

So if Republicans do, in fact, proceed very soon, let me remind them about the consequences of passing this bill. It will be a disaster for families, for the economy, and even for Republicans themselves. It rips healthcare from 16 million people. It is the biggest cuts ever to food funding. It raises energy prices and surrenders American energy leadership to China. And it rewards the ultrarich.

Republicans should abandon these destructive policies. But, of course, they aren't doing that. Instead of fixing their bill, Republicans want to rush it because they don't want the American people to find what is in it. And their fears are certainly justified because the more and more that Americans look at this bill, the more and more they despise it. It steals their Medicaid. It jacks up their premiums. It takes away their jobs. And it gives trillions away to billionaires and special interests. This is a nonsense and destructive piece of legislation, and it makes no sense for Republicans to scramble to pass it.

There is nothing inherently critical about July 4. Even Donald Trump, 2 hours ago, admitted the July 4 deadline is a fake. And yet, here they are, rushing, scrambling, and twisting themselves into knots to try and salvage a bill they know will hurt both their constituents and their own political futures. Republicans aren't just lying to their constituents, frankly; they are lying to themselves because this bill is wholly toxic.

Here is what Republicans should do. They should not let Donald Trump bully them. They should hold firm and tell Donald Trump his Big Beautiful Bill is a disaster, a betrayal of the American people. Republicans should keep their own promises not to cut Medicaid. They should listen to the critiques of some of their own colleagues like Senator TILLIS, who reportedly said behind closed doors, "This will be devastating to my State," or Senator JUSTICE, who said, "our rural hospitals are going to have a tough time . . . you may have to hold your nose and vote for disagreeable policies."

Senate Republicans should listen to their own words. They should ignore fake deadlines and stop the rush job.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina.

OPERATION UPTOWN FUNK

Mr. BUDD. Madam President, I rise to recognize and commend the outstanding efforts of our law enforcement community in western North Carolina for their role in the success of Operation Uptown Funk. Now, that is a pretty creative name, but it is a very serious issue. It was a yearlong investigation into drug trafficking in Appalachia.

This coordinated operation has involved law enforcement agencies from Buncombe, Henderson, Haywood, and

Transylvania Counties in North Carolina as well as Greenville and Spartanburg Counties in South Carolina, and it has been supported by the Drug Enforcement Administration. This is nothing short of a strong testament to the commitment of our law enforcement officers to put the welfare of our communities first.

Over the course of this investigation, authorities confiscated more than \$175,000 in illicit funds, 20 firearms, and 30 pounds of illegal drugs, including substantial quantities of cocaine, methamphetamine, and fentanyl. More than 30 individuals from Henderson County have been arrested and are being held accountable for their role in this dangerous drug network.

These results are not just statistics. They represent lives saved, overdoses prevented, and neighborhoods that can breathe easier knowing that they are a lot safer.

In a region still working to recover from the devastation caused by Hurricane Helene, dismantling this trafficking ring has brought a renewed sense of hope and security for Western North Carolinians.

On behalf of the people of North Carolina, I extend my deepest gratitude and congratulations to Sheriff Lowell Griffin of Henderson County, Sheriff Quentin Miller of Buncombe County, Sheriff Bill Wilke of Haywood County, and Sheriff Chuck Owenby of Transylvania County. I also want to thank the dedicated men and women within their departments—especially the Henderson County Drug Interdiction and Criminal Enforcement Unit, or DICE—for their service. Their courage has protected countless families and made it clear to drug traffickers they will find no refuge in the mountains of our beautiful Western North Carolina.

It is my honor to represent a State whose law enforcement professionals lead with tremendous integrity and commitment to our citizens. I will continue working in the U.S. Senate to ensure that they have the tools, resources, and support they need to keep our communities safe.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

MOTION TO DISCHARGE—S.J. RES.

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Mr. KAINE. Madam President, pursuant to section 601(b) of the International Security Assistance and Arms Control Expert Act, I move to discharge the Committee on Foreign Relations from further consideration of S.J. Res. 59, to direct the removal of U.S. Armed Forces from hostilities against the Islamic Republic of Iran that have not been authorized by Congress.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the motion to discharge.

The bill clerk read as follows:

Motion to discharge from the Committee on Foreign Relations, S.J. Res. 59, to direct the removal of United States Armed Forces from hostilities against the Islamic Republic of Iran that have not been authorized by Congress.

Mr. KAINE. Madam President, we will begin a couple of hours of debate on this resolution prior to a vote that I understand is scheduled around 6 or maybe a little bit thereafter.

I rise to talk about the resolution for the second time in the last week, and I need to repeat all the points I made when I spoke about it last week. I will just begin with this: I came to the Senate in January of 2013, and I tell people that I came with 100 interests and 10 passions and 1 obsession. The obsession that I brought with me to this body was an obsession that I will do everything possible I can to stop the United States from getting into an unnecessary war.

Why did I bring that obsession with me in 2013? I brought it with me because of the experience in Virginia during two wars over the course of 20 years, from 2001 to 2021. I was Governor of Virginia from 2006 to 2010. I was Lieutenant Governor of Virginia before that. Like every State in this country, Virginia was deeply, deeply affected by the global War on Terror.

When I was Governor of Virginia, I had the honor and responsibility—but it was also a burden—of being the commander in chief of the Virginia National Guard. That meant that I was with our Guard men and women when they deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan and when they came home. I went to funerals. I went to wakes. These were very, very moving experiences.

I visited, as Governor, our troops, our Guard men and women, in both Iraq and Afghanistan during that period where the war was at a huge upsurge. Thousands of Virginia Guard men and women were deployed during those 4 years. Of course, because of who Virginia is, it wasn't just our Guard men and women; it was also our Active-Duty, our DOD civilians, civilians from other parts of the Federal family, reservists, military contractors, DOD civilians and their families. The cost of that 20 years of war on Virginia was very heavy.

I came with the obsession not only because of what I had seen in terms of the effect of these wars on my Commonwealth and my country—the deaths, the injuries, the longstanding mental health needs, the tremendous expenditure of public treasure, the lack of clear and positive results from that 20 years—but I also came with an obsession on this topic because of watching the way the war started, particularly the war in Iraq.

The United States was basically—the public and this body were basically lied to about the extent of the Iraqi program of weapons of mass destruction, and then an administration forced a vote on the floor of this body right before a midterm election. The debate and vote occurred in October of 2002.

I remember—at the time, I was Lieutenant Governor, and I was paying attention to this, and I thought, what is the urgency about this debate in October of 2022 right before a midterm election?

You might remember that the United States didn't even invade Iraq until March of 2023. There was no urgency. There was none. But it was determined to be politically expedient to force a debate before a midterm election to try to give one party an edge in those midterms. Yes, there was a vote, but it was timed and structured for political rather than military reasons, and thousands of Americans, both soldiers and contractors, lost their lives as a result.

So I came to this body fully believing that, yes, I am only 1 of 100, but I am going to do everything I can to make sure that the United States doesn't get into an unnecessary war and that if the issue ever arises, Congress needs to fully debate any military mission before we send our sons and daughters into war.

Now, I say this as a Senator from—I am going to argue this, and the President will challenge me on this, but I am going to say Virginia is the most pro-military State in the United States. Our military bases, our veteran population, our reservists, our Guard, our military families, our DOD civilians—our map is a map of American military history: Yorktown, Appomattox, the Wilderness, Fredericksburg, the 9/11 attack on the Pentagon. Everything about Virginia is connected to our Nation's military mission.

I know the President would make the same claim about Florida's connection to our military. This would be a virtuous competition as we would all talk about how pro-military our States are. But I believe this deeply about Virginia.

My dad was an Army officer. One of my kids is a Marine officer. I mean, this is family. And I am connected deeply as a member of the Armed Services Committee to all of our military community.

I am not a pacifist. Every year, I work on the Armed Services Committee to help write a defense bill and try to get it passed. I whip votes on the floor for military aid packages to allies. There are bad folks in the world. The United States needs to defend itself, and it needs to work with allies to help them defend themselves. But our troops, our sons and daughters, deserve to have wise civilian leadership that only makes the decision to send them into war on the basis of careful consideration and a debate before the entire public.

The other night when I spoke on the floor, I pointed out the history of the way the Framers of our Constitution grappled with this question in 1787. To just make it simple, they decided—contrary to the history of the world and the way virtually every other country did it, they decided that war was too big a decision for one person. I mean,

they were making this decision at the time that George Washington was President. He was very respected and admired. He was a wartime general. Deeply respected. But as much as they respected leaders like George Washington, they said that war is too big a decision for one person.

So they wrote a Constitution and said that the United States should not be at war without a vote of Congress. Defense against an attack or an imminent attack? Yes, the President, as Commander in Chief, has the power to do that. But to go on offense against another nation or an entity, like a terrorist group—and there were terrorist groups back in the days, like the Barbary Coast pirates. From the very beginning, we have confronted threats not just by nation states but by others.

But the decision was that it was too big a decision for any one person; we should only go to war after a debate—not only in Congress, where we put our thumbprint on “This is a national mission we are risking our sons and daughters' lives for,” we have a debate in front of the entire public so they can understand the stakes.

War is too big for any one person.

I think the events of this week have demonstrated that war is too big to be consigned to the decisions of any one person.

Our current Commander in Chief, on his social media account a day or two after the attack in Iran, put up a music video with lyrics that were matched to a Beach Boys song, “Barbara Ann,” but the music video contained these lyrics: “Bomb bomb Iran; bomb bomb bomb bomb bomb Iran . . . ; went to a mosque, gonna throw some rocks . . . ; time to turn Iran into a parking lot.”

We shouldn't premise a decision to send our sons and daughters into war on the judgment of a single person.

The President patted himself on the back, and he compared the attack to Hiroshima and Nagasaki. That was a most unusual—most unusual—comparison.

I haven't put all the lyrics of the song up on my chart, but one of the other lyrics was about sending the Ayatollah home in a box. I mean, is this some kind of a joke? Is this the way we treat war now? We run a victory lap, overstate it, and we turn it into a funny music video, or we use a Hiroshima and Nagasaki comparison as if that is like a good thing?

