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Ten Republican Senators May Vote for Resolution Ordering End to Conflict With Iran

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Senator Tim Kaine (D-Va.) says 10 Republican senators are considering voting for a resolution he is sponsoring to force the United States to stand down from any confrontation with Iran unless Congress specifically authorizes such engagement.



“The question of whether United States forces should be engaged in armed conflict against Iran should only be made following a full briefing to Congress and the American public of the issues at stake, a public debate in Congress, and a congressional vote as contemplated by the Constitution,” reads the [resolution](#). “The absence of such a deliberative approach is deeply unfair to members of the United States Armed Forces and other Americans whose lives are at risk in the event of hostilities between the United States and Iran.”

The resolution directs President Trump to remove U.S. forces from conflict with Iran within 30 days of its enactment, a particularly pressing matter in light of the United States’ January 3 drone assassination of Iranian General Qassem Soleimani and Iran’s subsequent retaliation. It still permits Trump to order defensive actions in response to “imminent attack.”

Asked Monday how many Republican senators might vote for the resolution, Kaine said, “Probably about 10,” reported [The Hill](#). “There’s good discussion going on,” he added.

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The list of GOP senators considering supporting the measure runs the gamut from the conservative Mike Lee (Utah) and Rand Paul (Ky.) to the moderate-to-liberal Todd Young (Ind.), Lisa Murkowski (Alaska), Susan Collins (Maine), and Mitt Romney (Utah).

According to [The Hill](#), Lee said the resolution simply explains that “additional hostilities against Iran need to be authorized by Congress.”

“That is a perfectly unremarkable statement,” he added. “The fact that this would be objectionable to anyone in either political party is really saying something.”

But Kaine — who cannot be credibly accused of partisan motives in sponsoring the resolution because he has been offering similar measures since joining the Senate in 2013 — thinks he knows why his fellow lawmakers might oppose his resolution.

“Many members of Congress, what they want to do is hide under their desk, let the president just do whatever the president wants, and then they think they can escape accountability for the consequences of war,” he [told](#) CBS’ *Face the Nation* Sunday.



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Kaine believes his resolution is especially needed given the less-than-satisfactory briefing on the justification for the Soleimani assassination congressional leaders received from the Trump administration last week. Kaine told *Face the Nation* that while the briefers had “specific” intelligence regarding Iranian plans to attack U.S. interests, they had “nothing” demonstrating “an imminent threat.”

“We felt that the evidence was far short of imminent threat,” he said. “We were mad that they were so dismissive of the notion that Congress would have anything to do with questions of war and peace.”

The administration’s [constantly shifting explanations](#) for why Soleimani had to be killed at that particular moment (Trump signed an order permitting the assassination [seven months ago](#)) coupled with Trump’s typically dismissive attitude toward his critics (whether or not the threat was imminent “doesn’t really matter because of [Soleimani’s] horrible past,” he [tweeted](#) Monday) have not exactly helped bolster its case for waging war without congressional authorization.

Furthermore, while Trump has suggested that the 2001 and 2002 authorizations for the use of military force empower him to confront Iran, Defense Secretary Mark Esper has said that he disagrees, leading Lee to [recommend](#) Esper’s publicly supporting Kaine’s resolution, which specifically states that the earlier resolutions “do not serve as a specific statutory authorization for war against Iran, and neither authorize[s] any such action.”

Kaine’s resolution is expected to be brought up for a vote later in the week. Democrats could force a vote on it anytime, but Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.) wants to wait until his entire caucus is present to do so, noted *The Hill*.

Should the Senate pass the resolution, it would then go to the House of Representatives, which would also have to approve it. Trump, of course, is likely to veto it.

Still, the debate is worth having if the United States is to remain a free republic for, as James Madison observed, “No nation could preserve its freedom in the midst of continual warfare.”

Michael Tennant is a freelance writer and regular contributor to The New American.

Photo of Senators Mike Lee and Rand Paul: AP Images



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