

Wake Up Senators! New bipartisan War Powers Act to Constrain Military Action against Iran

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The US Senate, long the lap dog of the man who would be king, President Donald Trump, appears to have finally remembered its proper constitutional role.

Last week, the Senate voted 55/45 for a new bipartisan War Powers Act to constrain military action against Iran. The Congress voted a similar act. Both are designed to start returning the right to make war to Congress, as the Constitution clearly intended. The president is not the Warlord-in-chief in spite of what he thinks.

The Senate has been supine until now, intimidated by an unholy alliance of pro-war Christian evangelists and the Israel lobby, and over \$100 million given to the Republican Party by casino mogul Sheldon Adelson. Senators who dare oppose this powerful special interest risk their political futures. The lifting of limits on political contributions has given Adelson enormous power over Trump and his friend, Israel's prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu.

Trump has been very successful in intimidating and punishing those who deviate from his party line. All he lacks so far is a KGB-style secret police to enforce his demands. The current fracas over Trump's efforts to undermine the prosecution of his ally, political low-life Roger Stone, is yet the latest example of the steady erosion of our democratic system.

Yet even Trump went too far with the murder of senior Iranian officer, Maj. Gen Qasem Soleimani, who had been invited to visit Iraq for peace talks by its US-installed regime. Americans, besotted by too many violent TV programs, saw this as a plus, but the rest of the world was horrified by the gangster act. It appears Trump & Co. were convinced to commit this murder by Israel, which had been stalking Soleimani for years.

Ironically, the US killed the most moderate senior Iranian leader who was in line to become the Islamic Republic's leader. Israel has long had the policy of assassinating Palestinian moderates, leaving only the radicals alive. This allowed Israel to assert 'we have no one to negotiate with.'

Soleimani's murder was too much for eight Republican senators. This act of war was never approved by Congress, as the Constitution mandates. Better educated senators realized that Trump was pushing the US into a bloody war with Iran which, like the US invasion of Iraq in 2003, would have only one real winner, Israel.

These senators did the right thing. They arrested, at least temporarily, the decades-long shift to growing presidential dictatorship under the guise of war powers.

Think back to the 2003 Iraq War which was concocted by the Bush administration to justify a massive military intervention when, in fact, no real threat to the US existed. I know this because I was there and immune to all the official lies from Washington and London. A pack of lies, but the US still occupies Iraq.

The 'imminent threat' scenario used by Republicans to promote warlike acts, such as the murder of Maj. Gen. Soleimani, is bogus. Anyone can justify war by claiming 'intelligence sources' and internet chatter. Much of the intelligence the US gets from the Mideast is fake or twisted to promote other nation's benefit. Washington was fed a farrago of intelligence lies and half-truths by its allies Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Israel to help promote the 2003 war against Iraq. Trump has used similar phony 'intelligence' to justify his Mideast militarism.

The founders of our United States intended Congress to be the premier arm of government. But our once powerful Congress has been bleeding power and authority – not to mention respect – since the Vietnam era. Serving in Congress was supposed to be a part-time job for educated landowners, not small-town lawyers from the rural Bible Belt.

But will this attempt by the Senate to restore some of its power and prestige work? Trump will almost certainly veto this war powers act and further intimidate Congress. Yet unless Congress makes a stand, our balanced system of government is truly at risk. Americans should at minimum draw the lesson never to vote power to a president and Congress of the same party.

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