked about, if they were in the United States, they would have been tried in our courts. That decision raises serious questions about the administration's own assessment of threat, necessity, and purpose.

These strikes have not been authorized by Congress, and the administration has not sought congressional authorization to use lethal military force to address alleged criminal activity that under the United States law—and we are a country of laws—does not carry the death penalty.

That is a profound escalation, and one Congress has neither debated nor proved. They openly covet Venezuelan oil. That is what this is about. The President is coveting Venezuelan oil.

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Despite promises to end wars, this President is threatening military invasions not just in Venezuela but across the Western Hemisphere.

Just last night, President Trump declared: “Venezuela is completely surrounded by the largest armada ever assembled in the history of South America,” and that “the shock . . . will be like nothing they have ever seen. . . .”

This is not a strategy. This is a game, and the President is playing it with the lives of American servicemembers, threatening a regime-change war with no plan for what would happen next.

This President wants to be the judge, the jury, and the executioner. However, this Congress—Congress is not a part of the executive branch. We are a coequal branch of government. The Constitution vests this body with authority over matters of war and peace. That power has too often been ceded to the executive branch.

Earlier this month, on a bipartisan and bicameral basis, we repealed outdated authorizations for use of military force to prevent Presidents of either party from abusing it. We cannot now abandon our constitutional duty over these strikes in the Western Hemisphere.

Even if you happen to disagree with me when I say these strikes—and they are—not about making Americans safer, that these strikes are about oil, that they are about another reckless foreign war or stretching Presidential power toward that of a would-be king—all of those things happen to be true, by the way—this vote is ultimately not about whether you agree with the administration's policy. It is not about whether any President can take these actions. It is about, and what it should be about, is whether this President can take these actions without congressional approval.

Every Member of Congress should want to do their job. Congress must make clear—all of us—that no President can unilaterally draw the United States into a conflict that the American people do not want.

Democrats and Republicans, those of us who were elected by the people, are the closest to the people. We should not shirk our responsibility. We should make sure that, right here, we do what the Constitution tells us to do and have debate and vote on the House floor so that all of America knows where we stand on matters of going to war or not. That is what they elected us to do.

For us to just give away that power to the executive branch is not doing our job. We should have a vote because it is the rule of law. We are the United States of America. We are not part of the Duma or have a Putin who just does what they want with getting around and not dealing with the people's Representatives. We should stand for the power that was vested in us. That is what this is really all about.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MAST. Mr. Speaker, I would let the ranking member know that, just in the last year in his district, he has lost at least 140 people to overdose, which apparently he does not want to protect his community from those like the President wants to protect his community.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. SALAZAR), the chairwoman of the Western Hemisphere Subcommittee.

Ms. SALAZAR. Mr. Speaker, I am here today because I oppose this resolution. It is fundamentally flawed. It is trying to invoke the War Powers Resolution of 1973, which doesn't even apply in the case of Venezuela.

The War Powers Resolution applies when there is active combat with the United States forces. It does not include law enforcement or counter-narcotics operations against declared terrorists like Nicolas Maduro, who happens to be the head of a major drug cartel in the Western Hemisphere.

Therefore, we do not need this resolution because what the President is doing is well within the law. The President does not need congressional approval to protect Americans from terrorist attacks.

Let's see what the Constitution says. The Founding Fathers vested in Congress the power to declare war, but they were equally clear that the power to defend the homeland from foreign and domestic threats belongs to the President as Commander in Chief.

Therefore, President Trump does not need congressional permission to kill terrorists at sea who are bringing cocaine and fentanyl to the streets of Miami, New York, or Chicago.

Let's see what international law says. The United States is waging a noninternational armed conflict with Venezuela. What does that mean? Our

issue is not with Venezuela as a country but with Nicolas Maduro, the narco-trafficker who hijacked that country after he stole the elections last year. Under the Law of Armed Conflict, we can use military force to stop his drug cartel from flooding the streets of the United States.

According to article 29 of the Charter of the Organization of American States, of which the United States is a member, it says that the countries of the Western Hemisphere may take military action against a threat that endangers the peace of the Americas.

The Maduro regime has destroyed the peace of the whole Western Hemisphere. If not, ask anyone who lives in my district, the city of Miami.

Now let's go back to American history, which says that Maduro is the world's largest drug trafficker. In 2020, he was indicted by a Federal grand jury in this country for pushing hundreds of thousands of tons of cocaine to the streets of the United States.