War is too big to leave the decision to send our sons and daughters and risk their lives on the say-so of one person.

We had some turmoil this week in the Senate. We were going to have a briefing on Tuesday from the national security officials in the administration. They had to postpone it until Thursday because they were fighting with themselves and they were fighting with reporters about intelligence that had come out that the President wasn't happy about.

In the immediate aftermath of the attack, he said that the Iranian nu-

clear program had been completely obliterated. All sources—Iranian sources, Israeli sources, the IAEA, the United States—have said “severe damage,” but because the President sort of went overboard with the Hiroshima and Nagasaki claims, reporters started to dig into it. Then the President got mad, and then his Secretary of Defense started to name-call reporters who were asking basic questions.

War is too big an issue to leave to the moods and the whims and the daily vibes of any one person. That is why the Founders said that unless it is imminent defense—and in this case, it wasn't. The Israeli Foreign Minister had said before the U.S. attack that their attacks had already set the Iranian program back at least 2 or 3 years. That is a direct quote from the Israelis who follow this very closely. If the program had been set back at least 2 or 3 years, what was the urgency that suggested we needed to take this action without a debate in Congress?

It was not only done without congressional authorization, it was also done without congressional consultation, and it was done without congressional notification of Democratic leaders. Republican leaders were given a briefing, but for the first time during my time here, no Democrat in a leadership position on the key committees was given an advance notice of this. Is war now to be a partisan thing where the White House just notifies those of the same party?

I have tried to be consistent about this. When I came to the Senate in 2013 with this passion that I am going to do anything I can to stop an unnecessary war, within a few months of arriving here, President Obama, who is a personal friend, was contemplating military action in Syria. I looked my friend in the eye, and I said: You do not have congressional authority to do that. You need to bring this to Congress.

Hey, I thought you were my supporter. I thought you were my friend and you would support this.

I do support you, and I think you have good judgment, and I think you are likely to make a careful decision, but war is too big an issue to leave in the hands of even a completely careful and deliberative of individual.

The Framers didn't want to leave war in the hands of George Washington, for God's sake. They thought Congress should be involved in it.

I said to President Obama: You need to bring this to Congress.

And guess what. A lot of Members of this body said the same thing.

Seven Members of the Senate right now were in the House in 2013. I have a letter that many of them wrote. Six Members who are currently Republican Members of the Senate signed this.

August 28, 2013:

Dear Mr. President, we strongly urge you to consult and receive authorization from Congress before ordering the use of U.S. military force in Syria. Your responsibility to do

so is prescribed in the Constitution and the War Powers Resolution of 1973.

We were in a recess then—it was August—but they said:

If you deem that military action . . . is necessary, Congress can reconvene at your request. We stand ready to come back into session, consider the facts before us, and share the burden of decisions regarding U.S. involvement in the quickly escalating Syrian conflict.

Six Republican Members of this body signed that letter in 2013, but based on their public statements, they seem to have a different standard for President Trump than they did for President Obama, a different standard for war against Iran than they did for war against Syria.

There is one Member who signed this letter who is consistent: Congressman PETER WELCH, who is now in the Senate. He signed this letter to the President of his own party, saying you can't do this without a vote of Congress, come to Congress. And he is taking the same position on the floor today, consistent with what he did then.

I am going to conclude and just say this: I know everybody in this body is praying that the cease-fire that is in place now, for a couple of days, works and that it holds.

I know everybody is praying that when the administration now says they are interested in a diplomatic resolution to this program, that they will have learned that they shouldn't tear up diplomatic deals that they did in 2018 but instead should prefer diplomacy and step back from war against Iran.

I pray that that holds and that we won't need to be back here doing this again, but I do note that the President, even today, said he would certainly bomb Iran again.

I am hoping—I am realistic—but I am hoping that Members of this body will stand up for the Constitution, will stand up for the proposition that war is too big to be decided by one person, will stand up for the principles that they articulated pretty clearly when it came to President Obama thinking about taking war into Syria.

At that moment, when we urged President Obama to do that, he didn't use military force. He did bring it to Congress. We had a debate in the Foreign Relations Committee. We passed an authorization, and in that debate, Syria stepped forward and said they would give up their chemical weapons program. Diplomacy achieved a result, just as diplomacy achieved a more effective control of the Iranian nuclear program—even than the bombs that we dropped last Saturday—until it was torn up.

I pray the cease-fire continues, but I fear we are going to be back here on this floor. And I hope when we are on this floor again, Members of this body will stand for the proposition that has been part of our history that war is too big an issue to allow one person to make the decision that sends our sons and daughters into harm's way.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Madam President, I rise today in support of Senator KAINE's War Powers Resolution to make crystal clear that, as required by the Constitution of the United States, the President may not take offensive military action against Iran or any other country without congressional approval.

Last Saturday, the world learned through a social media post by Donald Trump that he had ordered an attack on three of Iran's nuclear enrichment sites, the first-ever direct U.S. military assault on Iranian territory.

We all agree that Iran must not obtain a nuclear weapon, but bombing is not the best, most sustainable way of achieving that goal, and nothing—nothing—I heard yesterday at the intelligence briefing changes that assessment.

The bombing attack was also a clear violation of the U.S. Constitution, which reserves to the Congress the power to declare war. And make no mistake, initiating a bombing attack against another country is not only a matter of foreign policy, it is an act of war.

For anyone who claims otherwise, I ask them to consider this: What would we have said if Iran or any other country had flown bombers over our country and struck our facilities? We would rightly call it what it was, an act of war.

While the President has the authority to defend the United States when attacked, article I of the Constitution vests the responsibility to go to war explicitly and exclusively in the Congress, not in one person in the Oval Office.

James Madison put it best in 1793 when he wrote:

[I]n no part of the Constitution is more wisdom to be found than in the clause which confides the question of war or peace to the legislature, and not to the executive. . . . The trust and temptation would be too great for any one man.

That is why the Framers of the Constitution designed a system of checks and balances to stop the government from ignoring the will of the American people, and the American people absolutely do not want the United States to be dragged into war, unnecessary wars.

So beyond the debate over the particular politics or policy of President Trump's decision to attack Iran, this debate is about the rule of law. And no President—past, present, or future—is above the law. Those strikes violated American law, and prominent legal experts have said they also violated international law.

The fact that there is now a cease-fire in place does not obviate the need to pass this resolution. President Trump has already shown that he is willing to initiate hostilities on his own, and, indeed, as Senator KAINE just mentioned, President Trump just said

a few hours ago that he would “absolutely” consider bombing Iran again.

And just last month, when asked whether he needs to uphold the Constitution of the United States, President Trump answered: “I don't know.”

We, the U.S. Senate and the House, should make clear that compliance with our Constitution is not optional.

Now, President Trump did not just attack another country in violation of the Constitution, he did so in spite of the facts presented by our own U.S. intelligence Agencies. Just 3 months ago, the U.S. intelligence community noted that they “continue to assess that Iran is not building a nuclear weapon and Supreme Leader Khamenei has not authorized the nuclear weapons program he suspended in 2003.”

That assessment has been reaffirmed year after year since at least 2007 that Iran was not producing a nuclear weapon and had not made a decision to do so. You would think that the facts and intelligence assessments would matter when a President chooses to attack another country. Apparently, not in this case.

Indeed, when President Trump was confronted with the U.S. intelligence community's assessment just days before he launched the attack, he dismissed it. It was an inconvenient fact. It was inconvenient because it showed there was more time for diplomacy to work, time to get a negotiated solution.

Secretary Rubio was asked about this intelligence assessment after the United States bombed Iran. His answer, very revealing, he said: “Forget about the intelligence” and then went on to try to justify the timing of the attack.

Now, as I said earlier, most, if not all of us, agree that Iran must not have a nuclear weapon, which would pose an existential threat to Israel, threaten America's interests in the region by further emboldening Iran's malign actions, and increase the risk of nuclear proliferation throughout the Middle East.

So the question is, How do we best accomplish that goal in a durable way that doesn't unleash unintended consequences and put Americans and others at greater risk?

President Obama answered that question. That is exactly what he accomplished through the agreement his administration negotiated with Iran 10 years ago this July.

President Obama made a deal with Iran to prevent it from building a nuclear weapon, and the agreement was working. Iran was subject to round-the-clock, 24-hour inspections from the International Atomic Energy Agency. That agreement made the whole world a safer place.

But in his very first term, Donald Trump ripped up that deal. Not surprisingly, Iran began to enrich uranium at higher levels, though still not at the 90 percent level needed for bomb-grade material.

Now, by the time Donald Trump returned to the White House this year,

even he and his administration had come to understand that the best way to ensure that Iran does not decide to develop a nuclear weapon is through negotiation. That is why, earlier this year, he dispatched his special envoy, Steve Witkoff, to open negotiations with Iran, and those negotiations were ongoing. Indeed, the sixth round of discussions were scheduled to take place on Sunday, June 15, just 2 days before the Netanyahu government launched its attacks on Iran. Not surprisingly, that Israeli attack derailed the ongoing United States-Iran negotiations.

It is important to remember that a decade earlier, Prime Minister Netanyahu worked very hard to derail President Obama's ongoing negotiations with Iran. Indeed, Prime Minister Netanyahu even addressed a joint session of Congress, urging the Congress not to proceed with those negotiations.

Prime Minister Netanyahu did not succeed in derailing President Obama's JCPOA. That agreement went into effect, and it did make the world and our country and Israel a safer place.

But unlike then, Prime Minister Netanyahu succeeded this time. He outmaneuvered Donald Trump. That story is well-documented in a June 17 New York Times piece entitled "How Trump Shifted on Iran Under Pressure from Israel" and a June 23 Washington Post story entitled "Netanyahu decided on Iran war last year, then sought to recruit Trump."

Simply put, Prime Minister Netanyahu accomplished that goal. President Trump joined his war of choice against Iran. And in doing so, President Trump put our men and women in uniform in the region in grave danger and unnecessary risk.

Following the attack, Iran fired 14 missiles at a major U.S. air base in Qatar. Fortunately, Iran gave the United States and Qatar advance warning, and there were no casualties. But the full extent of Iranian retaliation could play out throughout the region and other places around the world over a long period of time.

