



EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20503

March 20, 2018
(Senate)

STATEMENT OF ADMINISTRATION POLICY

S.J. Res. 54 – To Direct the Removal of United States Armed Forces from Hostilities in the Republic of Yemen that Have Not Been Authorized by the Congress

(Sen. Sanders, I-VT and 10 cosponsors)

The Administration strongly opposes passage of S.J. Res. 54, a joint resolution that purports to direct the removal of United States Armed Forces from hostilities in the Republic of Yemen that have not been authorized by the Congress.

The fundamental premise of S.J. Res. 54 is flawed—U.S. forces are not engaged in hostilities between the Saudi-led coalition and Houthi forces in Yemen. Since 2015, the United States has provided limited support to the Saudi-led coalition pursuant to the Arms Export Control Act, statutory authorities to provide logistics support, and the President's constitutional powers. This non-combat support includes intelligence sharing; logistics support, including air-to-air refueling; and military advice, including advice on compliance with the law of armed conflict and best practices for reducing the risk of civilian casualties and collateral damage. United States counterterrorism operations and an October 2016 strike on radar facilities in Houthi-controlled territory, which was the subject of a prior report consistent with the War Powers Resolution of 1973, are separate matters. Other than those engagements, no U.S. forces have been introduced into hostilities or introduced into a situation where hostilities are clearly imminent in connection with ongoing support to the Saudi-led coalition, and, as a result, this U.S. support does not implicate the War Powers Resolution.

In addition to its erroneous premise, the passage of S.J. Res. 54 would significantly harm our relationships in the region. We depend on our partners in the Saudi-led coalition to help us combat terrorism, support the Republic of Yemen government, and counter Iran's destabilizing activities. Our continued cooperation allows the Administration to support diplomatic negotiations to end the war, ensure humanitarian access, and defeat terrorists that seek to harm the United States. Apart from negatively impacting our bilateral relationship with Saudi Arabia, the legislation sets a broader precedent that could hamper our ability to build and maintain security cooperation relationships, and sustain our pressure campaign against Al-Qa'ida and ISIS.

Accordingly, if S.J. Res. 54 were presented to the President in its current form, his advisors would recommend that he veto the joint resolution.