Back in 1989, we had a very similar experience in Panama with Manuel Noriega. At the time, President Bush took action in Panama to remove Noriega. There was no need for congressional approval, but as Commander in Chief, he did what he needed to do. Today, Panamanians are eternally grateful to the United States.

In 1983, President Ronald Reagan ordered United States forces into the islands of Grenada to protect the lives of American citizens. Once again, the President did not ask approval from Congress. Reagan acted swiftly, lawfully, and decisively.

Today, the actions taken against the cartel of the los Soles, headed by Maduro, fall squarely into this same category—operations against nonstate actors and criminal organizations, not a war against a sovereign nation or a legitimate President.

This resolution presented by the Democratic Party would tie President Trump's hands in the fight against drug-trafficking terrorists. Every Venezuelan knows that Maduro is just a thug and a delinquent who has been in the drug-trafficking business for 27 years since he took over the country. They have totally destroyed the most prosperous country in Latin America, Venezuela.

Of course, Congress has the crucial role in authorizing wars, but the President has independent authority to defend the mainland. Panama is thriving. Grenada is thriving.

Once Maduro is gone and order is restored to the country, it will be the most prosperous country in Latin America, having the largest reserves of oil in the world, which will give them enough resources not to depend on the charity of the United States or any other country to fix the destruction that Maduro wrought.

Mr. Speaker, for those reasons, I strongly oppose this resolution, and I urge my colleagues to do the same.

Mr. MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I just say that the President said yesterday that

that oil was the United States' oil, not the Venezuelan people.

I thank the gentlewoman for her passion, though. I only wish she had the same passion to speak out against the Trump administration's mass deportation of Venezuelans legally in the United States of America.

Mr. Speaker, if this truly was about addressing drugs, then tell me why the administration pardoned Ross Ulbricht, who ran one of the largest online drug marketplaces in history and was serving a double life sentence.

Why did the President pardon the former President of Honduras, whom a U.S. court convicted and sentenced for flooding the U.S. with 400 tons of cocaine and bragged?

He said: "... shove the drugs right up the noses of the gringos," and he was pardoned by the President of the United States into our districts.

□ 1300

I am a former special narcotics prosecutor, and I know this to be a fact. You don't run a serious counter-narcotics strategy by carrying out the death penalty for those who are at the bottom of the drug trade while freeing those who are the very top and ordering them to come.

At the same time, the administration asks us to believe that deploying fighter jets, an aircraft carrier, and more than 15,000 troops to the Caribbean is merely a counterdrug mission. This is the largest U.S. military buildup in the region since the Cuban Missile Crisis.

If this were really about drugs, why are the United States forces seizing oil tankers? The stated mission, the scale of buildup, and the actions taken simply do not align.

The administration can't keep its story straight, and it is no longer trying to hide its real motivations. Senior officials, including the President himself, have made it clear that the real objective is provoking a conflict with Venezuela to oust Maduro. Trump's chief of staff said to Vanity Fair: "He wants to keep on blowing boats up until Maduro cries uncle."

Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. HIMES), the ranking member of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence.

Mr. HIMES. Mr. Speaker, I thank the ranking member for the time.

Mr. Speaker, I came down here to debate something that this Chamber has been debating for generations, which is the push and pull between the Congress and the Chief Executive on the use of our military.

I was profoundly disturbed to hear the chairman denigrate the ranking member. To suggest that he doesn't care about the losses in his district, to suggest that we want the President to do nothing about narcotics, he knows that is not true. I will tell the chairman that I have opposed every Presidential attempt to use the American Armed Forces without congressional approval since I have been here.

This is about one thing, and it is not about the comity of this institution or the dignity that the majority should show in such a debate. This is about one thing and one thing only. It is not about the horrors of drug abuse.

We know that over here. There is not a Democrat who doesn't believe that 100,000 overdoses is an appalling outcome. There is not a Democrat here who doesn't experience the crushing, disgusting horror of those losses. We couldn't agree with the majority more that this is a huge problem.

What this is about is whether the Representatives of the people should be involved in a discussion about how we solve this problem—the Constitution says so—and the questions raised here.

For the first time in 250 years, the United States military is deliberately targeting civilians. They may be awful civilians, I will grant you that, but they are deliberately targeting civilians. We have the largest military force ever assembled in the Caribbean, with no discussion, no debate in this Chamber amongst the Representatives of the people.