And what was accomplished? What was accomplished? To hear President Trump tell it, the Iranian nuclear program was "obliterated." That is flatout untrue—untrue.

We know from public reporting that a Defense Intelligence Agency assessment found that the strikes only set back Iran's nuclear program by "a few months."

Whether it is a few months or somewhat longer, the point is this: The strikes did not obliterate Iran's nuclear program. Before the attacks, U.S. intelligence assessed that Iran was not building a nuclear weapon, and in the aftermath of the attacks, Iran may well change its mind and move forward.

So President Trump disregarded a politically inconvenient U.S. intelligence assessment when he launched the attacks, and he is now making up his own politically convenient narrative about the results.

What has been particularly cowardly is the Trump administration's efforts to escape their own failures by hiding behind the amazing men and women of the U.S. military. To hear President Trump and Secretary of Defense Hegseth tell it, any criticism of their decision to attack Iran is somehow a criticism of the American military. This is garbage, and they know it. Our service men and women performed their mission flawlessly, and they did it with courage and with resolve.

It is especially rich to see Donald Trump, who has so often insulted and belittled our military heroes, now try to hide his own failings behind them.

So let's be clear, while we owe our servicemembers a debt of gratitude, we do not owe that debt of gratitude to President Trump or members of his Cabinet for their decisions or for their current efforts to manipulate the narrative about the results of the attack.

I have to say, as my colleague Senator Kaine mentioned, that the spectacle of President Trump and Secretary Hegseth berating the press for questioning their claims that the Iranian nuclear program had been "obliterated" only revealed their manic desperation to hide the truth.

Remember when President George Bush declared, with respect to Iraq, "Mission accomplished"?

What President Trump and Secretary Hegseth are communicating is that it is somehow treasonous to ask about intelligence reporting that casts doubts on their claims. This is not only an effort to intimidate and silence the press. It also sends a terrible message to all the intelligence analysts in the U.S. Government. It says that anybody who presents facts that don't fit President Trump's political narrative is trying to, as Secretary Hegseth said, "make the President look bad" or "undermining the success of our pilots" or "trying to manipulate the public mind."

That is ridiculous. We have already seen the dangers of manipulating intelligence to fit the President's narrative, rather than fidelity to the facts. The United States went to war in Iraq under false pretenses. Remember when the Bush administration told America that Iraq was developing weapons of mass destruction? Remember when Vice President Cheney warned, in March 2003, that "if there's a mushroom cloud in New York, you will know that Saddam Hussein is behind it." And, of course, there were no weapons of mass destruction in Iraq.

So false intelligence and false narratives that fan the flames of unnecessary wars cost us dearly. The Iraq war cost the lives of over 4,000 American soldiers and hundreds of billions of dollars of American taxpayer money. The war upended the region, killed hundreds of thousands of Iraqi civilians, strengthened Iran, and unleashed ISIS on the world. It was the worst U.S. foreign policy blunder in a generation.

The Trump administration has now created a culture of fear and retribu-

tion throughout the Federal Government. We have already seen patriotic Federal employees be fired for telling the truth. A whistleblower just filed a complaint the other day. He had been at the Justice Department. He said: I didn't sign up to lie.

So the real challenge is this: The President has not obliterated the Iran nuclear program, but he is doing everything he can to obliterate the credibility of the U.S. intelligence community so he can invent his own reality without contradiction. That is why it is more important than ever that Congress stand up for the Constitution and insist that the President cannot initiate hostilities without approval from Congress.

That is what this resolution asks. It asks: Do you support the Constitution and the role it gives to Congress to declare war? Do you believe that the people's representatives should have a voice in whether American lives and, specifically, the lives of our Nation's Armed Forces, are put at grave risk?

We owe it to our troops, and we owe it to the American people to ensure that no President—not this President or any other—can unilaterally commit our Nation to go to war.

The Constitution does entrust that responsibility to us. Let's not abdicate it.

Colleagues, I urge you to vote yes on the Kaine War Powers Resolution.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California.

MR. SCHIFF. Madam President, I rise today in support of Senator Kaine's resolution for the simple and compelling reason that it upholds our constitutional duty. Regardless of what people may think of the military's execution of its mission last weekend—and our servicemembers performed with courage, with professionalism, with extraordinary precision—or their views of its effectiveness—and I hope and pray the mission was effective—Iran is a malevolent regime, it is the paramount sponsor of terrorism in the world, and it must never be allowed to obtain the bomb.

Regardless of whether you support the President's decision to engage in preemptive strikes in the first place, regardless of whether or not you support the President generally or you do not, the Constitution charges the Congress, not the President, with the power to declare war.

Now, there may be a fog of war and a murky uncertainty concerning the battle damage assessment, but there is no ambiguity here when it comes to the Constitution. Article I, section 8 provides that "Congress shall have [the] Power . . . To declare War"—not the President, or the President if it is not convenient to the Congress, but the Congress. And this body, for far too long, has been allergic to the responsibility it has to govern the use of military force.

Not since the very early part of this century has Congress approved any authorization for the use of military

force. Nevertheless, a great deal of military force has been, in fact, used by the United States, since then, in far-flung places in the world.

In fact, post-World War II, the war powers have been utilized by an increasingly strong Executive and an increasingly deferential and fearful legislature.

Now, during the last several weeks, it has been apparent to anyone watching that the conflict in the Middle East had the potential to draw in the United States of America—when missiles began striking Tehran and Tel Aviv; when the President of the United States, with signature bombast, began to telegraph the possibility that we would enter the fray; when countless American families were forced to consider whether their children would be the next to bear the burden and carry the sacrifices of another potentially endless war in the Middle East.

And so with those families and our servicemembers in mind, Senator Kaine introduced this resolution to ensure that the President did not risk committing the United States to yet another open-ended conflict in the region without a debate in Congress and a decision by Congress as to whether the country should go down that dangerous road.

Now, at that time, many Senators, myself included, pushed for an intelligence briefing from the administration. We had significant questions we needed answered: Had Iran made the decision to build a bomb? Had Iran begun the process of building the mechanism of a bomb? Was there an imminent threat to the United States or our forces? What were the threats to U.S. personnel and facilities in the region, should Iran respond? How might Iran and its proxies escalate and harm U.S. interests, not only in the region but here at home and in other parts of the world? How much damage could U.S. military action do to the Iranian nuclear and missile programs, and for how long would it set them back? And, most important, what was the risk that such a bombing campaign could escalate into all-out war?

Days passed, no briefings. Even after last Saturday's strikes, still no briefing. Not until yesterday did the administration come to Congress to answer the most basic of questions, and only after suggesting, it was reported, that they would potentially choke off further information to the Congress.

The Constitution demands otherwise. The Founders split the government's wartime powers, just as they divided responsibilities for so many other things. It is Congress which declares a war, which raises an army and a navy and pays for the financial cost of defense and war.

And keep in mind that the need for congressional approval of warmaking was not hypothetical to the Founders. The United States had just fought a war against a King, and the Founders did not want to put the power to start

another war in the hands of any single person.

The Framers put their thinking on parchment, and in a letter to Thomas Jefferson, in the summer of 1789, James Madison reflected on how they had approached this question of war power, which was the subject of much debate in Philadelphia at the Constitutional Convention. He said:

We have already given, in one example, [an] effectual check to the Dog of war, by transferring the power of letting him loose from the Executive to the Legislative body, from those who are to spend to those who are to pay.

"From those who are to spend to those who are to pay"—that is because a decision as consequential as entering into war requires informed debate and buy-in from the people's representatives and the public, from us here in the Senate and from our colleagues in the House, because we need to weigh the benefits and the risks for our constituents and for the country as a whole, because a decision like this one should be insulated from partisan politics and not made with haste or with blinders on.

There are, perhaps, Senators in this body who will say: This debate is no longer needed. The mission is over. Iran has backed down. A lasting ceasefire is in place. The threat has passed.

And I would say to them: I don't know that to be true, and neither do you.

And on behalf of all those who could and would pay, we should not allow this great and solemn power to make war to be usurped any longer. The only way for us to know whether the United States might be drawn into a broader conflict is if we exercise our authority to prevent it or to determine that the Congress wants to affirmatively provide a President with the authorization to use force.

So I am a yes on this resolution.

And if the Senate votes to bring this resolution before the body, which I hope it will see the wisdom of doing, I will move an amendment that I have filed with Senators KIM and KAINE that I would hope would receive all of our support. Our amendment makes clear what is implicit in Senator KAINE's resolution already, and that is that terminating the use of U.S. Armed Forces against Iran does not affect the ability of the United States to defend itself, to share intelligence with Israel or our other partner nations, or to assist them in taking defensive measures to protect themselves from an attack by Iran or its proxies.

Our intent in this amendment is to make it crystal clear that calling up and passing this resolution would in no way restrict the United States' ability to defend itself or our partners.

And with that question settled, we should be able to turn to the real need for this debate: Should this Congress continue to abdicate our constitutional duty to an administration that, at every turn—at every turn—has deemed

us irrelevant; an administration that, for too long, deferred its obligation to brief Congress and has reportedly threatened to take steps to choke off the amount of information we have and need to assess the impact and the consequences of unilateral military action; an administration that openly disdains and threatens a free press, ignoring the fact that our fourth estate exists to ask questions for the people, even if those questions are uncomfortable—especially when those questions are uncomfortable—and shine a light on the places where tyranny and despotism can grow and foster and fester?

Because here is the bottom line: Article I, section 8 says that "the Congress shall have [the] Power . . . To declare War."

And every American should know that Congress is not giving up on its most basic constitutional right to debate and determine whether U.S. forces undertake further operations—offensive operations—against the Iranian regime or any other.

This resolution, with my amendment, would give Senators confidence that a vote on that question will in no way put American troops or our allies at increased risk, and the underlying resolution would give the American people the confidence of knowing that they will not be dragged into another war without their consent.

