

put much tighter restraints on any future possible nuclear enrichment programs. But apparently, the Trump administration had already decided to go to war.

Another reason we heard from members of the administration—they are constantly shifting rationales—has been Iran's ballistic missile program. But Iran has zero missiles that can reach the United States. Not even close. None.

So in yet another interview, Donald Trump said the aim is "freedom for the Iranian people." In other words, regime change—regime change—the regime change he promised he would never undertake if he became President.

Colleagues, we all know, every one of us, that the Iranian Government is a terrible regime, brutal to its own people, dangerous to the region. But we also learned from history that bombs don't turn dictatorships into democracies. And already, the Israeli and American strikes on Iran have produced mass civilian casualties. We have already seen reports of hospitals being bombed. In one strike alone, at least 175 civilians were killed at an elementary school, most of them schoolgirls, which has the hallmarks of a war crime.

These killings should not be a surprise, especially when Secretary Hegseth said this morning that the operation would have "no stupid rules of engagement." That is what the Secretary of Defense said—anything goes.

This is not a way to bring solidarity and support from the Iranian people. When we and the Israelis take out a country's leadership, we have no idea what will emerge next. In fact, back in 1953, the United States and the United Kingdom backed a coup against a democratically elected leader in Iran that enabled the Shah of Iran to consolidate power in the country. Some people thought that served American interests at the time. Instead, it became one of the primary drivers of the Iranian Revolution of 1979 and the creation of the Islamic Republic and its ideology.

So beware what you ask for. Indeed, according to public reports, the CIA assessed that the most likely scenario if the Supreme Leader were killed was that more radical elements of the IRGC would take power in Iran.

This does not advance America's interests in the region or the world. It will not make us safer. It will make the world less safe for America.

And is it now the policy of the United States to go to war against every regime we hate? Colleagues, that is going to cost a lot of American lives and treasure. And that is presumably why Trump and VANCE had previously been opposed to regime change and wars of choice.

So beware what we ask for when we open up Pandora's box. Have we not learned the lessons of Iraq? The Iraq war cost the lives of 8,000 American soldiers and contractors. It cost tril-

lions of dollars in taxpayer money. The war upended the region, killed hundreds of thousands of Iraqi civilians, and helped spawn ISIS. It was the worst U.S. foreign policy blunder in a generation.

The big winner from the war in Iraq? Iran. Iran was the big winner.

So now Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu says this war against Iran is something he has "yearned to do for 40 years." Well, he got the war he wanted from Donald Trump. But there is a reason past Presidents have not started wars against Iran, and that is because they have refused to risk American lives and open Pandora's box for a regime change war when they had no idea how it would end.

This war is rapidly turning into a conflict that we feared—a widespread, escalatory regional war with no end in sight. Iran has retaliated to U.S. and Israeli attacks by attacking U.S. assets and bases in every Arab country in the Persian Gulf, as well as targets in Israel, resulting in a further loss of lives. This includes drones and missile strikes on civilian infrastructure throughout the region. And just last night, Hezbollah joined the fray, launching missiles into Israel, prompting airstrikes from Israel into Beirut and across Lebanon.

This is not "America First," and we have no idea where it is going. What we do know is that the Framers of our Constitution never envisioned this to be allowed under our system of government. It is why the Framers, in our Constitution, gave Congress the power to declare war. They didn't want to give that power to one person. They didn't want to give that power to somebody like Donald Trump, who has said publicly that the only thing constraining his power is "my own morality, my own mind." That is what Donald Trump has said.

Colleagues in the Senate, you must understand that that is not what the Constitution requires. The Constitution requires Congress to act to declare war. So it is more important than ever that Congress stand up for the Constitution and that Congress insist that the President cannot continue these hostilities without approval from Congress. He shouldn't have started them without the approval of Congress.

So the resolution before us asks a simple question: Do you support the Constitution of the United States and the role it gives to the U.S. Congress—that role to declare war?

Do you believe that we, the people's elected representatives in the House and Senate, should have a voice in whether American lives—and specifically the lives of the members of our Nation's Armed Forces—are put at grave risk?

Do you believe that this regime change war of choice that Donald Trump promised he would never launch serves American interests or makes our Nation safer?

