

MASSACHUSETTS **Peace Action**



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July 14, 2017

To: Senator Ed Markey
 Senator Elizabeth Warren
 Rep. Richard Neal
 Rep. Jim McGovern
 Rep. Niki Tsongas
 Rep. Joseph Kennedy III

 Rep. Katherine Clark
 Rep. Seth Moulton
 Rep. Mike Capuano
 Rep. Stephen Lynch
 Rep. Bill Keating

Re: End War Without End - Community Leaders' Letter

Dear Senators and Representatives,

The shooting down of a Syrian air force jet, following a Tomahawk missile attack on a Syrian airbase, represent a significant escalation of US military activity in the Middle East, but not a dramatic departure from the policies of the last decade and a half. Our country is waging war in Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Libya, Somalia, and Afghanistan, and our troops are deployed in over 150 foreign countries. The result has only been more death, more destruction, more refugees, and more terrorism.

Our war without end began with the US invasion of Afghanistan in December 2001, but quickly expanded to the Middle East, the Horn of Africa, and North Africa. Millions of civilians have been killed and displaced in this war and the Middle East faces a refugee crisis of unprecedented proportions. Thousands of young American men and women have been killed and many thousands more injured or traumatized. Economists estimate that this war will cost the American people several trillion dollars and that our children and grandchildren will be paying for it.

Congress represents the voice of the people in Washington, DC. It is time for you, as our representatives, to speak for us and to claim your power to choose peace over war.

Our war without end has been justified by two Congressional resolutions that authorized the use of military force (AUMF). The first was passed on September 14, 2001, three days after the attacks of 9/11, and it empowered President George W. Bush to use "United States Armed Forces against those responsible for the recent attacks launched against the United States." This resolution was the basis for the US-led invasion of Afghanistan, a war which continues today and is the longest conflict in the history of our country. The resolution of September 2001 was not

deemed sufficient for a war against Iraq, which led to a second authorization in October 2002 for the use of force against that nation.

On the basis of these two authorizations the United States has used force over a wide area for more than fifteen years. They were the basis for the US bombing of Libya in 2011, which toppled Muammar Gaddafi but left behind an ongoing, vicious civil war. They justify the ongoing air war in Somalia against al-Shabab, which expanded the “War on Terror” to sub-Saharan Africa. They have been invoked to justify US actions against ISIS in Syria as well as elsewhere, which has led to countless civilian casualties. In December 2016 President Barack Obama declared that the 2001 AUMF justified the battle against ISIS in Iraq, Syria, or wherever else it exists, and President Donald Trump appealed to these same AUMFs to support a plan to send additional US troops to join the battle against ISIS in the northern Syrian city of Raqqa.

It is time for Congress to end this war without end. The Constitution grants Congress the power to declare war and it is time that you, our Senators and Representatives, step up and speak for the people in Washington, DC. We are tired of war without end. We call upon you to:

- Support Barbara Lee’s H.R. 1473, the Prohibit Expansion of U.S. Combat Troops into Syria Act, which would prohibit the Department of Defense from funding any attempt by the Administration to expand our presence in Syria by putting U.S. combat boots on the ground.
- Join the bipartisan effort spearheaded by Congressman Jim McGovern and others calling for an immediate Congressional debate on the deployment and use of U.S. Armed Forces in Iraq, Syria, Yemen, and elsewhere.
- Refuse to fund the Pentagon or authorize the sale of US weapons to the countries in the region until Congress debates a new Authorization for the Use of Military Force.
- Support diplomatic, not military, efforts to end the conflicts and civil wars in the region.

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