There must be a check on the dogs of war. There must be a voice for those who will pay the costs of going to war, and the Senate must be that voice.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. MERKLEY. I appreciate the comments of my colleague from California and particularly appreciate that my colleague from Virginia Senator KAINE has proposed this War Powers Resolution, a resolution that reaffirms a basic principle: The decisions of war and peace belong under our Constitution to Congress, not to the President.

But on June 21, President Trump ordered strikes on three Iranian nuclear facilities. There was no congressional authorization. There was no debate in this Chamber. There was no vote in this Chamber. The President made a unilateral decision that risked bringing the United States into another extended war in the Middle East.

That is not how our Founders designed our Nation through the architecture of the Constitution. In fact, each Member here swore an oath to uphold that Constitution that places the responsibility for declaring war upon this body, not upon the individual who sits in the Oval Office. To be sure, the President, as Commander in Chief, has the responsibility to protect the Nation from an imminent threat. But in this case, there was not an imminent threat.

First, according to our own intelligence, Iran was not pursuing a nuclear weapon. Second, even though Iran possessed a significant amount of 60-

percent-enriched uranium—more than the 3 percent to 5 percent that is utilized for civilian energy—it was still not enriched to the level to build a bomb. It would have had to be enriched to 90 percent. It would have had to be converted to metallic form. It would have had to be arranged with an extensive system of explosives that compress it in order to start a chain reaction. That is a very difficult engineering feat. Third, prior to the U.S. strikes, Israel's Foreign Minister said Israel's attacks had already set back Iran's nuclear weapon program for at least 2 to 3 years.

So let's be clear, the threat was not imminent. It was not a situation where there was no time for the President to observe the Constitution, to honor the Constitution, to seek an authorization for the use of military force from the Congress of the United States.

The administration, instead, acted precipitously, putting American lives at risk, including the over 40,000 U.S. troops in the region, as well as diplomats and American civilians stationed or visiting the Middle East.

Wars are easy to start, but they are often hard to end, and the consequences can be enormous. Look, for example, at the cost of the wars in Afghanistan and in Iraq: more than 7,000 deaths of American men and women serving in uniform, more than 50,000 serious injuries—often life-altering injuries—to America's sons and daughters serving in uniform, more than \$8 trillion of American treasure spent.

That is why the Founders said the consequences of conflict, of entering into war, are so significant they must never be entrusted to a single person, not even the person who sits in the Oval Office. That is why they wrote the Constitution, placing the responsibility for that here where it can be wrestled with; where it can be debated; where different perspectives can be brought to bear; where experts can be interviewed; and all can be taken into account in making such an important decision for our Nation.

From where we are right now, two things need to happen: First, Congress needs to reassert its constitutional authority over matters of war and peace; second, we need to double down on diplomacy to secure a lasting peace.

And a lasting peace includes at least three elements: Iran does not develop a nuclear weapon; second, Iran stops funding militias across the region; and, third, Iran's economy is freed up to prosper. Those are the three elements that need to be addressed.

Let me begin, first, by addressing in some greater detail Congress's need to reassert its constitutional authority. On "Meet the Press" on Sunday, Senator LINDSEY GRAHAM said:

You can't have 535 Commanders in Chief.

He is exactly right. And that is why the Founders designed the Constitution with a separation of powers. Congress has the responsibility to decide if we go to war, and then the President commands our military to go to war.

Article I gives Congress the power to declare a war and article II gives the President the power to be the Commander in Chief to execute the war. Senator KAINE's War Powers Resolution says hostilities in Iran must be explicitly authorized by Congress, but that does not, in any way, prevent the United States from defending itself from an imminent attack should that need arise.

This is a privileged resolution, meaning that we will have the opportunity to wrestle with it. And we will be voting on whether to do so later today.

This resolution is urgently needed. We are already in the throes of a slide into an authoritarian state. Our President has been ignoring the Constitution or violating the Constitution by violating the rule of law that applies to the executive branch; by ignoring or suppressing or circumventing due process, the very issue that protects all of us from an overbearing Executive. In fact, it is the defender of our freedom; third, stiff-arming the courts; and, fourth, seizing Congress's power of the purse.

And then just this week, it was reported that Trump will limit intelligence sharing with Congress, another brazen attempt to centralize powers in the executive in a strongman Presidency.

With this resolution, Senator KAINE's resolution, Congress can reassert its constitutional authority as a coequal branch of government. It can stop this President from seizing even more dangerously unaccountable power.

In addition to Congress taking this action, there is an urgent need for diplomacy in order to secure a lasting peace in the Middle East. That lasting peace includes the three elements that I mentioned: that Iran does not have the path to developing a nuclear weapon; that it stops funding militias across the region; and that Iran's economy is freed up to prosper. They can reenter international commerce.

It is already clear that diplomacy is not just essential but that it is effective. In 2015, the United States helped negotiate the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, better known as the Iran nuclear deal, which blocked all paths for Iran to acquire a nuclear weapon. It blocked the plutonium path; it blocked the uranium path; it blocked the covert path.

That deal was so important for global security that it involved the United States, Russia, China, the United Kingdom, and France, all working together to create that framework in partnership with Iran. And Iran accepted massive inspections and oversight from the International Atomic Energy Agency to make sure that you not only had an act of trust, but lots of acts of verification. The deal worked. Iran was not developing a nuclear weapon. Instead, they dismantled their plutonium-based Arak heavy water reactor. They agreed not to enrich uranium beyond 6.7 percent, and they didn't do so. They

shipped all of their more highly enriched uranium out of the country—some 25,000 pounds—to be stored abroad.

But 3 years later, President Trump tore up that agreement. He did so over the objections of his own national security officials; over the objection of his Secretary of Defense General Jim Mattis; over the objection of his Secretary of State Rex Tillerson; over the objection of his National Security Advisor General McMaster; and over the objection of his Chief of Staff General John Kelly.

Had President Trump, in his first administration, not torn up that agreement, we would be celebrating Iran's tenth anniversary under the nuclear deal with no path to a nuclear weapon. By ripping up the Iran nuclear deal, Trump opened the pathway for Iran to enrich beyond 3.67 percent, leading to the concerns that prompted Israel to attack Iran's nuclear facilities and that led Prime Minister Netanyahu to ask President Trump to use our planes and our abilities to bomb Isfahan, Natanz, and Fordo.

To create an enduring agreement now that stops Iran from having a path to a nuclear weapon, restrictions like those that were in the Iran nuclear deal back in 2015 have to be recreated. And, in fact, we learned over the last few days how diplomats from President Trump's team have been working on this, were in conversation with Iran before Israel's attack to create such an arrangement. In fact, they continued those conversations even as bombs were dropping.

We have to succeed to put in place a permanent, detailed, enforceable plan for peace which Iran agrees to, that stops funding for militias outside Iran and blocks all those paths to a nuclear weapon.

Colleagues, we wouldn't be here today discussing this if President Trump hadn't torn up the first agreement that was working against the advice of his entire foreign affairs and security staff. That is what happens when you scoff at diplomacy—diplomacy that works, agreements that worked—and unleash events in the world that lead to circumstances that realized themselves this year in 2025.

The decision to strike Iran without authorization from Congress was wrong because there wasn't the imminent threat and, thus, there was time to go through the process of seeking authorization for the use of military force necessitated by our Constitution.

Wars are easy to start, but they are hard to end, and that is why the Founders wanted us to debate them before the American people. We must reassert Congress's congressional authority. We must double down on diplomacy to secure long-term peace. We cannot allow our servicemembers in uniform to be sent to war if we are not even willing to debate and vote on that war.

I urge my colleagues to support this resolution.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. WELCH. Madam President, I do not want the United States of America to be involved in yet another regime-change war in Iran. Have we not learned anything from what happened in Iraq? We deposed Saddam Hussein, and all hell broke loose. That was a war of regime change—no sense since it wasn't related to 9/11.

We had a regime-change war in Afghanistan and then went on to embrace nation building. Thousands of American men and women who answered the call of the President reported for duty, lost their lives, lost their limbs, or are suffering today with PTSD. Trillions of taxpayer dollars have been spent and wasted. Yet, in the Middle East, the flashpoint now is Iran, and we came within an eyelash of getting dragged into yet another war where the goal was regime change.

I want to acknowledge the professionalism of our Air Force and our men and women in the military. The strike they were ordered to perform they executed flawlessly. To them, I extend my congratulations.

But the question for us is, Who authorizes the use of force? Our men and women will do what it is the Commander in Chief requires and do what it is Congress authorizes. We all have confidence in that. But this was a wake-up call for us because we came within an eyelash of being in a conflict where the goal would have been the Netanyahu goal of regime change.

What we did in this action, with the President's decision to send our bombers in at the request of Netanyahu, was to essentially put in the hands of the Iranian Government the question of how far this war would go. Would they turn the other cheek, which is essentially what they did, or would they retaliate in a way, as President Trump said, that he would rain hellfire on them and have us in a war?

The point here of the Kaine resolution is that if this country is going to make that decision, it must be Congress that authorizes that decision. It must be Congress that has the debate about what are the national security concerns, what are the costs, and what are the benefits. We can't simply bypass that and continue to abdicate our responsibility and congressional authority and duty, and that is why this resolution is so important.

Now this question of, how did we get here? You know, a war oftentimes happens not by design; you stumble into it. That is what almost happened here. We do not want a nuclear Iran. There is nobody in this U.S. Senate who wants a nuclear Iran. Russia doesn't want a nuclear Iran. China doesn't want a nuclear Iran. Our Presidents—bipartisan—have worked hard to make certain that Iran didn't have it.

The Obama agreement was working. After President Trump was not President Trump, he challenged the agreement. When he got elected, he tore it

up. But he saw at some point the wisdom of diplomacy, and he was engaged in active negotiations about a non-nuclear Iran and was making progress on those.

That was objected to by Prime Minister Netanyahu. He was against the JCPOA that Obama was negotiating and actually, as a foreign leader, came to this U.S. Congress and gave a speech in conflict with the Commander in Chief of the United States wherein he lobbied in this Capitol against entering into an agreement that ultimately made us more secure.

That determination on his part continues, and the biggest act of sabotage to the Trump negotiations as to a nuclear agreement was the bombing campaign that Netanyahu did that sabotaged those talks.

