

Senate, and after consultation with the Majority Leader, reappoints the following Members to serve on the Congressional-Executive Commission on the People's Republic of China:

The Senator from North Carolina (Mrs. HAGAN) vice the Senator from Montana (Mr. Baucus).

ONLY CONGRESS DECLARES WAR

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. SANFORD) for 5 minutes.

Mr. SANFORD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in opposition to the plan that has been put forward by the President. As you, Mr. Speaker, just noted a few moments ago, it is a small portion of a larger and, what I believe to be, fundamentally flawed plan.

I say that for many different reasons, one of which is the simple reality that body bags from a far off battle or from a far off war don't return to Washington, D.C. They return to congressional districts and States across this country. It is for that very reason that the Founding Fathers believed so strongly in Congress having the authority, and the sole authority, for the declaration of war.

I mean, I think it is important to look to what James Wilson, who happened to be one of the biggest advocates for a strong Presidency, said to his own State delegation back in 1787. He said on the importance of congressional authority with regard to war:

This system will not hurry us into war. It is calculated to guard against it. It will not be in the power of a single man or a single body of men to involve us in such distress, for the important power of declaring war is vested at the legislative level at large.

George Washington said this:

The Constitution vests the power of declaring war in Congress. Therefore, no offensive expedition of importance can be undertaken until after they shall have deliberated upon the subject and authorized such a measure.

James Madison said this:

The power to declare war, including the power of judging the causes of war, is fully and exclusively vested in the legislature. The Executive has no right in any case to decide the question whether there is or is not cause for declaring war.

I think our Founding Fathers had it right, and if we move forward today without stopping and waiting and insisting upon the President's constitutional duty to come before this body and ask for a declaration of war, I think we are making a mistake.

I would say, secondly, that I think we are making a mistake because the news of today is that General Dempsey now says if the plan doesn't work out, he would in fact recommend American ground troops there in this crisis in the Middle East. I think that that is telling. Because if you stop and think about it, is America the only group that is expected to suffer through the ravages of war with regard to boots on the ground in this instant if General Dempsey's call is right?

Think about this. There have been 6,600 American deaths there in that part of the world in recent history. There have been more than 50,000 soldiers that have returned with life-altering wounds. I mean, their lives are changed forever, and yet we can't get a real firm commitment out of allies there in the Middle East as to what they will or won't do with regard to ground troops.

So if it is that big a threat, why is it that allies in that part of the world are not making real and substantial commitments with regard to what they will or won't do with regard to ground troops?

Thirdly, I would say what we are doing is we are signing up for an open-ended commitment, maybe a 5- or a 10- or a 15- or a 20-year commitment, without legal authority to do so. The administration is resting solely on the 2001 authorizing language, which was to President Bush, in the wake of 9/11, for pursuing perpetrators of 9/11.

And yet in this instance what they are saying is, well, no, no, that gives us authority for the next 10, 15, 20 years. That is not the case. Congress authorized for that action. I think it is a misreading of the law to move forward as they have.

Finally, I would make this point. The Bible says, "Be hot, be cold, but don't be lukewarm." And I think this plan is predicated on lukewarm. I have some colleagues who say we need to commit ground troops; we need firmer involvement. I have others who say we don't need to do anything at all. And we are splitting it right down the middle. Let's bomb a bit and let's arm "moderate rebels" and we see how that works.

We have a snapshot of how that works because just this spring 1,000 ISIS soldiers routed two divisions of Iraqis, about 30,000 folks, in no time. Mind you, these are the same folks that American taxpayers spent \$25 billion training and equipping. We equipped about 200,000 of them. It has not worked well.

I think we need to pause, first, for constitutional reasons; second, for legal authority reasons; and third, for a flawed strategy that is based on lukewarm. We have that chance today, and I would beg of my colleagues to do so.

STRENGTHEN THE ECONOMY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. SCHNEIDER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. SCHNEIDER. Mr. Speaker, our number one priority should always be strengthening our economy and expanding job growth and opportunity.

That is why I launched the "Brad At Your Business" initiative, to hear firsthand about the opportunities and challenges facing the businesses in my district.

So far I have visited more than 80 companies, speaking with owners, managers, and employees about their aspi-

rations and needs for achieving success. I have spoken with some of the largest companies in our country, but also to small- and medium-sized businesses; second-, third-, and fourth-generation family firms, startups, advanced manufacturing companies, retail, and service firms.

Throughout these visits, I have heard several recurring themes, including concerns about our growing skills gap, our aging infrastructure, the need to reform our broken immigration system, and the need to modernize our Tax Code to successfully compete in a global economy.

These conversations have subsequently led to concrete actions, such as introducing the AMERICA Works Act and the LEARN Act, that will help better match worker training programs to specific employer needs.

If we are to successfully lead a resurgence of the U.S. economy, we need more collaboration between our business owners, workers, and elected officials.

Only by working together can we reignite social mobility, rebuild the ladders of opportunity, and achieve a more inclusive prosperity for all Americans.

MORE DEBATE NEEDED ON WAR VOTE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. RANGEL) for 5 minutes.

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, it is 10:40, September 17, 2014. And for me, this is an historic event, because I will be able to tell my grandkids and those who would listen that on the eve of the House of Representatives taking a vote that would expand the war powers of the President of the United States, that I stood in the well of the House talking to a House that was void of any Member of the House of Representatives.

I make this point not so much to indicate the importance of anything I might say this morning, but because I really think that the whole country should be concerned about the gravity and importance of the vote that we take today, which in my 44 years I cannot think of any vote that is more important and certainly more historic.

It goes unchallenged that the vote today would expose more members of the military to bodily harm. It is clear that the administration has called this a war on ISIS or ISIL. It is abundantly clear that the threat to our national security is subject to a whole lot of debate. And while I may not have the answer to whether or not there is a threat, to me, I cannot think of anything more important than the 435 Members of the House and the 100 Members of the other body, at least before we vote, to be able to debate this issue.

I intend to vote against the amendment that would include an expansion of our military venture, which means