

The Washington Times

Monday, December 14, 2020

States must take the lead to get U.S. out of pointless and endless wars

Why state legislators should follow the example set by South Carolina's Defend the Guard Act

By Rep. Stewart Jones

While President Trump was negotiating yet another peace agreement this week — this time between Israel and Morocco — his enemies beat the drums of war in their ongoing effort to overthrow the America First foreign policy.

It's sad that throughout the entirety of Mr. Trump's presidency, the swamp has worked around the clock to dismantle his efforts toward peace. Even worse, with the passage of the disastrous, \$740.5 billion 2021 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), it appears the neocons and pro-war left will soon regain the levers of federal power, plunging America into another four years of stupid, pointless, endless wars abroad.

With America's armed forces soon to fall under the control of a Congress that will, in all likelihood, do everything they can to keep our troops overseas, it's time for the states to step up. This is why I will soon be filing the Defend the Guard Act in South Carolina, a bill that would allow the governor to withhold national guard troops from being brought under federal control.

Sen. Rand Paul, Kentucky Republican, was one of the precious few voices of reason in the congressional vote on the NDAA. In his speech before the Senate, he said, "They believe that a president has the power to go to war anywhere anytime, but when a president tries to remove troops, they say 'Oh no no. What we really want are 535 generals in Congress to tell him he can't leave a war.'" Rep. Thomas Massie, Kentucky Republican, also took to Twitter to criticize the bill, writing, "This NDAA bill contains specific language to make it harder for the president to bring our troops home from Afghanistan."

But heroes of liberty like Mr. Paul and Mr. Massie cannot fight this issue alone. Without reinforcements from elected officials across the board and a powerful grassroots movement to end America's military expeditionalism, our efforts will never amount to anything beyond empty rhetoric.

In 1950, my grandfather was drafted into the Korean conflict. I grew up hearing stories of courage and sacrifice. The problem with American involvement in Korea was that it didn't follow a declaration of war, but a U.N. decision to get the U.S. to intervene.



Undeclared war — something with which our country has become painfully familiar over the last half-century — plunges our country into foreign quagmires based on the whims of politicians, rather than American interests.

In Article I of the United States Constitution, Congress is given the authority to declare war; history shows that this check on war is critical to the survival of our republic. The Founders repeatedly warned of the dangers of excessive foreign intervention, having studied the fall of countless republics into entangled empires.

In Thomas Jefferson's 1801 address to Congress, he said that the key to preserving our republic was "peace, commerce, and honest friendship with all nations — entangling alliances with none." In 1795, James Madison said that "of all enemies to public liberty war, is perhaps, the most to be dreaded, because it comprises and develops the germ of every other." Mr. Trump has tried to follow this advice and our country has seen the benefits of peace and commerce in recent years.

The pressure needed to apply to Washington if we are to see this objective through will not generate itself; it will have to emanate from leaders from across the country who are sick of seeing brave American service men and women shipped overseas with no objective, no plan, and no exit strategy. As I file the Defend the Guard Act in South Carolina, I call on state legislators elsewhere to do the same in their legislatures.

Stewart Jones is a member of the South Carolina House of Representatives.

For more information: www.DefendTheGuard.US and www.BringOurTroopsHome.US