

War powers resolution blocked in the Senate as 10,000 more US troops head to the Middle East

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On Wednesday, the US Senate defeated a Democratic Party-sponsored war powers motion aimed at bringing a resolution to the chamber floor calling for the withdrawal of US forces from the war against Iran on the basis that the war was not authorized by Congress.

The procedural vote failed 52-47 on a motion to discharge a resolution moved by Senator Tammy Duckworth of Illinois from committee. The vote permits the Trump administration to continue its illegal war against Iran without any congressional oversight.

This was the fourth attempt by the Democrats to posture as opponents of Trump's warmongering, while they know full well that the resolutions will be blocked by the Republican majority, and while they continue to vote for trillion-dollar military budgets.

The failure of the procedural motion means that the resolution never made it to the Senate floor and the merits of the text itself could not be voted on. The vote signifies once again that Congress, which has the sole constitutional authority to declare war, is a willing participant in the collapse of democratic government in the US and a facilitator in the establishment of a presidential dictatorship by Donald Trump.

Among the notable votes were those from Senators Rand Paul and John Fetterman. Paul, a Republican from Kentucky, voted for the war powers resolution, while Fetterman, a Democrat from Pennsylvania, voted against it. The two had taken the same positions in earlier Senate measures on Iran war powers.

In opposing the extremely mild assertion of the constitutional power of Congress, the Democrat Fetterman restated his unconditional support for Trump's criminal war, which has killed an estimated 3,636 people, including more than 1,700 civilians.

Fetterman said, "we have to stand [with] our military to allow them to accomplish... the goals of Epic Fury."

The text of Duckworth's resolution sought, "To direct the removal of United States Armed Forces from hostilities within or against the Islamic Republic of Iran that have not been authorized by Congress." The resolution does not declare the war illegal, criminal, or a violation of US and international law. Instead, it accepts the framework of the war and argues that Congress has been incorrectly excluded from the decision-making about launching the war and how to conduct it.

Republican opponents of the Senate motion defended the president's war-making authority and argued that the military campaign was justified by the alleged danger posed by Iran. For example, Senate Foreign Relations Chairman Jim Risch of Idaho stated that the President has a duty to act unilaterally to defend the US and its citizens and claimed the Constitution "clearly gives the president not only the right, but, indeed, the duty, as does his oath, to protect the United States."

This argument backs the lies told by President Trump, Secretary of State Rubio and Secretary of War Hegseth that Iran was two weeks from possessing a nuclear weapon, and there was an imminent threat of attacking the US. Other Republicans focused on the provision in the War Powers Act that permits a limited 60-day use of military force by the president without congressional authorization. This period expires in 16 days.

The 1973 War Powers Act was passed after the escalation of the Vietnam War and the exposure of secret US bombing campaigns in Cambodia and Laos by the Nixon administration. It was enacted over

Nixon's veto, which was overridden by two-thirds majorities in both House and Senate.

The backdrop to the passage of the act was the horrifying human toll caused by US operations in Indochina which were hidden from the American public. Estimates of the number of deaths in Cambodia and Laos during the secret wars in those countries are in the hundreds of thousands. The purpose of the War Powers Act was to limit the president's ability to launch or prolong wars without legislative approval.

The threat made by Trump on April 7 that, "A whole civilization will die tonight, never to be brought back again," which was widely interpreted as a promise to use nuclear weapons against Iran, would dwarf the crimes of Nixon and Kissinger during the Vietnam War.

A similar charade was under way in the US House of Representatives on Wednesday with Democrats introducing articles of impeachment against Secretary of War Pete Hegseth for "unauthorized war against Iran," "targeting of civilians," "obstruction of congressional oversight," "abuse of power" and several other items. The motion is universally recognized as dead on arrival, given the Republican majority in the House. Even if it were passed, a two-thirds vote in the Senate would be required to remove Hegseth from office.

Pentagon press secretary Kingsley Wilson dismissed the impeachment motion as an effort to make headlines and said Hegseth will "continue to protect the homeland and project peace through strength."

While Trump announced a two-week ceasefire on April 7, the pause remains unstable. After talks in Pakistan ended on April 11 without an agreement, the White House moved to impose a naval blockade of the Strait of Hormuz, in violation of international law. At a press briefing on Wednesday, the White House said that another round of truce talks is planned in Pakistan.

While the Trump administration is publicly talking about diplomacy, the military posture tells a different story. Media reports say that another carrier strike group and additional amphibious and Marine forces are moving into the region, with tens of thousands of troops already there from the first phase of the war.

The *Washington Post* reported on Tuesday that the US is sending more than 10,000 additional troops to the Middle East before the end of April. Quoting unnamed

current and former US officials speaking on condition of anonymity, the *Post* reported that the aircraft carrier USS George H. W. Bush and the ships escorting it, including 6,000 troops, are on the way to the region.

Another 4,200 troops from the Boxer Amphibious Ready Group and its embarked Marine Corps task force, the 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit, are also expected to arrive in the next two weeks.

This buildup is unmistakable evidence that the Pentagon is preparing for a resumption of military operations, regardless of the negotiations. As was the case before the start of the war, the force posture points to a second phase of war rather than de-escalation.

The same pattern is unfolding in Lebanon, where Israeli strikes continue while talks are underway. Reporting over the last 24 hours showed continued attacks in southern Lebanon, including strikes that killed medical workers, alongside Hezbollah rocket fire and the possibility of new Israeli buffer-zone plans.

In both Iran and Lebanon, the US and Israel are pursuing negotiations as a mechanism to buy time to allow for the mobilization of military personnel and hardware and escalate the wars in pursuit of their imperialist and annexationist objectives.



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