Again, I say congratulations to our men and women in uniform who, when they were ordered by the President to do the strike on the nuclear facilities, did it and did it well, but we should not at all discount how precarious that situation was for our country. It was the result of a decision by Iran to turn the other cheek, to disregard the attacks and basically not escalate. I am so glad they did, and the President showed temperance there himself. But we can't be putting ourselves in a position where our future and whether we do get in a war is based on the actions of other people—particularly folks who run Iran.

So if we are going to protect the national security, if we are going to protect the men and women of this country who will always respond to the call of the Commander in Chief—that is what makes them such wonderful patriots. They cede the authority to make the decision about whether they will be put in harm's way to the men and women who serve in the Congress of the United States and the Commander in Chief. That is a profound responsibility that each of us has to debate the question of whether we should commit this country to war.

So this resolution is absolutely vital—to the well-being of this country and to the humility that is required of a country before it makes the ultimate decision to ask the men and women who are citizens of our country to potentially sacrifice their lives for the well-being of this country.

I urge my colleagues to support the Kaine resolution.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kentucky.

Mr. PAUL. Mr. President, the Constitution is clear: Congress, not the President, has the authority to declare war. The Founders were unanimous in proclaiming that the power to declare war belonged exclusively to Congress.

James Madison, the father of the Constitution, said that the executive branch was the branch most prone to war; therefore, the Constitution, "with studied care, vested that power in the legislature."

Madison would further state that "in no part of the Constitution is more wisdom to be found than in the clause which confides the question of war and peace to the legislature, and not to the executive [branch]."

Hamilton, who didn't always agree with Madison or Jefferson, wrote that "the Legislature can alone declare war, can alone . . . transfer the nation from a state of Peace to a state of War," and "if the Legislature have a right to make war on the one hand—it is on the other [hand] the duty of the Executive to preserve Peace til war is declared."

Madison and Hamilton had very different visions of Executive power. Yet they both agreed that it was vitally important to entrust the power to declare war to Congress, not the executive branch.

George Washington remarked that "the Constitution vests the power of declaring war with Congress; therefore no offensive expedition of importance can be undertaken until after they shall have deliberated upon the subject, and authorized such a measure." No offensive expedition without congressional approval.

St. George Tucker, a Revolutionary War-era law professor, wrote in 1803 of how our Constitution diverged from the English tradition.

He wrote:

In England the right of making war is in the King. . . . With us, the representatives of the people, have the right to decide this important question.

It is without question that Congress neither deliberated nor authorized the recent offensive military action against Iran.

Each of us has taken an oath to uphold the Constitution. Deferring the decision as to when, where, and why the country goes to war to any President is a dereliction of duty on the part of Congress.

To commit America's military to fight wars on behalf of the Nation is the most consequential and humbling responsibility that Congress is entrusted with. If we are to ask our young men and women to fight and potentially give their lives, then we in this body can at least muster the courage to debate if American military intervention is warranted.

Washington's record of involvement in the Greater Middle East is particularly abysmal, with dozens of campaigns costing thousands of American lives and trillions of dollars. Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Pakistan, Yemen, Sudan, Somalia, and now Iran—all countries in the region that the United States has bombed or is bombing. In each case, the hawks in Washington were adamant that U.S. military intervention would lead to a glorious future and great peace. Instead, after tragically losing thousands of lives and trillions of dollars, the United States is not in a better strategic position thanks to our interventions.

After September 11, a generation of brave Americans answered the call to

serve, many enduring multiple deployments in the region. Some 7,000 U.S. servicemembers paid the ultimate sacrifice in the War on Terror. Tens of thousands more carry with them the scars of war: living with missing limbs, shrapnel, nerve damage, brain injuries, burns, scars. Some live with paralysis and are confined to wheelchairs. The mental wounds of war are also present as we remember the more than 30,000 veterans who have committed suicide since Washington's misguided project to remake the Middle East.

While our soldiers carry out their missions with honor, the Washington establishment consistently fails them. In almost all cases, our interventions were counterproductive, making us less safe and less prosperous.

As the initial jubilation wears off from those who clamor for war, the regional situation remains precarious, and American servicemembers remain in danger. Many advocates for war, giving voice to their real feelings, have loudly opposed the current cease-fire. Those arguing against a cease-fire give a callous testimony, insensitive to the cruelties of war.

Some 40,000 U.S. troops are scattered throughout the Middle East as we speak—some on large, established bases, others on isolated outposts. It is impossible to ensure all of these locations have adequate air and missile defense capabilities.

Our troop presence in the region is therefore a significant liability, allowing Iran and its proxies an opportunity to target Americans, which they otherwise would not have. Yet the Washington foreign policy establishment seems content to allow our servicemembers to serve as sitting ducks. Should American soldiers get wounded or, God forbid, killed in a retaliatory strike, the calls for war emanating from Washington will surely be deafening.

History is replete with examples of leaders who, in their hubris, thought they could shape the fate of nations, but we are subsequently proven wrong as events ended up controlling them. Our own country, sadly, experienced this during Vietnam.

The needless tragedy of that war in which 58,000 Americans paid the ultimate sacrifice led Congress to pass the War Powers Resolution we debate today. Congress intended to ensure a President would never again unilaterally plunge the American people into war without the people's representatives in Congress debating the issue. We owe it to all Americans who have worn the uniform to honor that humbling responsibility.

Moreover, despite the tactical success of our strikes, they may end up proving to be a strategic failure. It is unclear if this intervention will fully curtail Iran's nuclear aspirations or, in fact, whether the Iranians may well conclude to double down on their efforts to obtain a nuclear weapon. At this time, it is unknown.

The lesson Tehran and other unsavory regimes around the world may learn is that the only way to deter a strike is to maintain a nuclear deterrent. Pandora's box has been opened, and the consequences remain to be seen.

Congress must now focus its efforts on deescalation and preventing the call for regime change, the consequences of which, if applied to Iran, risk the total destabilization of the Middle East. The American people are sick and tired of sending their children to fight and die in war zones on the other side of the world with no tangible U.S. interests at stake.

Abdicating our constitutional responsibility by allowing the executive branch to unilaterally introduce U.S. troops into wars is an affront to the Constitution and to the American people.

Today's vote offers every Member of this body an opportunity to stand up for the Constitution, to stand up for American servicemembers, and to stand up for America's strategic interests. I will vote in support of this resolution, and I urge my colleagues to do so as well.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SHEEHY). The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, in a 1793 letter to William Cabell, James Madison said this:

In no part of the constitution is more wisdom to be found than in the clause which confides the question of war or peace to the legislature, and not to the executive department.

A few years later, in another letter, this time to Thomas Jefferson as part of their famous correspondence, Madison expounded on that very simple superlative, naming the war powers clause in the Constitution as the most important. He said:

The constitution supposes what the History of all Governments demonstrates, that the Executive is the branch of power most interested in war, and most prone to it. It has accordingly with studied care vested the question of war in the Legislature.

Our Founding Fathers didn't get everything right. They didn't see ahead of time that this Chamber would be divided in two: Republicans on one side, Democrats on the other side. But they knew, having watched the course of human history, that Executives—in their day, mostly all Monarchs and Kings—had all sorts of reasons to drag their Nation into war. Power often came from war, the funding that could be raised for war, the loyalty commanded by war, the glory that occasionally came to the leader, the ruler, through war and through conquest.

There was great risk in war, but there was also great reward in war. And there was far too much of it in the era in which our Constitution was being formed.

The purpose of the Founders was to give the American people a voice in government—a revolutionary idea at

the time—but it was also to order our government in a way that war would become less likely, would become less frequent. They imagined a world—this new America—in which peace would be the rule, not war, as it was at the time for the citizens of Europe who lived under the rule of Kings prone to war, incentivized to war, as James Madison wrote to Thomas Jefferson.

So this part of the Constitution, with more wisdom in it than any other part of the Constitution, according to James Madison, is this section of our Founding document that says it is not up to the ruler; it is not up to the executive branch; it is up to the branch of government most connected to the people to decide whether we go to war; to require that there be a debate, a conversation that involves everyone in this Nation; that requires, that necessitates, a collective decision as to whether to put the brave soldiers of this country and the collective security of the Nation at risk.

So we are here today because we still find wisdom in that clause of the Constitution. We still see great risk in moving into a world, which we are quickly moving to, in which that clause that James Madison named as the supreme clause of the Constitution, is a dead letter—is a dead letter.

That is the risk because there are very few wars that are planned so far in advance that there is time to come and have a monthlong debate. Wars happen quickly, and they necessitate quick action, according to the Constitution.

Yes, we have always accepted that there has to be an exception—but a limited exception—to that supreme clause in the Constitution. If there is an imminent attack against the United States, of course—of course—the people of the United States want the ability of the President of the United States to respond to that imminent attack. But in the absence of an imminent attack, there is no exception. There is no ability to go around Congress.

In the case of the hostilities against Iran that the President began last weekend, there was no imminent threat against the United States. There was no Army marching in this Nation. There was no nuclear bomb that even existed that could be dropped on the United States or our soldiers in the region.

So it was required—it is required under the Constitution—that the President come to Congress. If the President doesn't need to come to Congress to attack another Nation preemptively, preventively, absent an imminent threat, then that provision of the Constitution is dead letter. Period. Stop. And the most important piece of this document, according to our most revered Founding Father, is no longer operational.

And if we lurch into a world in which any Executive can send us to war without the participation of the American people, then we are in a world that our Founding Fathers could never have imagined.

So I am very glad to be on the floor today, as a big fan of the wisdom of our Founders, to support Senator KAINE's resolution. I appreciate his consistency in bringing this question before us.

I don't want to live in a world in which the greatest question that this country could envision, whether or not we send our brave men and women to fight on our behalf, is not a question that doesn't involve the collective conversation of this body and of the people of this Nation.

I think it is an important resolution to debate here, and I hope my colleagues will support it.

It doesn't really have to do with whether you think there is wisdom in this action or not, whether you think the President was right or wrong; this is an opportunity for us to stand up for our responsibility under the Constitution to be a coequal branch in setting foreign policy.