The administration has created a war that is not a war, a non-international armed conflict. It is a war inasmuch as we have an aircraft carrier and massive amounts of military hardware in the region, and we have killed upward of 100 people in 23, 24 strikes. Yet, it is not a war that needs to be even informed to the Congress.

The only question that matters—and you can show all the pictures of decapitations, horror, and overdoses. We will stand with you 100 percent about how horrible that is, but do you know what else is horrible? That the majority is comfortable with the removal of the Representatives of the people on this most consequential of issues.

Let's agree that there will be a Democratic President someday who does something that the majority doesn't agree with, but every word they say here today will unbind the hands of that Democratic President to do whatever he or she wants.

This is about our privileges as the Representatives of the people. This is about our fidelity to the Constitution of the United States that demands us to have this debate.

Let's stop trying to scare the American people, and for the first time in a very long time, let's stand up with the dignity and decency that this topic deserves and debate how we are going to address this huge problem while preserving our privileges and prerogatives as Representatives of all the American people.

Mr. MAST. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, to Representative HIMES, I tell him that he has had 182 overdoses in his district in the last year and lost somebody named Angel Samaniego by a suspected Tren de Aragua member.

Voting for this resolution to limit the President absolutely is not stand-

ing with the United States of America. There are people deliberately targeting Americans, and he is saying the President can do nothing about it. That is what his vote will say today.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SELF), the chair of the Europe Subcommittee.

Mr. SELF. Mr. Speaker, I thank the Chairman for the time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to this resolution.

This is neither the time nor the right legislation to deal with this issue. This resolution suspends all military actions against any organization that the President deems a designated terrorist organization unless Congress acts.

This is a dangerous limitation on the President's constitutional authority to defend the United States. Our world is changing and changing fast. The President must have the flexibility to change with the threats.

These drug cartels, especially Tren de Aragua, are behind much of the drug trafficking, human smuggling, and violent crimes that are tearing communities apart and fueling the opioid crisis in America.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, there were more than 72,000 fentanyl-related overdose deaths in 2023, the last year available. This number represents a tragic national public health crisis.

The intention of this resolution may be to stop the attacks on the drug boats, but by refusing military action against presidentially designated terrorist organizations, you shut the door for action against other dangerous groups, including Mexican cartels or Islamic terrorist groups that might want to establish themselves or attack elsewhere in the Western Hemisphere.

Instead of considering this resolution, which carries little or no consequences for hostilities that don't exist, this Chamber should focus on supporting the President's efforts to deter the growing national security threat from Venezuela.

Hundreds of Americans die each day due to illegal drugs like fentanyl. Rather than Democrats making it their life's mission to destroy Donald Trump, America would be better served if Members of this Chamber would help him prevent the flow of illicit drugs.

As a 25-year Active-Duty member who deployed multiple times, including that invasion of Grenada that Ms. SALAZAR mentioned in the Caribbean without congressional action, I caution the ranking member on accusing the President of the United States of war crimes. That is beyond the pale. I recommend he walk those comments back.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to oppose this resolution.

Mr. MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I am still waiting for the chairman to tell me why the President of the United States decided to let convicted drug pushers, convicted in

United States courts and in jail, be pardoned if this is about drugs. I am waiting for an answer. I haven't heard that yet.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. THOMPSON), the ranking member of the Committee on Homeland Security and an original cosponsor of this bill.

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the resolution.

I am proud to be an original cosponsor of the resolution, and I thank my colleague from New York for having the moral courage to offer it.

We are a nation of laws. The Trump administration's boat bombings are illegal under U.S. and international laws. Simply put, these are war crimes.

Further, the administration has failed to provide Congress with basic information, even as Trump directs a massive buildup of U.S. forces and threatens war.

I might add, Mr. Speaker, those of us who have been in so-called classified briefings still have not received any additional information beyond what is already in the eyes of the public and on TV.

It is our duty as Congress to rein in the lawless administration and prevent an illegal war. This is a moment for Members on both sides to choose order over chaos, morality over expedience, and country over party. We must rise to the occasion and vote "yes" on this resolution.

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Mr. MAST. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I think the other side should take a look at the chart. You can see when operations were kicking off in September, there were 3 strikes, going up in October to 11 strikes. Then it started to come down. Why? Because people started thinking about, am I going to push off the dock in this boat full of drugs and then take a Hellfire through the hull of my vessel sitting out here in the middle of the Gulf because I am transporting drugs to the United States of America? It dropped down to seven, dropped down to four, and it is going to continue to drop off because, finally, those that are shipping drugs to the United States of America are recognizing there are real consequences.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. MCCORMICK).

