

House tries to restrain Trump's actions on Iran

Resolution is not binding

By **MATTHEW DALY**
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Reigniting a debate over who has the power to declare war, the Democratic-controlled House on Thursday approved a resolution asserting that President Donald Trump must seek approval from Congress before engaging in further military action against Iran.

The war powers resolution is not binding on the president and would not require his signature. But House Speaker Nancy Pelosi nonetheless insisted it “has real teeth” because “it is a statement of the Congress of the United States.”

The measure will “protect American lives and values” by limiting Trump’s military actions, Pelosi said. “The administration must de-escalate and must prevent further violence.”

The White House called the resolution “ridiculous” and “completely misguided.”

And Trump, at a campaign rally in Toledo, Ohio, claimed he had no obligation



House Speaker Nancy Pelosi walks to meet with reporters following escalation of tensions this week between the U.S. and Iran.

J. Scott Applewhite/AP Photo

to give lawmakers advance warning, saying Democrats like Pelosi “want us to tell them so they can leak it to their friends in the corrupt media.”

The House passed the measure, 224-194, with just three Republicans voting in support. Eight Democrats opposed the measure.

A similar proposal by Sen. Tim Kaine, D-Va., faces an uphill fight in the GOP-

run Senate. Kaine’s efforts received a boost Thursday as Republican Sen. Todd Young of Indiana, an ex-Marine, said he might support the war powers measure. Two other Republican senators said Wednesday they would back Kaine’s plan.

“We are members of a separate and distinct branch of government. It is our duty not to take anyone’s word for things as we are deal-

ing with matters of life and death,” Young said, adding that he wished Trump administration officials had provided more intelligence information during a briefing Wednesday on a U.S. drone strike that killed a top Iranian general.

Pelosi, in announcing the House vote, called the killing of Gen. Qassem Soleimani “provocative and disproportionate.” The U.S. military

also tried, but failed, to take out another senior Iranian commander on the same day that the American airstrike killed Soleimani, U.S. officials said Friday.

Also on Friday, Pelosi said the House will take steps next week to send articles of impeachment to the Senate, ending Democrats’ blockade of Trump’s Senate trial over his conduct toward Ukraine.

Louisiana Rep. Steve Scalise, the No. 2 House Republican, denounced the Democratic war powers measure as little more than “a press release designed to attack President Trump,” while House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy of California called it a “meaningless vote” on a measure that will never be sent to the president or “limit his constitutional authority to defend the American people.”

White House spokesman Hogan Gidley said, “This House resolution tries to undermine the ability of the U.S. Armed Forces to prevent terrorist activity by Iran and its proxies, and attempts to hinder the president’s authority to protect America and our interests in the region from the continued

threats.” The House vote came a day after the Trump administration briefed lawmakers on its actions in Iran. Democrats and several Republicans called the briefings inadequate, adding that officials did not provide enough details about why the attack was justified.

Vice President Mike Pence said Thursday that Soleimani “was traveling the region making plans to bring an attack against American personnel and American forces.” He said it was not possible to share full details of the intelligence with lawmakers.

“When it comes to intelligence we have to protect sources and methods, there’s only certain amount we can share with every member of Congress,” Pence said on ABC’s “Good Morning America.” “But those of us who have seen all the evidence know that there was a compelling case of imminent threat against American personnel.”

Trump said Thursday that he “had calls from numerous senators and numerous congressmen and women saying it was the greatest presentation they’ve ever had.”

US blames Iran for Ukrainian jetliner downing

By **NASSER KARIMI, JOSEPH KRAUSS and ZEKE MILLER**
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The U.S. promised “appropriate action” Friday in response to its assessment that an Iranian missile was responsible for downing a Ukrainian jetliner that crashed outside Tehran, as the Iranian government denied playing a role in the killing of all 176 people on board.

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo became the high-

est-level U.S. official to directly pin the blame on Iran, after Canadian, Australian and British leaders announced similar intelligence conclusions Thursday. “We do believe it is likely that that plane was shot down by an Iranian missile,” he said.

Pompeo said an investigation would continue into the incident and that once it was complete he was “confident that we and the world will take appropriate action as a response.” Leaders said the plane appeared to have been unintentionally hit by a sur-

face-to-air missile.

Earlier Friday, Iran denied Western allegations that one of its own missiles downed the jetliner that crashed early Wednesday outside Tehran, hours after Iran launched more than a dozen ballistic missiles at two U.S. bases in Iraq to avenge the killing of its top general in an American airstrike last week.

“What is obvious for us, and what we can say with certainty, is that no missile hit the plane,” Ali Abedzadeh, head of Iran’s national aviation department, told a press

conference.

“If they are really sure, they should come and show their findings to the world” in accordance with international standards, he added.

Hassan Rezaeifar, the head of the Iranian investigation team, said recovering data from the black box flight recorders could take more than a month and that the entire investigation could stretch into next year. He also said Iran may request help from international experts if it is not able to extract the flight recordings.



Adrian Wylde/Canadian Press

Candles sit in front of pictures of victims at a vigil in Canada to remember those killed in the Ukraine International Airlines plane crash in Iran.

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