The American people do not want this war, and the Constitution entrusts

the power to declare war with the U.S. Congress. Let's not surrender that responsibility.

I urge my colleagues to support the War Powers Resolution and vote yes.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wisconsin.

#### WAR POWERS RESOLUTION

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. President, I rise today in strong support of my colleague from Virginia Senator KAINE's resolution prohibiting the United States from continuing this illegal war in Iran.

I want to start with the basic premise that I think we can all agree on: We are here to represent the people of our States and their desires. Wisconsinites have been unequivocal that they do not want another foreign war. I agree with them, and for a while, it seemed Donald Trump did too. The President promised not to get into more foreign wars, but the President broke that promise and has gone all in on war with Iran. The consequences are dire. Six American servicemembers are now dead. My heart absolutely breaks for their parents, their siblings, their children, their spouses, and their communities. Thousands of Americans in uniform who are stationed in the region are at risk because of the President's reckless and illegal war.

And what does the President have to say? He says that it is likely more Americans are going to die. He said that is just the way it is. He said that. The President's callous response shows his disregard for the men and women he is supposed to lead.

Our Constitution is crystal clear: If our country is going to war, Congress needs to vote on it.

In 2002, Congress debated the war in Iraq, and I opposed it. I believed the Bush administration dangerously underestimated the potential consequences and did not have a clear path forward after the initial military operation. I was right. As a result, thousands of brave service men and women died, taxpayers paid billions of dollars, and we got ourselves into a yearslong war in the Middle East.

I have the same concerns today. I fully agree that Iran's regime is a dangerous and murderous one and can't be allowed to obtain a nuclear weapon, but how we deal with them and keep America safe matters. Diplomacy—the hard work of peacefully negotiating—is the answer, not war. That is exactly why I supported the 2015 deal that kept Iran from getting a nuclear weapon, but President Trump ripped that deal up and allowed Iran's nuclear program to flourish.

Wisconsinites see exactly what this President is doing, and they do not support it. They want President Trump to live up to his promises and to address their kitchen-table issues and concerns, not pull our country into another foreign war.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

#### WAR POWERS RESOLUTION

Ms. DUCKWORTH. Mr. President, I come here today to support Senator KAINE's War Powers Resolution.

You know, I am proud of every mission that I completed in Iraq, but I would never wish another needless, endless, unjustified war like the one that I served in on anyone else. I wouldn't wish it on the heroes whose blood would be soaked into that desert sand. I would not wish it on their families, who would spend their days anxiously awaiting for news from half a world away. I wouldn't wish it on the American people, who are desperate for their President to focus on bringing their costs down here at home, not on starting new, expensive, forever wars continents away.

So I am here today to keep a promise I first made two decades ago. I ran for Congress so that when the drums of war started beating once again, I would be in a position to make sure that our elected officials fully considered the true cost of the war not just in dollars and cents but in human lives as well. That was the vow I made to the troops I deployed with and to all those who have served since I hung up my uniform.

Today, I am speaking here under this great Capitol dome to keep that most sacred promise because, sadly, right now, American servicemembers are already in harm's way 6,000 miles east in what could be yet another preventable war. These troops are ready to do their jobs no matter what, just as they have done time after time, tour after tour. So, to me, it is tragic that even as they prepare to do their jobs, our President and certain Members of this Chamber seem so ready to neglect their own.

As we all know, on Saturday morning, without any known imminent threat to America or American interests, Donald Trump launched an illegal military campaign against Iran.

Look, I want a democratic Iran, and I want to see the Iranian people free from the iron grip of its brutal, authoritarian regime, and I am not about to shed a tear for the Ayatollah's death. He was no friend of the United States' nor to his own people. He was responsible for the brutal murders of thousands of his own citizens in just the past few months alone. However, my first concern is always going to be the national security of the United States, and I am troubled because of the consequences that are sure to come because of Trump's actions.

Our troops and Americans all around the world are at greater risk because Trump wanted to thump his chest and look like a tough guy on TV. For no real reason he can explain, Trump is marching us closer and closer to another costly, bloody, protracted conflict—a war without any defined end

state and even without a concept of a plan for how to prevent the chaos and instability that will come next.