Mr. MCCORMICK. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to this resolution. I am an ER doctor who served many years just before coming to Congress, which was not that long ago, where I saw multiple overdoses every single night during a time where we had over 100,000 deaths per year in the United States, far more civilian casualties than any war we have ever experienced in the history of the United States. That is an average of well over 250 deaths per day.

Imagine the worst mass shooting we have ever had and multiply that times five times a day for every day during the year for 3 years running. That is what we are dealing with. That is the emergency we have. That is an emergency.

This opioid crisis is fundamentally different from any past drug epidemic. These substances are engineered to be highly lethal. The amount that you can fit on a pinhead could kill a person. Unknown exposure just from somebody coming to assist somebody could kill somebody. These are weapons of mass destruction.

It is different from anything we have ever experienced in the history of the United States or the world, for that matter.

If a foreign actor released a chemical agent that killed tens of thousands of Americans, the response would be immediate, unified, and decisive.

We can and must act immediately to save American lives.

This is not unprecedented. Every President in my lifetime, in my adult lifetime, has used the military to this end, to protect the people of the United States, which is the President's first and most important charge as President.

Therefore, I continue to have strong opposition to this resolution.

Mr. MAST. Mr. Speaker, I don't quite reserve yet.

I would let the next speaker on the other side know that they lost 116—Ms. KAMLAGER-DOVE had 116 overdoses in the last year. I can count at least six individuals killed recently by MS-13. The President is working to protect her district from MS-13.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I am still waiting to hear why major drug dealers, two major drug dealers, were pardoned by the President of the United States. I will wait.

Nothing?

Mr. Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. KAMLAGER-DOVE), the ranking member on the Subcommittee on South and Central Asia.

Ms. KAMLAGER-DOVE. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this resolution to stop the administration's illegal and ridiculous boat strikes. It is hard to overstate how pointless and performative these strikes really are.

The administration is trying to sell their military kill campaign by saying they are targeting drug traffickers who are selling fentanyl and hurting Americans.

Fact: Fentanyl and fentanyl precursors do not come to the United States through Caribbean sea routes.

Fact: The drug boats that the administration is blowing up are mostly carrying cocaine to Europe.

Fact: President Trump just pardoned a known Honduran cocaine kingpin.

Fact: Most smugglers that bring drugs into the country are U.S. citizens.

Fact: The real national security threat is selling our AI chips to China, not blowing up fishermen.

American taxpayers are spending millions of dollars to stop the Europeans from partying. What is in it for us? Normalization of extrajudicial killings, a total lack of due process, evidence, or congressional authorization. We need to stop this madness.

I authorize and tell—just tell my colleagues to support this resolution.

Mr. MAST. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DIAZ-BALART), the chairman of the Appropriations Subcommittee on National Security, Department of State, and Related Programs.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Mr. Speaker, I strongly oppose this resolution, which limits the United States' ability to fight narcoterrorist traffickers in our own hemisphere, where we are most directly impacted.

I just heard from the distinguished gentlewoman that these are fishermen, that these are fishermen in these boats. Really? I guess we are supposed to not believe our own eyes when we see these boats loaded with narcotics coming to the United States and going to other countries.

These are narcoterrorists who have been killing Americans by the thousands every single year through their poison. It is about time that we have a President who is taking the murdering and the poisoning of our youth seriously.

Literally, Mr. Speaker, every time one of these narcoboats is removed from the water, it literally is saving thousands of American lives.

Let me refresh everybody's memory about who we are dealing with and who the President of the United States is going after. They are going after narcoterrorist organizations such as Tren de Aragua, Cartel de los Soles, Clan del Golfo, and MS-13, just to mention some of these dangerous cartels that kidnap and maim and poison our youth.

Let's put it in perspective, Mr. Speaker. More Americans have died because of these narcocartels that are poisoning our youth than Americans we lost in World War I, World War II, Vietnam, and Korea. They are staggering numbers.

These cartels are responsible for the loss of lives of more Americans than ISIS and al-Qaida combined. These are terrorist organizations that are responsible for the death of our people.

I just also heard, oh, upset about pressuring Maduro, President Maduro. Maduro is not a President. He is the head of a narcocartel that has taken over by force and by terror a great country, the country of Venezuela. This is man who is under indictment.