I have my thoughts on the wisdom of this action. I have stated that I think it is very dangerous when the President of the United States deliberately misleads the country about the efficacy of our military operations overseas or the threats presented to this country. It is unforgiveable anytime a President doesn't tell the truth, but it is especially unforgiveable when the President doesn't tell the truth about national security intelligence.

I know my colleagues here come to different conclusions, but if the reporting is correct that Iran, even after these strikes, still has centrifuges and still has enriched uranium and still has scientists who know how to put those things together, then it just is not true that the program has been obliterated. That is a program that can be reconstituted in a relatively short amount of time because, of course, knowledge is not able to be destroyed by bombs.

The only way that you are going to make this country and this world safe from Iran's nuclear weapons ambitions—and they have them—is diplomacy. I hope that diplomacy got easier because of these strikes, but I don't think they did. I don't think diplomacy got closer because of these strikes and whatever follow-on strikes may come as President Trump is currently threatening. So if diplomacy is the only path, if you can't bomb out of existence knowledge, then I don't think this is a very good week for American national security.

But I come to a different conclusion than many of my Republican colleagues do, even some of my Democratic colleagues. But Senator KAINE's resolution is so important because that is the debate that we should be having. That is the argument that we should be having in public.

That debate over the wisdom of dropping bombs in a far-off land that could put our troops at risk, that could drag us into a war, that is not a debate that the Founding Fathers thought should take place behind closed doors at the Department of Defense, at the CIA, and

the White House. That is actually the debate that they thought that this body should have—the U.S. Senate—that the House of Representatives should have, and that is the chance that we have today: to bring that debate out of the shadows, out of the secret, to the place where the Founding Fathers thought it should exist.

That is why I urge my colleagues to support Senator KAINE's resolution.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. HAGERTY. Mr. President, President Trump's actions to address Iran's nuclear weapons program last weekend didn't start a war; they ended a war. So I rise today to support President Trump's wisdom and leadership in decisively countering Iran's nuclear threat and, therefore, to oppose this ill-conceived joint resolution.

As a U.S. Senator and former Ambassador to Japan, I understand and respect the role that Congress plays in matters of war and peace, but I cannot and I will not support a resolution that removes the ability of the President of the United States to act decisively in defense of national interests, our allies, and our Armed Forces.

This resolution, if passed, would send a dangerous message not just to Iran's terrorist-sponsoring regime but also to every adversary who is seeking to exploit our domestic debates and internal divisions. This resolution would signal that America's resolve can be hamstrung by congressional hesitation at the very moment when clarity, unity, and strength are most needed.

I cannot state this strongly enough: President Trump acted entirely within his constitutional authority under article II and in accordance with his solemn duty to defend this Nation and to defend the American people. Operation Midnight Hammer was a targeted, strategic, and necessary use of force to eliminate immediate threats posed by the Iranian regime and its proxies. No American lives were lost or injured during this military operation, thanks to the leadership of President Trump, the advice and counsel of Vice President JD VANCE, National Security Advisor and Secretary of State Marco Rubio, Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth, General Dan Caine, and the brilliant planning and flawless execution of the men and women of the U.S. Armed Forces.

For decades, the Iranian regime has been attacking U.S. personnel, our allies, and our interests through its Revolutionary Guard, through Hezbollah and Hamas and Houthi terrorists, and through its missile programs and multiple cyber attacks. For decades, the Iranian regime has cynically violated international agreements to overtly and covertly pursue the capabilities necessary to make nuclear weapons on short notice.

The idea that the President, in the face of escalating threats, can only sit idly by until Congress can hold hear-

ings and schedule votes is not just naive; it is reckless. This War Powers Resolution ignores the reality of modern warfare, and it would constrain the Commander in Chief at the precise moment when decisiveness is most critical. It elevates process over common-sense policy and political optics over operational necessity.

If the President had been forced to act in accordance with this resolution last week, the element of surprise would have been entirely lost, and the successful mission flown by our brave airmen would have been much different and, likely, much costlier.

Of course, Congress must be consulted. Of course, we can debate the scope and strategy of our military engagements. But we must not shackle our President in the middle of a crisis when lives are on the line. We must not embolden the Ayatollahs in Tehran by showing division and delay because that is the path to endless wars, rather than the path to decisive victories.

President Trump acted wisely and proportionately to protect American lives. He acted to reestablish the credibility of our strategic deterrence. And he acted after decades of Iranian aggression that went largely unanswered by the previous administrations of President Joe Biden and Barack Obama. President Trump, once again, demonstrated decisive leadership in the service of peace and stability. That is the actual job of the Commander in Chief.

Let me conclude by repeating what I said at the start. President Trump's actions last weekend did not start a war. His actions ended a war. And not a single American life was lost.

We should not be here debating how to constrain effective Presidential leadership but, rather, discussing how to recognize effective leadership and support it. For this reason, I urge my colleagues to oppose S.J. Res. 59.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas.

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, the most significant responsibility and heavy burden a President has is the determination of when to engage the Armed Forces of our Nation. Such decisions can both cost and save lives.

This past Saturday, President Trump directed our military to respond to a growing threat that Iran could weaponize nuclear material and deliver a nuclear weapon. With escalating tensions between our ally Israel and our adversary Iran, the President made the decision to deter and delay the capabilities Iran has to deliver a nuclear weapon. What we know to date from our intelligence sources is that the President's actions were significant and successful.

The U.S. Constitution splits the responsibility of the use of military force between the legislative and executive branches. Having received a classified and thorough briefing from our military, intelligence, and diplomatic officials, I conclude that the President

acted within his constitutional authorities.

I welcome the return to a stricter constitutional balance of power between the branches of government. Under the circumstances of the recent actions of the President and the timing of the offering of the resolution now before the Senate, we should not adopt the resolution, which states, in part:

Congress hereby directs the President to terminate the use of United States Armed Forces for hostilities against the Islamic Republic of Iran . . . unless explicitly authorized by a declaration of war.

With continuing threat from Iran against Israel, the dangers to American military men and women in the region, and because of the potential for terrorist acts upon U.S. interests within and without our borders, I believe the President has the constitutional authority and responsibility to defend the United States and its interests against imminent threats. I appreciate the President's decisive action and express gratitude and respect for the men and women of the military who carried out his orders, and I support the President in his efforts to find a peaceful resolution to hostilities in the region.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

Mr. KAINE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the following Senators be permitted to speak prior to the scheduled vote: Senator SANDERS for up to 10 minutes, Senator GRAHAM for up to 10 minutes, Senator RISCH for up to 10 minutes, Senator KAINE for up to 3 minutes, and Senator SCHUMER for up to 3 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, everyone knows that our country faces enormous crises. We have a healthcare system that is broken and is wildly expensive. We have a housing crisis in which millions of people are spending far more than they can afford to put a roof over their heads. We have the highest rate of childhood poverty of almost any major country on Earth and a childcare system which is dysfunctional. Millions of our kids cannot afford to go to college or are leaving school deeply in debt, and over 20 percent of our seniors are trying to get by on \$15,000 a year or less. And oh, by the way, we have an existential threat in climate change, which might very well make the planet uninhabitable for future generations. These are just a few of the crises that Congress and the President should be addressing.

In the midst of all of that, going to war against Iran and supporting Israel's unprovoked attacks against that country is not something that we should be doing. We do not need another unnecessary and costly war. We have had enough of them.

In 1964, Congress voted, with little debate, for a Gulf of Tonkin Resolution giving President Johnson the authority

to escalate American military involvement in Vietnam. As a result, the United States expanded its presence in that country, and we were dragged fully into Vietnam's civil war. Eventually, some 2.7 million Americans served in Vietnam; and more than 58,000 died, and over 300,000 were wounded. The Vietnam war devastated an entire generation; it killed millions of Vietnamese; and it destabilized the region. It cost U.S. taxpayers hundreds and hundreds of billions of dollars.

The Vietnam war was based on a series of lies. Years later, the U.S. Government concluded that the supposed attacks that prompted the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution did not happen as reported. The so-called domino theory, the ideological foundation of that war, was bogus. That was a war that never should have been fought.

In 2002, as a new Member of Congress, I can recall vividly how politicians and the media relentlessly beat the drum about the need to go to war against Iraq and its leader Saddam Hussein. Over and over again, we were told that Iraq was building weapons of mass destruction and that if we did not act quickly, nuclear weapons would be falling on America. Among those pushing for war in Iraq in 2002 were none other than Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu, who testified to Congress:

There is no question whatsoever that Saddam is seeking . . . nuclear weapons. If you take out . . . Saddam's regime, I guarantee you that it will have enormous positive reverberations.

That was Netanyahu in 2002.

The U.S. Congress, against my vote, invaded Iraq and became involved in a brutal sectarian war that lasted for almost a decade. No weapons of mass destruction were ever found. That war was based on a lie, a lie that cost us 4,500 brave young Americans, 32,000 wounded, and \$3 trillion in taxpayer dollars. Hundreds of thousands of Iraqis also died.

War often has awful and unintended consequences. It should only be considered as a last resort. We should not go to war against Iran.

First, let me state the obvious. Trump's attack against Iran is unconstitutional. Congress, alone, has the authority to take this country into war, not the President. Trump does not have that authority.

Second, Iran did not pose an imminent military threat to the United States that would justify a preemptive attack. Just a few months ago, Trump's own Director of National Intelligence, Tulsi Gabbard, testified to Congress that the American intelligence community "continues to assess that Iran is not building a nuclear weapon and Supreme Leader Khamenei has not authorized the nuclear weapons programs he suspended in 2003"—from Tulsi Gabbard.

Trump dismissed that finding, saying:

Well then, my intelligence community is wrong.

Really? On what basis does he think that the entire U.S. intelligence community is wrong?

Third, diplomacy offers a better path to durably address Iran's nuclear activities than a military attack. This was proven in 2015, when the United States and world powers made an agreement that strictly limited Iran's nuclear activities and put in place blanket inspections. That agreement was working, but Trump pulled out of that deal in 2018, and Iran restarted its activities.

To his credit, Trump returned to diplomacy this year, and U.S. officials held five rounds of talks with Iran to address this issue. A sixth round of talks was scheduled for June 15, but Israel derailed those talks with a surprise attack and, in the process, assassinated the Iranian official overseeing those negotiations.

