



May 2, 2019

Key Vote YES on the Veto Override for the Yemen War Powers Resolution, S.J.Res. 7

On behalf of our activist community, I urge you to contact your senators and ask them to vote YES on the veto override for the Yemen War Powers Resolution, S.J.Res. 7, championed by Sen. Mike Lee (R-Utah). The Yemen War Powers Resolution, which has already been passed by both chambers of Congress, would require the removal of undeclared, unauthorized United States' support for the Saudi-led coalition in Yemen absent explicit congressional authorization.

The United States' involvement in Yemen began with the Obama administration's unilateral action to authorize "logistical and intelligence" support to the Saudis in their newly-launched campaign against the Houthis. Since then, the conflict has dramatically worsened, and U.S. support has expanded to mid-air refueling, surveillance, reconnaissance information, and target selection assistance. It is evident that these activities constitute hostilities under the War Powers Act and that it is in Congress' best interest to debate the merits of U.S. involvement in Yemen.

In a simple, but much overdue exercise of the separation of powers, Congress has recognized that the executive branch is beyond its scope of authority to wage war with its continued hostilities in Yemen. These hostilities, and continued aggression in the region, have wreaked havoc on Yemen, causing the worst humanitarian crisis in the world, which the United States has contributed to via its involvement in and seemingly blind support for the Saudi campaign against the Houthis.

Article I of the Constitution grants the legislative branch with the power to declare war. While the President is the commander in chief of the armed forces, he can only act in such a role when the military is "called into actual service." Our framers knew the executive branch would be most prone to warmaking and thus carefully invested the power to initiate hostilities with the Congress. Our role in funding and supporting Saudi Arabia's bombing campaign in Yemen was never authorized by the legislative branch as required by the Constitution.

Moreover, with the passage of S.J.Res. 7, Congress explicitly declared that these activities should cease until Congress debates and approves such warmaking. This is their constitutional prerogative and the President has no standing to veto such a resolution. Members of the legislative branch should send a message that they, and not the President, have the proper authority under the Constitution to debate and authorize acts of war.

In his State of the Union address, President Trump rightly declared, “Great nations don’t fight endless wars.” This conflict in Yemen, along with scores of others across the globe, have raged on for decades with little to no input from Congress. This must change.

As Sen. Lee said on the Senate floor, “[T]here is a lot at stake, Mr. President, whenever the lives of American soldiers are on the line. And whenever the lives of innocent men, women, and children are on the line, too. Precious lives, of immeasurable worth. These decisions result in the shedding of blood – the shedding of blood which will be on our hands if we fail to both exercise our constitutional prerogatives and to take this responsibility seriously.” Congress must take this responsibility seriously and override President Trump’s veto so that our elected legislature may carry out its constitutional duty to decide the question of war or peace.

FreedomWorks will count the vote on the veto override for S.J.Res. 7, when calculating our Scorecard for 2019 and reserves the right to weight any votes. The scorecard is used to determine eligibility for the FreedomFighter Award, which recognizes Members of the House and Senate who consistently vote to support economic freedom and individual liberty.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Brandon', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Adam Brandon
President, FreedomWorks