Let's vote this down, and let's protect the American people. Let's not defend the narcocartel's drugs that are poisoning our people.

Mr. MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, maybe the gentleman from the National Security Subcommittee can tell me, since the

chairman can't, why the President of the United States pardoned a narcoterrorist and the former President of Honduras. Maybe he can tell me why. I am trying to get an answer.

Nothing? Walking out? Does he have an answer for me? Why would the President of the United States pardon a convicted drug dealer, over 400 million tons, killing Americans? I got nothing.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentlewoman from Washington (Ms. JAYAPAL), an esteemed member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee.

Ms. JAYAPAL. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this measure to rein in President Trump's unlawful boat strikes.

These strikes and Trump's naval blockade represent appalling violations of international law and Congress' constitutional authority to authorize the use of military force.

Drug trafficking is a serious offense. Communities across the United States have seen the devastating impact of addiction. But that does not give Donald Trump the right to go to war, to deploy military forces without congressional authority, or to kill anyone against the laws of war.

Drug trafficking cases should be handled in a courtroom. Listen, the majority's entire argument that this was so serious it required action without congressional approval is completely destroyed when the President himself just pardoned the former Honduran President, who has been convicted by an American jury for a drug trafficking scheme that moved about 4½ billion doses of cocaine into the United States. Give me a break. It doesn't pass the laugh test.

By the way, if Donald Trump were serious about addressing the opioid epidemic, he would not have cut Medicaid funding, and he would not have frozen \$8 billion in funding for drug abuse and addiction.

We have seen the disastrous impacts of attempted regime change in Latin American. The American people do not want another forever war. Vote "yes" on this resolution.

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Mr. MAST. Mr. Speaker, I would let Ms. JAYAPAL know that in her district they have lost 237 people in the last year from overdoses and had a number of people killed by MS-13 and Tren de Aragua. The President is working to protect her people.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. ROGERS), who is the chairman of the House Armed Services Committee.

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to this resolution.

For decades, violent drug cartels have ravaged American communities. They have flooded our streets with deadly narcotics. They have destabilized our hemisphere, creating openings for malign influence from China,

Russia, and Iran. Year after year, they have killed thousands of Americans.

We decided long ago that we would not tolerate threats to the American people from terrorists like al-Qaida and ISIS. We shouldn't tolerate them from narcoterrorists either.

Yesterday, the U.S. House of Representatives received a detailed briefing from the administration on Operation Southern Spear. We heard directly from Secretary Rubio, Secretary Hegseth, and General Caine. Their message was clear: Narcoterrorists are the single greatest threat in the Western Hemisphere.

President Trump is acting decisively, lawfully, and within his authority as Commander in Chief. Our military is targeting known drug smuggling boats loaded with drugs and moving along well-established trafficking routes. Every strike is based on rigorous intelligence linking these boats with well-known narcoterrorists.

Every strike undergoes a comprehensive legal review and complies with defined rules of engagement to ensure innocent civilians are not harmed. The Armed Services Committee is notified of every strike and has been briefed on this operation several times. These strikes are lawful under U.S. law and international law, and all actions are in compliance with the law of armed conflict.

Most importantly, these strikes have dramatically reduced drug smuggling operations.

The bottom line is that Americans are safer today because of President Trump's actions. Let's not return to the old, failed playbook of treating our counterterrorist administrations solely as a law enforcement matter. We tried that for decades, and it didn't work. It cost hundreds of thousands of American lives.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in protecting Americans by opposing this resolution.

Mr. MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Again, I offer the chairman, Mr. ROGERS, the opportunity to tell me why the President pardoned these drug dealers.

I am proud of this institution and who we are. I am a Member of the House of Representatives, a former chairman of the committee.

I would also ask the chairman: Why don't we do hearings?

Why can't we bring the administration into the Foreign Affairs Committee and have them answer questions of Members of Congress on what they are doing and why they are doing it?

That is our job. That is our responsibility.

Have we had one hearing on Venezuela on drugs coming in? Not a one. Have we brought anybody in from the administration?

That is our job.

Why don't we do our job?

That is why we were elected. I would hope that the chairman would have

some hearings so that we can discuss this as Members of Congress.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentlewoman from Minnesota (Ms. OMAR), who is an original cosponsor of this important resolution.

Ms. OMAR. Mr. Speaker, I thank Ranking Member MEEKS for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, may I answer that question for Mr. MEEKS?