Fourth, Binyamin Netanyahu should not be dictating U.S. foreign and military policy. Trump's attack on Iran would not have occurred if Israel had not launched an illegal, unprovoked, surprise attack on Iran on June 13, sabotaging U.S. diplomatic efforts.

If the people of Israel support Netanyahu's decision to start a war with Iran, that is their business. That is their war. The United States should not be part of it.

Fifth, the United States should not be allied with the Netanyahu government in any military effort. Netanyahu is a war criminal indicted by the International Criminal Court for starving and killing civilians in Gaza. His government is systematically destroying the Palestinian people, killing over 55,000 and wounding nearly 130,000—two-thirds of whom are women and children.

Israel has destroyed the entire physical infrastructure of Gaza—housing, hospitals, schools, and water systems—and continues to prevent the delivery of humanitarian aid to starving civilians in violation of U.S. and international law.

Sixth, this war is about more than Israel and Iran. It is about the very concept of international law and preventing a world where every dispute is settled with force. Whatever you think of the brutal, authoritarian, and terrorist-supporting Iranian regime, Netanyahu's surprise attack was a clear violation of international law and the U.N. Charter.

The world appropriately condemned Russia for its unprovoked attack against Ukraine. The world appropriately condemned Hamas for their unprovoked terrorist attack against Israel. Israel should be condemned for its unprovoked attack against Iran, and the United States should not be part of that illegal action.

Finally, wars are expensive. We need funding to address the healthcare crisis, the childcare crisis, the education crisis, and many other crises our people face every day. We should be investing our resources in improving life for

the American people, not wasting money on illegal and unnecessary wars.

Last year alone, the United States provided \$22 billion in military aid to Israel. Enough is enough. It is beyond absurd that we continue to finance Israel's wars, while neglecting the needs of our own people.

Mr. President, for all of these reasons, I strongly support Senator KAINE's War Powers Resolution to make clear that only Congress has the power to declare war; that there is no legal basis for war with Iran; and that the American people do not want more unnecessary costly wars.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Carolina.

Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, this is a debate worthy of the body, and I would like to give my belief about what we are doing here—my opinion.

Senator KAINE has introduced a resolution that basically requires President Trump to come to the Congress before any other military actions can be taken against the Islamic Republic of Iran. I think that would be a disaster for the country. You can only have one Commander in Chief, not 535.

Mr. President, you have been in it. You have been right close to the face of the enemy, and you, probably above all others, know what warfare is like dealing with radical Islam, and I applaud your service as a Navy SEAL.

So it says in the Constitution:

The President shall be [the] Commander in Chief of the Army and Navy of the United States, and of the Militia of the several States, when called into actual Service of the United States.

Well, they left out the Air Force because, back then, we didn't have one.

Since the founding of this country, it has been understood that the Commander in Chief can act as the Commander in Chief to protect our Nation from threats; that he is in charge of the military. He sits atop of the—he is the civilian in charge of the military, and it is his decision to use military force.

It is Congress's decision to declare war. How many times do you think we have declared war since the founding of our Nation?

I will give you the answer: Five.

Just think about all of the military conflicts that have existed in the history of our country, and we have only declared war five times: the War of 1812, the Mexican-American War, the Spanish-American War against Spain, World War I, and World War II.

So to my colleagues, if Congress has only declared war five times, does that mean all of these other military operations are illegal? No. That is ridiculous.

Because we have power to declare war—us, the Congress only—it doesn't mean the Commander in Chief can't be Commander in Chief.

This country cannot be put in a legal state of war unless the Congress decides to do that, but to suggest that means the Commander in Chief can't

do anything without our approval makes all of us Commanders in Chief.

Do you think they had that in mind? Do you think they really meant for the Congress to be the Commander in Chief, not the Commander in Chief?

The logic of this is as follows: Because we have the ability to declare war, therefore, the President can't act unless we agree. You have taken his power to be Commander in Chief away.

The War Powers Act of 1973, referenced by Senator SANDERS, is not worth, in my view, the paper it was written on. It was an effort by the Congress back then to limit President Nixon's involvement in the Vietnam war.

The way you do that constitutionally is that Congress has the power of the purse. If we don't like what a President is doing in terms of military engagement, we can stop the funding for that engagement.

Just think of the chaos that would ensue in this country if there were not one Commander in Chief but 535, and we had to sit down and talk among ourselves and debate as to whether or not we should go forward with the military operation in question. That would paralyze this country.

And this leak of the defense intelligence assessment tells you exactly what would happen if they brought this problem over to us to solve.

So it has been clear to me that only five times in the history of the country have we declared war, and we have had hundreds of military operations that the Founders never envisioned. The ability to declare war means the President of the United States, as Commander in Chief, cannot act unless we agree because that makes us the Commander in Chief. And that is not what they were trying to do.

They were trying to make sure the country could not go into a legal situation involving war without the body as a whole making that decision. But when it comes to how to use the military, when to use the military, we have a single person who does that. That is the Commander in Chief, and that person can be limited by Congress's ability to cut off funding for military operations they don't approve of.

So the War Powers Act, I think from its very founding, is unconstitutional, but this is a case study of the chaos that would be created if we accepted the proponents' version of this: that President Trump would have to come to the Congress as a whole before he decided to strike the next nuclear facility that maybe we don't know about, or there is some imminent threat to our troops in the region.

That is just not practical, and that is not what the Founders meant. They put a single person in charge of the military, and that was the President of the United States. They made sure that going to war was a group decision. And in this country, we have used that process five times in 250 years.

So not only did President Trump have the constitutional authority to

engage in Operation Midnight Hammer; it was an incredible success.

If you look up "obliterate" in the dictionary, it means to destroy utterly and wipe out. These three facilities were destroyed utterly, and they were wiped out. They were obliterated.

Now that doesn't mean that the threat from Iran is over. The desire of the regime still exists, and we will have to deal with Iran down the road. But on this vote, I think, we all need to vote no because what we are doing here, if we don't watch it, is having 535 Commanders in Chief. That would paralyze this country.

But something, maybe, we can agree on very quickly: Since the attack, the Iranian regime has gone on a terror campaign against their own people. They have arrested at least 700 people for ties to Israel. Dozens of people been hanged. They were basically drug out of their houses and hanged.

"Iran turns to internal crackdown in wake of 12-day war."

I will be doing a resolution condemning this regime's action. What they are doing is they are trying to maintain power over their people after this attack. People in Iran are getting fed up with the Ayatollah. Instead of listening to the people and changing the behavior of the regime, the regime is engaged in a terror campaign of extrajudicial killings, imprisonment, and beatings to suppress the people. And I think this body and the civilized world should condemn what is going on in Iran right now.

As to negotiations to solve the Iranian nuclear ambitions, to try to get a deal with Iran that we can all live with, count me in for that. But you have got to remember, the people you are negotiating with, as you talk to them, are killing their own people to try to keep them in control.

I have got one idea. Before we negotiate with Iran, they need to say one thing: We don't like Israel. We don't agree with Israel. But we recognize the right of the State of Israel to exist.

The policy of the Iranian regime is to destroy the State of Israel, purify Islam, and come after us, the infidels. Until they change that policy, nothing is really going to work.

So what I want to hear, before we sit down and talk to the Ayatollah and his henchmen, is that, for the first time ever since the founding of the Iranian regime, they recognize Israel's right to exist. Is that too much to ask?

Finally, this is the 80th anniversary of the end of World War II. Eighty years ago this past month, the Nazis surrendered. And one of the hallmarks of the Nazi regime was to kill all the Jews. Eighty years later, we are having a debate about a regime that wants a nuclear weapon to kill all the Jews, and we are wondering what to do.

You know what we should do? We should make sure they can't kill all the Jews. We should make sure that this homicidal maniac, the Ayatollah, who is a religious Nazi, is not allowed

to get a nuclear weapon and reign havoc on the region and come after us.

It is hard to believe that 80 years later, we would be having this debate: What should we do?

To my good friend Senator SANDERS, your solution will lead to World War III. You will appease evil.

World War II happened because people like Senator SANDERS did not stand up to Hitler. They did not choose wisely, and they did not stop him when they could. That is exactly what is going on now.

Until this religious Nazi regime gives up their desire to destroy the State of Israel, to wreak havoc on the region, and to come after us, chanting "Death to America," then we should stand up to them. I am not advocating invading Iran, but I am advocating being tough—no sanctions relief and don't reward this behavior.

Vote no to Senator Kaine's proposal. Stand up for the Constitution as it has been implemented for over 250 years. And all of us pray for the Iranian people and for our friends in Israel that better days are ahead. And these better days only come with sacrifice.

And as I speak, people in Iran are sacrificing because they just want to live free.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Idaho.

Mr. RISCH. Mr. President, I rise today to oppose this unhelpful resolution. It is a clear attempt to take a slap at President Trump and nothing more.

President Trump's foreign policy successes have been several and should be celebrated not denigrated. For instance, recently his work when India and Pakistan started fighting, he got involved, and he had that shut down pretty quickly.

This morning, I had the good fortune to attend, with Secretary Rubio, an event at the State Department where a peace agreement was signed between Rwanda and the Congo. Both Rwanda and the Congo were effusive in their compliments of President Trump for negotiating the peace that happened.

So the President has been hard at work trying to be the President of peace that he really wants to be. First, I think that we ought to have a good statement from the administration as to why this resolution is not well-taken, and I am going to quote from the Executive Office of the President their statement on the policy.

S.J. Res. 59 fails to account for the dynamic security threat posed by Iran and its proxies and our commitments to force protection in the region.

On June 12, the International Atomic Agency Board of Governors found that Iran had failed to comply with its nuclear safeguards obligations. Iran immediately responded stating that it would establish a new uranium enrichment facility in a secure location and that other measures were being planned.

Israel took action against Iran, an action it believed was necessary for its self-defense.

The United States' top priority is protecting American forces in the region. President Trump will take all necessary steps to protect our forces, deescalate conflict, and remain in close contact with our regional partners.

