

Congress Fiddles While Trump Lurches Toward War on Iran

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Congress, and particularly the Democrat-controlled House of Representatives, seems determined to see the end of the Trump Administration before the 2020 vote. Although House Speaker Pelosi claims she is not seeking impeachment, she's accusing the president of "covering up" something. However, she won't say what until she can do more investigating.

But Trump's opponents on both sides of the Congressional aisle don't seem so enthusiastic about challenging the president when he actually does abuse his Constitutional authority to pursue a more aggressive policy overseas.

Late last week, for example, President Trump declared a national security "emergency" brought about by unspecified "Iranian malign activity" – a "loophole" allowing him to bypass Congressional review of some \$8 billion in US weapons to be sold to Saudi Arabia.

Congress had been reluctant to approve yet more arms sales to Saudi Arabia after the President vetoed a bi-partisan House and Senate-approved bill requiring the US to end its military support for the Saudi war of aggression against Yemen.

What might this new Iran "emergency" be? As with the lead-up to the Iraq war, the Administration claims important secret intelligence — but of course we have to just trust them. From what we have heard from the Administration, it looks pretty flimsy. Rear Admiral Michael Gilday, the director of the Joint Staff, has outright claimed that the so-called "sabotage" of four container ships at port in the UAE is the doing of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards. But even Abu Dhabi didn't claim Iranian involvement in the mysterious incident.

Could it have been a false flag?

Admiral Gilday also claims, without providing proof, that the recent firing of a small rocket in the general vicinity of the US Embassy in Iraq is the work of the Iranians. "We believe with a high degree of confidence that this [recent attacks] stems back to the leadership in Iran at the highest levels," he said.

What would Iran gain by shooting off an insignificant rocket, exposing itself to US massive retaliation with no gain whatsoever? They don't say.

The Trump Administration has been lacking any coherent foreign policy strategy for some

time. It often seems the President is fighting more with his own appointees than with his opponents on Capitol Hill. As soon as he announces that ISIS is defeated and US troops must come home, his employees like National Security Advisor John Bolton “clarify” Trump’s statements to mean that troops are staying. Trump goes to Hanoi to cut a deal with North Korea’s Kim Jong-Un and Bolton shows up with a poison pill that blows up the deal.

Bolton announced plans for 120,000 US troops to the Middle East to help push the war on Iran he’s been hocking for 20 or so years. Then we heard it was 10,000. Then 1,500, of which 600 are already there.

Whether Trump is on board or not, his Administration is clearly dragging the US into conflict with Iran. While some Members remind the president that he does not have Constitutional authority to attack Iran without approval, that argument has not been very effective in deterring presidents thus far.

If Congress really wanted to rein in an out-of-control president, they have plenty of opportunity in his bogus “national emergency” declaration and his saber rattling toward Iran. But if asserting Constitutional authority means Congress acts to pull-back US militarism overseas, suddenly there is a great bipartisan silence. They’d rather impeach Trump over his rude Tweets than over his stomping on the Constitution.

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