

caused the injury and death of American troops, the spiking of gas prices, the spending of \$30 billion. We have let him do that on his own. Do we want to also give him the sole ability to review a peace proposal, a diplomacy proposal, an end to the war and to make the decision on his own without any examination by this deliberative legislative body about whether the proposal is something that we can work with?

Are we so willing to let this President tell our sons and daughters: You are going back to war because I have determined that the peace proposal, the diplomacy proposal, is garbage without letting anyone in the article I branch even review it?

I think the fact that there have been peace proposals presented to the President that we have not seen is also something that is extremely important as we contemplate this War Powers Resolution.

Let's have the discussion, including analyzing proposals that have been made, so we can offer our advice to the President about whether diplomacy seems like it is realistic or doable and not have him dismiss deals out of hand without sharing the contents.

And, finally, there is one additional matter that puts this in a different light than last week. It was only last week right before the vote that some of us were informed by the White House that the White House refused to share with Congress the legal rationale for this war. Any administration that takes the Nation to war does so bound to follow the law, and any administration that takes us to war does so on the basis of a legal opinion developed by the Office of Legal Counsel at the Department of Justice. And that has been the case during all of the administrations that I have served under including President Trump term 2.

The boat strikes that President Trump's administration were carrying out in the Pacific and Caribbean, the military operation in Venezuela—they were both justified by a legal opinion.

Now, I was disappointed that the President was unwilling to make that legal opinion available to the public, but the White House did allow us—the Members of the Senate and House—to read it in a classified setting so we could at least read what the legal rationale was and reach our own conclusion about whether we thought the legal rationale made sense.

To my knowledge, in my now nearly 13 years in the Senate, this is the first instance of a President taking us into military action and refusing to show the House or Senate the legal opinion. There is a legal opinion that has been drafted to justify this war, but the administration will not let any of us—I thought it might just be me—they turned down my request to look at the legal opinion—but I have gone to the leadership of the Armed Services Committee and the other key committees, and they haven't seen it either.

Are we really willing to go to war on the basis of a legal opinion that the ad-

ministration is unwilling to even show to us who are Members of the U.S. Senate? I mean, it sort of raises the question: What are they hiding? If they feel confident about their legal rationale or about the factual assertions they would make in the legal rationale, they would be willing to show it to us—as they have with respect to other military actions as recently as the attack of Venezuela to depose the Maduro government.

So I would argue that one important feature of this motion at this time to discharge the committee would be it would force the administration to come forward and finally show us the legal rationale upon which they base this, in my view, illegal and unwise war.

So those are at least four or five reasons why this vote this week to discharge this matter from the committee and finally bring it to the floor of the Senate is different than any of the seven votes we have had before. We are well beyond day 60. We are in this fragile cease-fire. That is the perfect time to have a discussion before we start up the war again.

The President is receiving peace and diplomatic proposals that he is throwing into the trash can without sharing them with us. We might have some ideas about the merit and validity of those proposals, and we ought to be able to decide whether they have merit enough that that is the path we should take instead of sending our sons and daughters back into harm's way by re-engaging in the bombing campaign.

Finally, if the administration is unwilling to share with us the legal rationale for the war, that should be a flashing red light to every Member of this body.

So, Mr. President, within a short period of time, I will come to the floor and make the motion, and we will have this vote on an eighth motion to discharge. It is my hope that it is successful and we finally move to having a debate about this most consequential war in full view of the American public.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

#### WAR POWERS RESOLUTION

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, I am glad to join Senator Kaine on the floor today in support of his resolution. I have admittedly lost count on how many of these resolutions we have brought before the body. This must be our seventh, eighth, or ninth. That is extraordinary, duplicative, redundant, but necessary because, at least in my time in the Senate, never before has this country engaged in such a significant, consequential, deadly, and costly military operation overseas without the consent of the people and without the consent of Congress.

The Founding Fathers were really intentional in lodging the warmaking power not in the executive branch but in the legislative branch. There are few

questions we confront that are more serious than about when we send our men and women to die overseas, when we decide to expend such a sizable amount of our hard-earned taxpayers' money on military operations. And it should not—it cannot—be simply one individual who makes those decisions. It has to be all of us.