Far from making America greater or better or stronger or whatever new adjective he is using this week, Trump's actions have made our Nation and our allies less safe. He has made them less secure.

By continuing to strain our military with wars of choice, Trump is handing a gift to bad actors like Russia and the PRC, as his never-ending chaos makes it harder for our Armed Forces to focus on defending our critical interests in places like the Indo-Pacific.

So, no, Trump's actions over the past 72 hours—or ever—haven't put America first; they have made the situation for America worse.

The sad fact of the matter is that what we are facing today is in large part a manufactured crisis. Iran is no ally of ours. We have been adversaries since long before Trump took office. I have always condemned their proxy activity and ballistic missile program, and I certainly agree that they cannot be allowed to obtain a nuclear weapon. But we can't forget that Donald Trump is the one who pulled the United States out of the very deal that was limiting their weapons development program. Trump is the one who made sure Iran no longer had to play by the rules and curb their nuclear production. Trump and his inability to conduct foreign policy are what made today's nightmare a reality.

His historical incompetence is what gave them the matchbox and the motivation to start a fire, and now he is angry that it is starting to catch. He is mad because they are doing the very things his actions encouraged them to do. It is circular logic which has already had fatal consequences—fatal for the six American heroes who have already lost their lives in this conflict and fatal for the hundreds of civilians who have already become the most horrible kind of collateral—moms and dads who this evening should be able to sit down and eat dinner with their little girl, who should be able to kiss their little boy goodnight, who should be able to go bed dreaming of a tomorrow that doesn't include missiles or misery.

Now he has created a power vacuum in Iran, resulting in an unstable regime that is willing to do anything to hold on to power. Now he has created an open invitation for well-funded, organized terrorist groups to swoop in and snatch away any chance the Iranian people have for freedom and self-governance.

War is always tragic, but when it is preventable, it is not just tragic but a travesty too. Trump wouldn't let himself be dragged by the bone spurs to serve in uniform when his country needed him, so how dare he try to drag us into yet another war of his choice today. But this draft dodger is too infatuated with maximum pressure to consider even minimum diplomacy.

Once again, the Trump foreign policy doctrine has proven reckless, senseless, and dangerous—a doctrine in which fact and fiction are one and the same and one in which avarice outweighs advice every damn time.

It is shameful—terrifying—that we have a Commander in Chief who seems to come to military decisions by virtue of temper tantrums and announces them via tweet, a President who doesn't seem to care if he keeps to the path of fire and fury that he has been treading; our own homeland will be in greater danger, more wounded warriors will be sent to Walter Reed, and more fallen heroes will be laid to rest in Arlington; a President who is so obsessed with being the tough guy, that he doesn't seem to give—well, doesn't seem to care; a President who is happy to squander the lives of our heroes for his own personal gain.

Now, after this weekend, he has officially traded deterrence for instability and chaos and made us all less safe in the process—Americans, certainly, but also our partners in the region and the Iranian people themselves, who did not ask for any of this; Iranian families who suffered decades under the Ayatollah's tyrannical iron grip and who, at long last, want to feel safe and secure.

Look, Trump may have run to his podiatrist instead of running toward danger in Vietnam, but I actually know what it is like to leave your blood, your sweat—your limbs—in a war zone half a world away. So I know what is at stake for the thousands of troops this administration is getting ready to send into harm's way, and I can tell you this: It is a whole lot easier to cover your eyes and order other Americans to sacrifice if you don't have to sacrifice anything yourself. It is much easier to ignore the everyday realities of war from inside the hallowed halls of the White House, but it is nearly impossible if you have been outside the wire yourself.

So as those drums of war echo louder than they have in years, I am here today because, despite what he thinks, Donald Trump does not have the authority to unilaterally force us into war.

He may have never read the Constitution, but I have. So let me direct his attention to article I, which makes it clear that the President does not have the power to declare war; only Congress does. We are the ones tasked with deciding when and how Americans are sent into combat. We are the ones charged with that most solemn duty, yet Trump is acting also if article I simply doesn't exist, as if obeying the Constitution is optional, as if our founding document is a yellowing, crumbling piece of paper he can crumble up at will.

Refusing to allow him to get away with this should not—must not—be a partisan issue. No matter if you are struggling to pay rent or your name is plastered in fake gold on a building on