The answer is that this is not about drugs. This is about regime change. We also have the White House Chief of Staff on record saying that this is about regime change. It has nothing to do with drugs.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of this resolution. I was proud to co-lead Ranking Member MEEKS' effort, and I urge all my colleagues to join us today in reasserting this body's constitutional authority on matters of war and peace.

Let's be perfectly clear: Only Congress has the power to declare war.

The Trump administration's military escalation in the Caribbean is not only reckless, it is blatantly illegal. We cannot allow this kind of dangerous overreach to go unchecked.

Trump, a President who touts himself as a global peacemaker, has appointed himself judge, jury, and executioner in the Western Hemisphere.

His brutal military campaign, which has killed more than 90 people, further threatens a region that has already been destabilized by decades of U.S. interventionism. It risks driving us into further war in Venezuela.

The American people across the political spectrum have been clear that they do not want to fight and fund another war.

With this vote, every Member of Congress has the chance to show the American people where they stand. Will they enable Trump's illegal warmaking, or will they stand on the side of the Constitution?

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BOST). The time of the gentlewoman has expired.

Mr. MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I yield an additional 30 seconds to the gentlewoman from Minnesota.

Ms. OMAR. Mr. Speaker, stand on the side of the Constitution and put an end to this unauthorized use of military force.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all my colleagues to uphold the separation of powers and pass this resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to refrain from engaging in personalities toward the President.

Mr. MAST. Mr. Speaker, I would let Representative OMAR know that in her district, she lost 205 people in the last year from overdose and have had people killed by MS-13. Teenagers have been killed by MS-13. The President is working to stop that from happening.

I would also remind the ranking member that just yesterday—he should know this, he was standing on stage with me—we had a classified briefing

with the Secretary of War and the Secretary of State. His comments afterwards did not reflect the truth of what was said, but he was there.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. GIMENEZ).

Mr. GIMENEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong opposition to H. Con. Res. 61.

This resolution would prohibit the President of the United States from using all tools at his disposal in the fight against designated terrorist organizations in the Western Hemisphere. These are the same narcoterrorists who are waging, and have been waging, a war on the American people through the use of deadly drugs and poison that are flooding into our country.

Let's talk about reality, not about rhetoric.

First of all, the number one job of any government is to protect its people. Since September 11, 2001, roughly 4,000 Americans have been killed inside the United States either by al-Qaida, ISIS, and similar ideologically linked terrorist groups.

Meanwhile, since 2021—I am not talking about 2001—nearly 400,000 Americans have died from overdose poisoning, deaths fueled by foreign terrorist organizations including the Venezuelan regime and violent cartels operating in our own backyard. That 400,000 is about the size of my native city of Miami. This is, in reality, a weapon of mass destruction.

Yet here we are, debating whether to retreat from fighting terrorists in our own hemisphere, while continuing to fight them halfway around the world.

I have spent my life in public safety. Mr. Speaker, I have seen what happens when you hesitate, when you retreat, and when you take your foot off the gas. People die. Families are destroyed, and communities suffer.

This resolution does nothing to promote peace. It invites danger, continued chaos, and the loss of more American lives—more American lives.

It tells terrorists and cartels that the United States Congress is willing to tie the hands of our Commander in Chief while they ship poison into our communities and profit from American death.

As someone who fled communism, I know this lesson well: Weakness invites aggression. When America steps back, evil steps forward.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. MAST. Mr. Speaker, I yield an additional 1 minute to the gentleman from Florida.

Mr. GIMENEZ. We must reject this resolution and make clear to the world that the United States has the will to confront narcoterrorism head-on and that we will never surrender to the very people who are killing our children.

Too many Americans have already died because we turned a blind eye to this threat.

For the sake of our national security, our communities, and the men and

women in uniform who stand the line every single day, I urge a “no” vote on this resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Florida (Mr. MAST) for yielding me the time to speak on this important matter.

Mr. MAST. Mr. Speaker, may I inquire how much debate time remains.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Florida has 7½ minutes remaining. The gentleman from New York has 10¼ minutes remaining.

Mr. MAST. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

□ 1330

Mr. MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, the gentleman can use my time if he can answer why the President of the United States pardoned major drug dealers who were convicted and doing time. It was the little guys. I will wait.

Also, if this is about drugs, the fact is, the drugs come from China, the fentanyl. The mainstay of fentanyl is from China. I haven't heard China in this debate at all.