So these are increasingly heart-breaking motions to make because it shouldn't be up to the minority party. The majority, who asked for the consent of the governed to lead this Senate, should do their responsibility under the Constitution and have a full debate on an authorization for military force.

Here is my guess: It would not pass. If Leader THUNE brought an authorization for military force against Iran here in the Senate, it would not pass. I don't think it would even get 50 votes. It might not get 40 votes. It would fail, and the President would not have the authorization to continue these operations.

I am going to just talk about two, I think, important topics that I have yet to address on the floor. The first is the consequences of spending this much money on a war that is making us less safe. I have made this case before on the floor, and I won't go into it again, but this war is not making us any safer. This war is jeopardizing our security around the world. But at what cost?

In hearings last week, the administration suggested that the cost of the war is about \$29 billion. To most military experts, that just didn't pass the straight-face test, the smell test. In fact, one group of experts actually did an accounting based upon what they know of the costs of an engagement like this, which has largely been an air campaign but has required a massive deployment of forces into the region. They said it looks to be about \$15 billion in mobilization, administration, and combat cost, general operations costs; \$41 billion when you look at all of the weapons that have been expended; about \$12 billion in losses, damages, destroyed assets. And we are learning that there is a really extensive amount of damage that has been done to our fixed resources in the region. Then we probably spent another \$3 billion or so supporting our partners in the region. That is about \$72 billion that has been spent just in the first 70, 80 days of war.

And I get it. Even, I think, for my colleagues, you kind of lose the value of money when you are in this place and allocating tens or hundreds of billions of dollars on a regular basis for the operations of the Federal Government. And for my constituents, they even lose track of what is a big number anymore at the Federal Government.

What does \$72 billion mean? Well, let me give you a little bit of context. What is the entire operations budget for the National Park System on an annual basis? Is it \$71 billion? No. Is it

half that? No. Is it 10? No. The entire operations budget for the National Park System is \$2 billion, just to give you kind of a sense of what we are talking about here. In 2½ months of war, we have spent \$70 billion. The National Park System needs about \$2 billion to operate. Their entire budget of deferred maintenance—if you wanted to fix everything that is broken in the National Park Service, how much would it cost? It would cost \$33 billion. So half of what we have spent on the Iran war could fix up every national park in the country to tip-top shape.

How much do we spend on elementary education—elementary, middle, and secondary education? Every year, about \$33 billion. So if you took the amount of money we spent on the Iran war and dedicated it all to K-through-12 education, we would triple the amount of money that our elementary, middle, and high schools get in this country. What an important investment that would be. What would it mean to your child's elementary school to have triple the amount of Federal funding? That would mean that you could reduce class sizes, you could hire more paraprofessionals. Urban school districts could hire guidance counselors and social workers for the first time. New school buildings would go up. Leaks would be fixed.

How about medical research? The total budget of NIH and CDC? About \$60 billion. So if we had taken this money that we have spent in just 2½ months of war and applied it to medical research, we would double—double—this year's budget for medical research. If you doubled the NIH and CDC budget this year, I guarantee you we would cure at least one disease; we would find a treatment years ahead of schedule; we would save lives, thousands of lives. But, instead, we are spending this money on a war that is making us less safe and driving up costs for millions of Americans.

Again, I am just telling you the cost to the government of this war. Of course, we are seeing billions of dollars being spent by businesses, by farms, by consumers because gas prices are out of control. This week, they will probably hit \$5 a gallon in Connecticut. That will put a lot of my small businesses out of business if gas prices remain at \$5 through this summer. There will be lots of families in my State—who for the first 60 days were probably able to manage that extra cost—who are going to have to cancel a week or two or three of summer camp for their kids this summer because they are going to have to make a choice as to whether I fill up my tank to get to work or whether my kids get to go to basketball camp. Those are the decisions that families are going to make.

The second thing, very briefly, I want to talk about is another cost. The President is not spending his time right now trying to end this war. Reports are that the President has become bored of the Iran war, and that is

why we are in a stalemate. Nothing is changing. Nothing is happening. We are blockading the Strait of Hormuz. The Iranians are blockading the Strait of Hormuz. Peace negotiations are stuck. And so day, after day, after day, grocery prices climb, gas prices climb, and the reports suggest it is because President Trump has lost interest in the war.

