

The President's authorities to conduct military operations may be wide and well-established, but they incur a responsibility to situate decisive actions in broader, longer-term strategy.

Maduro is an authoritarian thug. He reduced a once-prosperous neighbor of America to an impoverished vassal of Cuba, Russia, Iran, and China. He profited from the flow of lethal drugs to America. He spat in the face of Venezuelan voters. And, until very recently, he slept in peace while they starved.

A Western Hemisphere without him or his ilk in power serves America's interests. But clearly, Venezuela and the hemisphere have a ways to go.

To the extent that our colleagues are concerned about the mechanisms and timeline of a transition to democratically elected Venezuelan leaders, I share their curiosity. If they want to know more about the President's longer-term strategy to stabilize Venezuela and the Western Hemisphere, so do I.

Suffice it to say that whatever the objective, whatever the strategy, America is well-served when its Presidents secure enduring bipartisan support for their foreign policies. President Obama ignored Congress in pursuing a reckless and bad nuclear deal with Iran. Unsurprisingly, that deal did not endure.

Successfully returning Venezuela to its role of stable, prosperous, democratic neighbor is a noble goal, but an ambitious one. It doesn't come without risk. And it is worth making the clear case to the country.

I appreciate the administration's willingness to brief Senators on the sensitive details of a tactical victory. But they owe it to the American people—and, frankly, the long-suffering people of Venezuela—to lay out the path to strategic success in much greater detail.

If the aim is to reestablish American primacy in its near abroad, great. If the idea is to evict enemies who hate America from a valuable foothold in our region, onward.

A stable Venezuela, led by duly elected Venezuelans, will leave Americans safer and more secure. The administration should explain how that end goal will be achieved.

In the meantime, I will oppose the Kaine resolution and would urge my colleagues to do the same.

VENEZUELA

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I rise today in support of the War Powers Resolution before the Senate regarding recent U.S. actions related to Venezuela. This is a serious and consequential matter that goes to the heart of Congress' constitutional responsibility to authorize sustained military engagements, define the limits of executive authority, and protect the long-term interests of both the United States and the Venezuelan people.

Nicolas Maduro is a narcoterrorist and international drug trafficker whose actions led to the addiction and deaths of many Americans. He was an illegitimate dictator who held power through stolen elections and horrific violence against the people of Venezuela. The Biden administration imposed a \$25 million bounty for his arrest and extradition to the United States. He was indicted twice in Federal court and should stand trial in the United States.

With Maduro rightfully captured, the circumstances have now changed. While I support the operation to seize Nicolas Maduro, which was extraordinary in its precision and complexity, I do not support committing additional U.S. forces or entering into any long-term military involvement in Venezuela or Greenland without specific congressional authorization.

The resolution I have supported today does not include any language related to the removal operation. Rather, it reaffirms Congress' ability to authorize or limit any future sustained military activity in Venezuela, while preserving the President's inherent article II authority to defend the United States from an armed attack or imminent threat. I believe invoking the War Powers Act at this moment is necessary, given the President's comments about the possibility of "boots on the ground" and a sustained engagement "running" Venezuela, with which I do not agree.

What happens now matters greatly, both in terms of accountability for Maduro and the future of the Venezuelan people. The long-term success of this operation will depend on Venezuelans having the opportunity to run Venezuela, with the support of international and private sector partners.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

VENEZUELA

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, first, I want to thank Senator Kaine for his great leadership on this issue, Senator SCHIFF, and Senator PAUL for working with me on this resolution.

If there was ever a moment for the Senate to find its voice, it is now. The Senate must act to stop Donald Trump's folly.

Today, the Senate must assert the authority given to it in the Constitution on matters of war and peace. We must send Donald Trump a clear message on behalf of the American people: No more endless wars.

If any of my colleagues—if any of the American people—doubted what Trump was up to, here is what he said last night to the New York Times.

They asked him: How long are we going to stay in Venezuela—a month, 6 months, a year?

Donald Trump said:
I would say much longer.

Donald Trump is ready for an endless war in Venezuela and Lord knows where else. The American people are not. The American people want us to focus on the No. 1 issue they face: rising costs. They can't afford the things they need—the affordability crisis.

And, instead, Donald Trump and too many of our Republican colleagues are saying: Let us spend our treasure and maybe even American lives on Venezuela and other areas far afield.

How can the American people watch this and not just groan and grimace and ache and fear? When America has tried to do this kind of nation building, these kinds of regime replacements in the past, it has led to the American people paying the price in treasure and in blood.

So now we have the opportunity to stop. We are very close. We urge our Republican colleagues to join us. Tell the American people you want to focus on what they care about: the cost of groceries, the cost of healthcare, the cost of electricity and other goods.

The contrast between what is happening in the House and Senate today is glaring. In the House, there will be, from what I am told, a good number of Republicans who will join in saying: Extend the tax credits for 3 years.

Leader THUNE has even refused to put that on the floor.

But what is happening here? The ability, the strength, the constitutional authority of the Congress to say: No. No endless wars. No sending all our money down to Venezuela and Lord knows what other countries.

Again, just look at this, my Republican colleagues. Here is what Trump said on oversight of Venezuela.

They asked him:

A year? Longer?

He says:

I would say much longer.

How many of you want to see us bogged down in Venezuela for a whole bunch of years? If you don't want to see that, if you want to see us focused on the costs the American people are facing and reduce them, vote with us.