In fact, the President runs around and says some of those—we are back selling chips or whatever he wants to do with China, which is a danger to our national security, killing our people. The number one drug that is killing Americans is fentanyl. There are no ships there.

My main focus is, as I said earlier, even if you disagree with me, why don't we do our work as Members of Congress? Why aren't we having hearings, open, public hearings with members of the administration coming to testify before us and the American people so that they can hear for themselves?

In prior Congresses, when I was the chair, even when Mr. McCAUL was the chair, and there was a Democrat in the office, they were bringing in the Secretary of State on a consistent basis, subpoenaing them, having them come in to address certain things, and they came in.

I make judgments now to go to hearings when I see someone from the administration is going to be there, and, boy, that is very rare. Generally, it is just somebody on the other side, from the private sector or something of that nature on foreign affairs. The diplomats and representatives from the State Department and people directly from the administration don't come before our committee.

No matter what your position is, this is about the United States House of Representatives doing its duty and responsibility.

Let me tell you, when it comes to drugs, I had a career in fighting drugs as a prosecutor. No one, to this day, fights harder and wants to make sure that we lock up and bring to justice those who bring in and those who sell narcotics in our communities. We still have laws because when we did, we didn't execute them. We tried them in a court of law.

That is who we are. That is not who Vladimir Putin is and who some of these other authoritarian governments are. That is what they do. That is not what we do here.

We have values, and we have a job to do, as Members of the United States House of Representatives, for the people. I am saying to my colleagues on the other side of the aisle: Let's do our jobs. Let's bring in the administration and members of the administration. Let them testify and talk to us, where we can question them, and talk to the American people because, ultimately, this is about them.

The American people should be able to see what took place in those waters when those two individuals were hanging on the boat. There was no problem showing all the others. What are we hiding from the American people? We, as Members of Congress, should be demanding that the administration be accountable to the American people, and the best way to do that is for them to come to Congress because that is our job.

Ultimately, I am saying we should do our jobs as Members of Congress and not give away our power to someone who would like to just be an authoritarian. We don't have that kind of government.

That is why the United States of America was created in the first place, to make sure that one man or woman couldn't make unilateral decisions around the United States Congress.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MAST. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, the ranking member made the claim that nobody fights harder against drugs. He made a big speech. Nobody fights harder against drugs than the President of the United States of America. He is the one sinking the boats.

Democrats are the ones saying any terrorist organization, no matter how many people they kill, behead, abduct, no matter how much drugs they traffic, the President shall not have the authority to go out there and combat them.

If there is a boat coming across with anthrax in it, the President can't hit it. If there is a boat coming across that had something brought over from Iran, the President can't deal with it. Anything that comes across in the Western Hemisphere—that is literally what his legislation says—the President cannot go out there and defend the United States of America from imminent threats.

How imminent is this threat of drugs? Mr. Speaker, 365 days a year, 7 days a week prior to President Trump starting to sink their boats that they were bringing to the United States of America, that is as imminent as it gets. It is as imminent as the Sun rising. That is how prevalent that threat has been.

The President is finally bringing it to an end. Nobody fights harder than the

President of the United States of America. Nobody is fighting harder to allow drugs into this country than Democrats with this reckless and ridiculous piece of legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers. I reserve the balance of my time until the gentleman yields back his time.

Mr. MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time to close.

Mr. Speaker, this War Powers Resolution would immediately end President Trump's extrajudicial boat strikes in the Western Hemisphere, which have never been approved by Congress and far exceed the President's authority.

We are a country of laws. Individuals in the streets have to abide by our laws. The President of the United States should be abiding by our laws.

In our laws, you convict somebody in court. You can't just go out and kill them. What I had to do was build a case in public, try that case, and convince a jury to unanimously convict someone so that they would go to jail. That was my job.

I think that the President of the United States cannot summarily determine that he is going to go kill someone without coming and getting authorization from this Congress.

The worst criminals have had to go to court. The fact of the matter is, we know of two such people, the worst of the worst. They sold drugs and said they were going to shove it up their noses. He wasn't killed. He shouldn't have been killed. He was tried. He was from another country. In fact, he was the President of another country.

He was tried in a court of law, and he was convicted by a unanimous jury. He is on the streets today. Why? Because the President of the United States said he deserved the pardon. No matter how many people he killed, no matter how many drugs he brought in, the President of the United States said it is okay, we are going to send him back on the streets.

