

Mr. Speaker: I strongly oppose H Res 568, a resolution "expressing the sense of the House of Representatives regarding the importance of preventing the Government of Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapons capability."

Once again we see on the "suspension" calendar, which is customarily reserved for non-controversial legislation, a resolution designed to move the US toward a military conflict with Iran. Sadly, it has become non-controversial for Congress to call for US attacks on foreign countries that have neither attacked nor threatened the United States.

We should not fool ourselves about the timing of this legislation. Next week, high-level talks between Iran and the five permanent UN Security Council members plus Germany (P5+1) will resume. Those who seek US military action against Iran must fear that successful diplomacy will undermine their calls for war.

Disturbingly, some of my colleagues have suggested this resolution can be read as a form of ersatz Congressional approval for the use of military force against Iran.

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has the authority to monitor the Iranian nuclear program to determine whether nuclear material is being diverted from civilian to military uses. The IAEA has never reported an Iranian violation. This legislation attempts to scare us into believing otherwise, but that fact remains. And the US Intelligence Community agrees with IAEA conclusions on this matter.

The most dangerous aspect of H. Res. 568 is that it dramatically lowers the threshold for conflict with Iran by replacing the prohibition against acquiring nuclear weapons to a prohibition against a "capability" to develop nuclear weapons.

However, as former senior Bush administration official, Flynt Leverett, has stated:

Iranian efforts to develop a "nuclear weapons capability"...may make American and Israeli elites

uncomfortable. But it is not a violation of the NPT....While the NPT prohibits non-nuclear-weapon states from building atomic bombs, developing a nuclear weapons capability is, [allowed] under the NPT... It is certainly not a justification—strategically, legally, or morally—for armed aggression against Iran.

But this resolution states that the House "rejects any United States policy that would rely on efforts to contain a nuclear weapons-capable Iran." That makes it very clear that the intent of the House is to authorize force against Iran not if it acquires a nuclear weapon, but if it has a "capability" to acquire them some time in the future. The term "capability" is left undefined, of course, leaving it open to very broad interpretations by this and future administrations.

Mr. Speaker this is incredibly dangerous legislation. I urge my colleagues in the strongest manner to reject this stealth authorization for war on Iran.