The FY2021 Defense Appropriations Bill Must Prevent War with Iran

The Trump administration’s “maximum pressure” campaign has led the United States and Iran to the brink of war. U.S. actions to withdraw from the Iran nuclear deal, end the suspension of United Nations sanctions, assassinate a top Iranian official, and veto the bipartisan Iran War Powers Resolution have created a volatile situation in which a military confrontation could break out at any moment.

The FY2021 Defense Appropriations Act, passed by the House in late July, includes two important provisions by Rep. Barbara Lee (CA-13) to prevent what would be a disastrous and horrific new war in the Middle East. The first bans funding for the use of military force against Iran without express congressional approval. The second would repeal the 2002 Iraq Authorization for Use of Military Force (AUMF), which allowed the United States to launch a war against the Saddam Hussein regime 17 years ago. The 2002 Iraq AUMF was cited as a legal justification for the U.S. drone attack that killed Iranian General Qassem Soleimani in January 2020.

The Senate has not yet released its version of this bill or taken any action on it. We must ensure that these key House-passed provisions remain in the final defense appropriations bill that is sent to President Trump’s desk.

The specific provisions in the House-passed FY2021 Defense Appropriations Act (H.R. 7617) that would prevent war with Iran are:

» **No funding for unauthorized war with Iran:** Sec. 9029 prohibits funding for any use of military force in or against Iran without specific congressional authorization. It provides an exception that would allow the president to repel sudden attacks, consistent with the War Powers Act and the president’s commander-in-chief powers.

» **Repeal of the 2002 Iraq AUMF:** Sec. 9028 repeals the 2002 Iraq AUMF, a law that the administration cited as justification for killing an Iranian general in 2020.

Keep House-Passed Provisions to Prevent War with Iran in the Final Defense Appropriations Bill.

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