What is he interested in? Well, we found out this week. Instead of spending his last several weeks trying to end the war and bring down costs, the President has been engineering a novel, new corruption scheme to pad his pockets and his supporters' pockets. We learned this week that the President is settling a lawsuit that he lodged against himself for \$1.7 billion. The President sued himself. He sued the IRS—but essentially he was suing himself—and then he settled with himself for \$1.7 billion to be deposited into a slush fund that the President can use at his discretion to reward his political supporters.

We found out just hours ago that in that settlement is included a provision that stops the IRS from auditing the President or his family. So instead of ending the Iran war, instead of trying to do something about these spiraling prices and costs that are being borne by families and the Federal Government, the President has spent the last few weeks reaching his hand into the Treasury, stealing from the American people \$1.7 billion to be put into a slush fund that he controls, to reward his political supporters, and securing an agreement with the IRS that no matter how much fraud or illegality he and his family and his business entities engaged in, they are getting off scot-free. Everybody else in this country plays by the rules, can be audited by the IRS, and is subject to the Tax Code. The President, as of today, is no longer subject to the Tax Code. His past fraud, his past illegality has been immunized, and he is getting \$1.7 billion of your money to give away to his political supporters.

That is why the war is still happening. That is why these costs—right now, likely \$70 billion to the taxpayer, billions more in increased costs—that is why they continue to go up and up and up—because the President has become bored by the war. He doesn't pay the cost of the war. In fact, every day, he gets richer because, instead of ending the war, he is spending his time finding new, novel, and corrupt ways to reach his hand into the Federal Treasury and get paid by the taxpayers of this country.

I am glad that we are getting closer to 50 votes. I imagine that when we come back from recess, after many of my Republican colleagues have heard about the misery that is being visited on this economy because of these high prices, we will reach enough votes to pass this resolution. But we will not stop bringing these measures before the Senate until that day comes.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wisconsin.

#### WAR POWERS RESOLUTION

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. President, I rise today in opposition to President Trump's war of choice in Iran that has cost taxpayers billions and taken the lives of 13 American servicemembers.

Since this war began over 11 weeks ago, it has been abundantly clear that Donald Trump and Pete Hegseth don't know what they are doing. They have offered shifting rationales for why we are at war, moving the goalposts by the hour. There seems to be no plan or timeline for when this war will end. This administration has also been caught flat-footed at every turn, including not anticipating that the Strait of Hormuz would be closed and the skyrocketing gas prices that followed.

It is not just Americans at home who are paying the price for this conflict. American servicemembers are sounding the alarm, too, that the Trump administration wasn't prepared to keep them safe. First, we learned that servicemembers who were injured in Kuwait in a March 1 drone strike had to wait nearly a month to get care for their traumatic brain injuries. Now we are learning that troops in the same unit had their calls for support from the Army ignored. Soldiers stationed in Kuwait asked for additional medical personnel and medical supplies before the war began, but that request was denied. These same soldiers also recount that they did not get the proper training for responding to an attack.

They were told: Don't worry about protection.

MAJ Stephen Ramsbottom told CBS News that he believed MSG Nicole Amor, an Army reservist who was killed in the attack, could have survived her wounds had the military been properly prepared for retaliatory strikes on U.S. bases.

All of this points to a larger problem and a larger pattern of Donald Trump and Pete Hegseth being totally reckless, starting a war without the careful planning necessary to protect Americans. And while two in three Americans say this war was the wrong decision, President Trump keeps threatening to ramp up this conflict, putting our troops further into harm's way. He has even hinted that he is interested in starting another war in Cuba.

Americans didn't ask for this war of choice. Their elected representatives in Washington didn't even vote on it. And yet it is Americans who are paying the price every single day.

I am glad to see more of my Republican colleagues are listening to their constituents, and I was pleased to see another vote to stop this reckless and illegal war.

But it is not enough. It is time for Congress to finally be a check on this President.