S.J. Res. 59 should be rejected also because it purports to limit the President's article II authority under the Constitution and could hinder the President's ability in his constitutional role as Commander in Chief to protect the United States from the continued threat posed by Iran and its proxies.

S.J. Res. 59 also could hinder the President's ability to protect the United States' forces in the region through actions to deescalate the threat posed by Iran and its proxies.

The operative part of this resolution that is before us states:

Congress hereby directs the President to terminate the use of United States Armed Forces from hostilities against the Islamic Republic of Iran.

This might be appropriate if we were at war against Iran or, indeed, if there were hostilities against Iran, but we are not, and we do not intend to. You can't terminate something that is not going on. Every American is opposed to the long, drawn-out conflicts that we have, in our history, from time to time, experienced. I assure you that President Trump feels exactly the same way. He hates those long, drawn-out conflicts. He hates any kind of kinetic action but realizes that as Commander in Chief he has to take them at times.

The President did take a single strike against Iran at carefully calculated targets and in an even more carefully calculated time, much like what he did with General Soleimani in his first term that was so successful.

The strike on Iran was a single, brief strike at three nuclear bomb facilities that ended the conflict between Israel and Iran. It was on behalf of a close ally, Israel, and on behalf of the world, which is unanimously against Iran obtaining a nuclear weapon.

Most importantly, it ended a war; it did not start a war. If the United States or Donald Trump or any other President sought to declare war on Iran, this would be well-taken. The Constitution is clear that only this body, the Congress of the United States, can declare war, but the Constitution and statutes are equally clear that the President not only may but must act to defend America and Americans at a time or place that a threat presents itself.

Congress has also spoken on the power of the President in the War Powers Act. Now, we have heard a lot on the floor today about how important the Founding Fathers thought declaration of war was. They were absolutely right. It is just as right today as it was then. There is a lot of difference between then and now. Then we had oceans protecting us on each side, and for a war to take place, it took months to unfold and to start.

In today's world, it is the press of a button, and it happens instantaneously. That is why Congress went in

and passed the War Powers Act that gave the President the opportunity to defend America, and in that act, it provided things that the President had to do. He complied with that act exactly as it was put in place by Congress when he took the single-strike act against Iran.

Also, the Justice Department has opined to Republican and Democrat Presidents and created the precedent as to when the President could use power. This strike is in full compliance with that guidance. The guidance is very simple. No. 1, if the President is going to take action, it must, No. 1, be in the national interest and, No. 2, be limited in nature, scope, and duration. And, of course, that is further modified by the action that Congress has taken in the War Powers Act.

What this President did with this single strike was in full compliance with the constitutional statutes. Both open-source reporting and the classified briefing we received demonstrated this was a brilliant tactical move, which was brilliantly planned and executed after in-depth conversations with the intelligence community and the talented array of Presidential advisers that President Trump has.

My colleague on the other side of the aisle should do what we on our side of the aisle have been doing, and that is congratulate the President and the brave men and women who conceived and executed this spectacularly successful event and thank them and recognize that this ended the conflict between Israel and Iran.

Instead what we have seen is an attempt in every way to denigrate the action, downplay it, and berate this great and glorious victory. This resolution we have before us today is another sad attempt in that regard.

I understand that the hate and vitriol against our President precipitates this kind of thinking. It is wrong. This is ill-conceived and will telegraph that we Americans do not stand with our President or with Israel. That is also wrong.

Make no mistake, Iran is all alone in this. No one is coming to help them. This body, above all, should not be the entity that provides aid and comfort to Iran.

I urge a "no" vote.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

Mr. KAINE. Mr. President, the remaining two speakers and Senator SCHUMER have yielded their time to me. I will be the last speaker before the vote.

My colleague from Idaho says this is driven by hate and vitriol toward President Trump. He well knows that from my first months in the Senate, I have taken this position, now, against four Presidents, Democratic and Republicans.

The principles that have been stated on this floor about the Constitution and War Powers Resolution are very,

very clear. Congress declares war. Once declared, the President is the Commander in Chief. There is no war without a declaration of Congress.

The President, as Commander in Chief, can defend the United States against imminent attack, but there was no such imminent threat posed by the Iranian nuclear program, as the President's own National Security Advisor testified to Congress shortly before this strike.

And as the Israeli Foreign Minister announced before the U.S. strike, that the Israeli actions had set the nuclear program back 2 or 3 years. No imminent attack on the United States, no imminent threat, that means Congress gets to declare war.

This is not about hatred for any President; it is about standing up and doing what we took an oath to do. My colleague from South Carolina says we have only declared war five times, ending with World War II. That is not accurate.

Congress has had the guts to at least vote on authorizing war up through 2002. But in 2002 something happened in this body; the Senate and the House got lied into a war with bogus intelligence about the weapons program of the nation of Iraq. We should be haunted by that. We should be haunted by that.

The claims that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction led us into a war where thousands of troops and thousands of U.S. contractors were killed. And so what should have been the learning that came out of that is that we should do a good job kicking the tires, as Congress, before we go into a war and not get lied into a war. Instead, what I fear, since there has been no willingness of Congress to vote on any war since 2002, is what Members of this body have decided is, Wow, we got it wrong. We were lied into a war. We voted in a way that we regretted so let's not vote at all. Let's not vote at all. Let's overturn the congressional and constitutional history that says we only go to war with Congress and try to hide in the grass.

Many of my colleagues have said things about Iran and how bad Iran is. None of them have ever introduced an authorization for war against Iran. If Iran is so bad, do that.

People in this body would rather not vote so they can't be held accountable. I get that. That is a human impulse. It is just a human impulse that so disrespects the service of our men and women in uniform. If we are going to send troops into harm's way, our sons and daughters, whether they are flying bombing missions or ground troops or covert operations, we ought to have the guts in this body to cast a vote saying that that war is necessary, not just act as cheerleaders and hide from culpability, hide from accountability, hide from responsibility.

If you vote against S.J. Res. 59, what you are saying is this President should be able to wage war without coming to

Congress. If you think the President should have to come to Congress, whether you are for or against the war in Iran, you will support S.J. Res. 59. You will support the Constitution that has stood the test of time. You will support your oath.

I urge a positive vote on the resolution.

I yield the floor.

VOTE ON MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question occurs on agreeing to the motion to discharge S.J. Res. 59.

Mr. KAINE. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

The result was announced—yeas 47, nays 53, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 328 Leg.]

YEAS—47

Alsobrooks	Hirono	Rosen
Baldwin	Kaine	Sanders
Bennet	Kelly	Schatz
Blumenthal	Kim	Schiff
Blunt Rochester	King	Schumer
Booker	Klobuchar	Shaheen
Cantwell	Lujan	Slotkin
Coons	Markey	Smith
Cortez Masto	Merkley	Van Hollen
Duckworth	Murphy	Warner
Durbin	Murray	Warnock
Gallagher	Ossoff	Warren
Gillibrand	Padilla	Welch
Hassan	Paul	Whitehouse
Heinrich	Peters	Wyden
Hickenlooper	Reed	

NAYS—53

Banks	Fischer	Moran
Barrasso	Graham	Moreno
Blackburn	Grassley	Mullin
Boozman	Hagerty	Murkowski
Britt	Hawley	Ricketts
Budd	Hoeben	Risch
Capito	Husted	Rounds
Cassidy	Hyde-Smith	Schmitt
Collins	Johnson	Scott (FL)
Cornyn	Justice	Scott (SC)
Cotton	Kennedy	Sheehy
Cramer	Lankford	Sullivan
Crapo	Lee	Thune
Cruz	Lummis	Tillis
Curtis	Marshall	Tuberville
Daines	McConnell	Wicker
Ernst	McCormick	Young
Fetterman	Moody	

The motion was rejected.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MORENO). The majority leader.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

VOTE EXPLANATION

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I was necessarily absent, but had I been present, I would have voted yes on rollcall vote No. 322, on the cloture motion—Motion to Invoke Cloture: Daniel

Zimmerman, of North Carolina, to be an Assistant Secretary of Defense.

I was necessarily absent, but had I been present, I would have voted yes on rollcall vote No. 323, on the nomination—Confirmation: Daniel Zimmerman, of North Carolina, to be an Assistant Secretary of Defense.

I was necessarily absent, but had I been present, I would have voted no on rollcall vote No. 324, on the cloture motion—Motion to Invoke Cloture: Paul Dabbar, of New York, to be Deputy Secretary of Commerce.

I was necessarily absent, but had I been present, I would have voted no on rollcall vote No. 325, on the nomination—Confirmation: Paul Dabbar, of New York, to be Deputy Secretary of Commerce.

I was necessarily absent, but had I been present, I would have voted no on rollcall vote No. 326, on the cloture motion—Motion to Invoke Cloture: Kenneth Kies, of Virginia, to be an Assistant Secretary of the Treasury.

S.J. RES. 59

Mr. OSSOFF. Mr. President, on Saturday, June 21, 2025, at President Trump's direction, U.S. forces struck certain nuclear facilities in Iran. As I stated this week in the Intelligence Committee: Those strikes having been taken, I certainly hope they were effective. Most of the Congress is united in our conviction that Iran must not build or acquire a nuclear weapon. An urgent unanswered question is whether the administration's use of force meaningfully advanced that longstanding foreign policy objective. Members of Congress are seeking further information from the administration in order to determine whether these strikes were effective.

Tonight, I voted to discharge S.J. Res. 59 from the Foreign Relations Committee. Such discharge would require the Senate to debate whether congressional authorization should be required for any further offensive military action against Iran. Given the stakes for U.S. national security, the safety of military servicemembers we represent, and the security of our allies, Senators owe the American people that debate, consistent with our constitutional role in the formation of U.S. foreign policy.

The administration has argued that last Saturday's strikes were within the President's inherent article II authorities as Commander in Chief. That debate is not relevant to Senator KAINE's S.J. Res. 59, which would pertain to future military action.

Indeed, the question for the Senate tonight was not whether the President's use of force to date has been legal and constitutional or whether the strikes themselves were necessary and effective. The question was: Should the Senate robustly debate whether any future offensive military action should require congressional approval? Given the stakes for our national security