Vote yes on this very important resolution.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

VENEZUELA

Mr. Kaine. Mr. President, I have spoken before; so I am going to be very brief. And then I am going to call up the business of the Senate, this War Powers Resolution.

Two points. In the aftermath of the briefing yesterday, I have had good conversations with colleagues, and many of them have asked me about the distinction between the execution of a valid arrest warrant and a larger military operation.

I want to state very clearly that I do not challenge, nor does this resolution

challenge, the execution of a valid arrest warrant against Nicolas Maduro. That valid arrest warrant bringing him to justice in the United States will be good for America and good for Venezuela. We do not challenge that.

In fact, under the War Powers Resolution, I am not even sure that the execution of an arrest warrant, even if accompanied by a military escort, would rise to the level of hostilities that would allow such a challenge, and I certainly wouldn't be calling it up for a vote on the floor.

But this is obviously bigger than the initiation of an arrest warrant.

From the beginning, on September 2, the striking of Venezuelan boats in open waters, the amassing of naval assets around Venezuela, the President's authorization of covert activities, the seizure of ships, the coordinated attack of 150 aircraft that not only extracted President Maduro and his wife but also bombed sites around the country—this is bigger than an arrest warrant.

More than 200 enemies have been killed. U.S. troops have been injured. Two are still hospitalized. And now we understand, after the hearing yesterday and what has been made public, that this will go on for a long period of time. The seizure of oil, the dictation of terms about elections and the politics of Venezuela will go on for years.

This is not an attack on the arrest warrant, but it is merely a statement that, going forward, U.S. troops should not be used in hostilities in Venezuela without a vote of Congress, as the Constitution requires.

The second point I will make is this: We are all humans in this place, and one of the things we try to do is minimize votes that we might regret. It is impossible to eliminate those.

We are humans, and we cast thousands of votes even in a single term in the Senate. There will be some we might look back on and feel like: Oh, maybe we should have done this differently.

The most likely vote where regret would be most painful is a vote on matters of war.

And I just want to assure my colleagues: Here is something I can guarantee you. No one has ever regretted—no one has ever regretted—a vote that just says: Mr. President, before you send our sons and daughters to war, come to Congress. That is a vote that no one has ever regretted, and no one will ever regret.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

DIRECTING THE REMOVAL OF UNITED STATES ARMED FORCES FROM HOSTILITIES WITHIN OR AGAINST VENEZUELA THAT HAVE NOT BEEN AUTHORIZED BY CONGRESS—Motion to Discharge

Mr. Kaine. Mr. President, pursuant to section 601(b) of the International

Security Assistance and Arms Control Act of 1976, I move to discharge the Committee on Foreign Relations from further consideration of S.J. Res. 98, to direct the removal of United States Armed Forces from hostilities within or against Venezuela that have not been authorized by Congress.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to discharge from the Committee on Foreign Relations, S.J. Res. 98, a joint resolution to direct the removal of United States Armed Forces from hostilities within or against Venezuela that have not been authorized by Congress.

VOTE ON MOTION TO DISCHARGE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion to discharge S.J. Res. 98.

Mr. WICKER. 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.

Mr. BARRASSO. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Montana (Mr. DAINES).

The result was announced—yeas 52, nays 47, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 5 Leg.]

YEAS—52

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

NAYS—47

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

NOT VOTING—1

Daines

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SHEEHY). The joint resolution will be placed on the calendar.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Alexander C. Van Hook, of Louisiana, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Louisiana.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Louisiana.

MINNESOTA

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, with me today is Mr. Nick Ayers, a colleague from my office.

I want to talk about a serious subject. I want to talk about welfare fraud, taxpayer money.

Now, I want to make it clear that I love Minnesota—I love Minnesota—but I do not like people, whether they live in Minnesota or elsewhere, who steal money from the poor. There ought to be a special place in Hell for them. By now, unless you are still living in your parents' basement, playing video games, you know that there has been massive welfare fraud in Minnesota. It is staggering. It is stunning. It is astounding. It may rise to the level of \$9 billion of taxpayer money meant for the poor—\$9 billion.

It is an uncomfortable truth that, at this juncture, most of that fraud appears to be centered in the community of Minneapolis among people of Somali ancestry. Some have said and suggested that it is racist to say that. Facts are not racist. What I just said is just a fact. So far, there have been 90 people charged, most of whom are of Somali descent. That is just a fact. There are over 100,000 people of Somali ancestry in Minnesota—most of them in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area—and the vast majority of them vote in a bloc, as is their right, and the vast majority of them vote in a bloc for Democratic candidates, as is their right. Some will say Kennedy is being a racist for pointing that out. Let me say it again: Facts are not racist. They are facts. It has already come out at some of the trials, and not all of the folks being charged are of Somali ancestry—I want to make that very clear—but most of them are. Again, it is just a fact.

I apologize for my voice.

Let me explain what this thievery—this industrial-scale fraud—was just about. It was centered around Medicaid.

As the Presiding Officer knows, Medicaid is a Federal program administered by the States—we put up most of the money—to provide health coverage for poor people, for pregnant women, for children, and for disabled people. President Obama, through ObamaCare, extended Medicaid to some of the folks in the middle class, but, still, the main purpose of Medicaid is to help poor