There is another individual who sold drugs over the internet, killing Americans. He was not executed. He was tried and convicted unanimously in a court. He is back on the streets.

□ 1340

As a prosecutor, I would have been—and the family members of the victims, of those two, in particular, and others like them, for them to be convicted and then released by the President of the United States of America, is that justice? Is that protecting us? What kind of message is that sending to just go after the little guy in a boat who was instructed by others?

How many of the big kingpins have been brought to justice? Who is going after and building a case to prosecute them and have them locked up in jail?

This administration wants to say these strikes are about stopping drugs from entering the country. Putting aside the fact that drug smuggling is not a crime punishable by death, or

that these boats could have, per the law, been intercepted by the Coast Guard and suspected traffickers questioned and prosecuted in a U.S. court, this is not a counternarcotics operation.

The administration's actions, whether the largest military deployment to the region since the Cuban Missile Crisis, the seizure of a Venezuelan oil tanker, ordering a blockade of Venezuela, or the many public statements issued by U.S. officials, including President Trump—

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. MEEKS. Let me just say, I see him putting up a picture.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. MEEKS. Let me tell you about that picture. That is diplomacy before he was the President of the United States. He was a member—

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

The gentleman is no longer recognized.

Members are reminded to refrain from engaging in personalities toward the President.

Mr. MAST. Mr. Speaker, let me put this up. I was asked to take it down for a moment. Let me take a second and put this up. I will get to it.

This resolution, plain and simple, is about telling the President he has no authority to combat terrorists in the Western Hemisphere. Those are the words of this resolution. It is not a secret. Anybody can read it.

The President doesn't have the authority to combat MS-13, Tren de Aragua, Sinaloa Cartel, take your pick. If the President says they are terrorists, and they are in the Western Hemisphere, the President can't touch them.

That is what they are trying to do. They want to tie his hands and not let him defend the United States of America.

We are not talking about street gangs. They are militarized threats. They have taken over entire apartment complexes and neighborhoods in the United States.

My colleagues say this resolution is just about putting Congress on record, so let's put Congress on record.

If you stand with protecting the United States of America against narcoterrorists, then oppose this resolution. It is plain and simple. If you stand shoulder to shoulder with MS-13, Tren de Aragua, and Sinaloa Cartel, and the dictators who work hand in hand with them, like Nicolas Maduro in this photo, then this resolution is for you. Vote for it.

We know exactly where some of my colleagues stand. You can look to see where they stand in this photo. Let's talk a little bit about that in a moment. I will touch on something else first.

Since President Trump took office, we have seen our Democrat colleagues fight to unmask agents, to dox Border

Patrol officers. We have seen them issue warnings ahead of immigration raids. They spent taxpayer dollars to keep illegal immigrants in the United States. Now, Democrats are going even further with this resolution and saying the President can't protect our country.

I am going to show you this photo. I actually thought a lot about this photo as chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee because I take photos with foreign heads of state, diplomats, and other people from other countries on a daily basis. I shake hands and greet people. Whether I like them or not, I shake hands. It is something that I do, but I can tell you what I don't do. I do not let other people wrap their arms around me unless they are my kids, my friends, or my family.

That is Nicolas Maduro's hand right there. I will put a little arrow there. That is Ranking Member MEEKS, who has been arguing with me for the last little while, right here. That is his arm around the ranking member. I don't let people put their arms around me, especially not people like that.

In this photo of Nicolas Maduro, you probably also recognize John Kerry. It is sad to see that. I think it says a lot about the origination of this bill, the heart of this bill. This is not a handshake. It is an embrace of somebody with a relationship. That is what happens.

If somebody puts their arm around me, that means they have a relationship with me. To me, this says a lot about who this bill stands shoulder to shoulder with.

Do you stand shoulder to shoulder with Nicolas Maduro, with his arms wrapped around you, or do you stand shoulder to shoulder to protect the United States of America and our people from the people who are murdering us and sending their drugs over? The choice is up to you.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. All time for debate has expired.

Pursuant to the order of the House of December 16, 2025, the previous question is ordered on the concurrent resolution.

The question is on adoption of the concurrent resolution.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the yeas appeared to have it.

Mr. MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

REMOVAL OF THE USE OF UNITED STATES FORCES FOR HOSTILITIES WITHIN OR AGAINST VENEZUELA

Mr. MAST. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to the order of the House of December 16,