



Written by [Michael Tennant](#) on July 25, 2023

House Shoots Down Resolutions Ending Iraq, Libya, Syria “Emergencies”

Any doubts that Congress favors permanent, presidentially declared war were put to rest last Tuesday when the House of Representatives overwhelmingly rejected five resolutions aimed at ending long-standing “national emergencies” related to Iraq, Libya, and other countries.

Representative Paul Gosar (R-Ariz.) led the charge to repeal five of the 41 ongoing national emergencies that presidents have declared in the 47 years since the National Emergencies Act (NEA) was passed. The oldest of these dates to 1979.

“Problems lasting years, decades even, are not emergencies and should not be treated as such,” Gosar said in a [statement](#). “Rather, they should be addressed by Congress with due process, debate and transparency, not with endless emergency declarations which give neo-cons, warmongers, the military industrial complex and bureaucrats free reign [sic] to control policy and spending.”

According to Gosar, an emergency declaration issued by a president under the NEA gives the chief executive access to 135 special powers, including the authority to draft Americans into active duty, test chemical and biological weapons on humans (including American citizens), seize or shut down radio stations and internet traffic, take Americans’ private property, and “freeze American citizens’ assets and bank accounts and restrict anyone from selling them groceries, renting them an apartment, representing them as an attorney, providing dental or medical treatment, and much more.”

The NEA requires Congress to consider a joint resolution to terminate a national emergency every six months after it is declared, yet none of the 41 active emergencies had ever been considered by Congress before. Representative Lauren Boebert (R-Colo.) noted on the House floor that the national emergency related to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, for which she was sponsoring a termination resolution ([H.J. Res. 68](#)), should have been reviewed 31 times since it was declared in 2006. Instead, President Joe Biden [extended](#) the emergency last year with nary a peep from Capitol Hill.

“Congress has failed to perform its most basic constitutional duty: checking the powers of the executive branch,” Gosar wrote in a [Washington Times op-ed](#).

Furthermore:

While national emergency declarations are ostensibly meant to focus on protecting the well-



AP Images
Paul Gosar



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being and safety of American citizens, without proper congressional oversight, the added authority provided to the president can lead to the expansion of executive power and abuse. For example, in 2003, President George W. Bush declared a national emergency and cited it as the legal basis for the invasion of Iraq, despite the fact that Iraq was not actually a threat to the national security of the United States. This decision was an abuse of executive power, violated international law, and undermined the authority of Congress.

More recently, President Biden used the COVID-19 national emergency powers to justify his bogus student loan forgiveness scheme, claiming that the pandemic created a hardship that made it difficult to repay college loans.

Congress, with Biden's consent, finally put an end to the Covid-19 emergency in May, but the other emergencies remain on the books.

Gosar sponsored two resolutions. One, [H.J. Res. 74](#), would have terminated President Barack Obama's 2012 emergency declaration regarding Saudi Arabia's war on Yemen, which has served as a pretext for U.S. intervention in that conflict and prevented humanitarian assistance to the suffering Yemenis. "It is incomprehensible that a stated 'emergency' is used by our country to harm the people of another country, including forcing starvation and disease," Gosar said in a [June 16 press release](#).

Gosar's second resolution, [H.J. Res. 70](#), would have repealed Obama's 2011 emergency declaration concerning Libya. In a [June 13 statement](#), Gosar pointed out:

Almost hilariously, the extended national emergency related to Libya continues to cite Muammar Qadhafi as the reason for the declaration, even though Qadhafi has been dead for almost 12 years. You can't make this stuff up.

At no time since 2011 has Libya posed a military or economic threat to the United States. The people of Libya deserve to live in a manner of their choosing without the prospect of U.S. bombings, attacks or color revolutions thrust upon them by corrupt and misguided American agencies — none of whom are acting with Congressional approval.

Representative Eli Crane (R-Ariz.), an Iraq war veteran, sponsored [H.J. Res. 71](#), terminating Bush's 20-year-old Iraq-related emergency declaration.

"The U.S. military overthrew Saddam Hussein's regime within 3 weeks of being in Iraq," [tweeted](#) Crane. "There is no reason to risk the lives of American soldiers by maintaining a presence there. My resolution would result in a full withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq."

Finally, Gosar and Representative Matt Gaetz (R-Fla.) cosponsored a resolution ([H.J. Res. 79](#)) in hopes of ending Bush's 2004 declaration regarding Syria, which claimed that the United States faced a national emergency because of Syria's alleged terrorist support and weapons-of-mass-destruction programs. Biden [extended](#) the declaration in May, saying, "The Syrian regime's actions and policies ... continue to pose an unusual threat to" the United States.

According to [The Grayzone](#), "Gaetz characterized the five national emergency declarations addressed in the resolutions as 'dormant slush funds spending untold sums of money with no transparency as to how much is going into the "Syrian emergency."'"

All five resolutions suffered resounding defeats. Nevertheless, Gosar warned his colleagues that



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“there’ll be 36 more coming your way.”

“No president, regardless of party, should be handed a blank check and endless special powers that can be used to circumvent the normal democratic process, exceed their constitutional authority, and violate the balance of power,” Gosar declared in his op-ed. “It is crucial that the use of the NEA be subject to scrutiny, ensuring that it is used only when truly necessary and swiftly reviewed for termination when no longer justified.”

But why stop there? Repeal the unconstitutional NEA!



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