



**Statement of Lead Republican Michael McCaul (R-TX)  
House Committee on Foreign Affairs**

*"Opening Remarks: No War Against Iran Act"*  
January 30, 2020

Opening Remarks as Delivered

*"Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to this dangerous amendment. I'd like to refresh the memory of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle. The Iranian regime orchestrated over a dozen attacks against Americans in Iraq over the last three months, killing a U.S. citizen and wounding four U.S. service members, and they also hit the embassy of the United States, ordering a fiery attack on the U.S. Embassy and launched a ballistic missile attack on the United States forces. Honestly, Mr. Speaker, I don't know what more we need -- what more the president needs -- in terms of authorization to respond in self-defense given these events.*

*"The President has made it abundantly clear that he's not starting a war with Iran. He's repeatedly shown restraint after Iran's provocations and deescalated where others would not. When forced by Iran's dangerous escalations, the President has targeted limited military action to defend Americans overseas using his Article Two constitutional authority. This included the strike in Baghdad against Soleimani, Iran's mastermind of terror, who was responsible for killing more than 600 Americans and wounding thousands more. He has blood on his hands, but my colleagues cannot accept the fact that the president acted time and again with restraint in these matters. They are so blinded by their contempt for this President that they're seeking to tie his hands.*

*"They would rather risk putting Americans in the Middle East in harm's way by an Iranian regime with a 40-year history of deadly aggression against us. This amendment takes legitimate options off the table for the executive branch, and in doing so, it shows America divided in the*



*face of mounting Iranian threats, making our nation less safe. And make no mistake, Iran and others are watching. As the Democrats needlessly divide us. We all agree that, under Article One of the constitution, only Congress possesses the authority to declare war, but this amendment goes much farther than prohibiting an unauthorized war. This amendment uses Congress' power of the purse to preclude any use of force whatsoever against Iran unless it is previously authorized by Congress or provoked by an attack on the territory of the armed forces of the United States.*

*"But think about what that means. What can our military do if Iran attacks American civilians or diplomats or commercial shipping overseas? Under this reckless amendment, the answer is absolutely nothing. The United States military cannot fire a single shot until after the successful completion of a bicameral legislative process that enacts a law authorizing the use of force. How many Americans would be dead by then? We need Iran and its terrorist proxies to think twice about attacking Americans, our friends, and our own interests, not enabling them like what this amendment does. Further, this is an unprecedented attempt to limit the powers claimed by every commander in chief, both Democrat and Republican, since the War Powers Resolution was enacted over President Nixon's veto in 1973. This misguided amendment is actually far more restrictive than the War Powers Resolution itself, which recognizes the use of our armed forces for up to 60 days without legislative authorization in situations of war. This is absolutely not the time to play politics with our national security. Iran's aggression is not going to go away anytime soon.*

*"I'd like to quote from a July 8 letter from the Department of Defense when the same proposal was considered as an amendment to the Defense Authorization Bill. Quote, "The Department strongly opposes this amendment. If U.S. citizens, diplomatic facilities in the region or other important national interests are threatened or attacked, we must be able to respond promptly and in an appropriate fashion," end of quote. That letter was sent five months before the attack*



*on the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad. The concerns expressed in the letter are even more urgent today given the many attacks on Americans in Iraq in recent days. Bottom line, this measure emboldens our adversary by tying the president's hands in Iran. So, therefore, I oppose this legislation, which I believe is politics at its worst. It's dangerous. It ties our Commander in Chief's hands, it emboldens our enemy, the largest state sponsor of terror, the Islamic Republic of Iran, and I urge my colleagues to do the same."*

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