

About a *quarter of the Fiscal Year Supplemental Appropriations Bill to pay for the Iraq and Afghanistan wars -- which now costs 275 million per day--was considered the week of November 12. The bill was called a "bridge," in that it would provide temporary funding for current operations until the full amount can be considered in 2008. The measure would have required some U.S. troop withdrawals from Iraq to begin 30 days after the bill is enacted, and it set a goal - - but not a requirement -- that most troops be brought home by December 15, 2008.

In addition to these measures, the bill required more time at home between tours of duty in Iraq, banned water boarding and other torture techniques, and prohibited the establishment of permanent bases in Iraq. The House approved the bill by a 218 - 203 vote. The Senate refused to bring up the bill; it voted 53 - 45 in favor of beginning debate, but 60 votes were required and the bill died. Sen. Mitch McConnell (R-KY) tried to bring up a \$70 billion bill to pay for the wars that had no restrictions, but his measure died 45 - 53. Walsh voted for the McConnell amendment in the House. *\$70 billion was approved (HR 2764 Supplemental Fiscal 080) to continue the endless war in Iraq. Feingold's attempt to withdraw most troops and reduce mission in 9 months failed with only 22 Democrats voting with him, including Schumer and Clinton.

Most House Democrats voted against the \$70 billion, but still, (and there are certainly lots of mitigating factors) it is impossible to escape the conclusion that the new Congress failed to do what it was elected to do, end Bush's quagmire in Iraq. It is unclear when the Congress will take up Bush's request for the additional \$230 billion -- with the \$70 billion they just handed to Bush, they can reasonably delay and action until February or beyond. This means the vote could come around the time of the 5th anniversary of the invasion.

We should be very encouraged about the victory on killing all funding for the Reliable Replacement Warhead. The Administration is now, thanks to us, 0 for 3 on new nukes programs (we've killed the nuclear bunker buster, proposed "mini-nuke", and now RRW). Our challenge now is to shift from defeating Bush's Dr. Strangelove schemes to promoting our positive, proactive agenda for the total worldwide abolition of nuclear weapons, and we have helped create the political space for progress on that issue. (Information taken from National Peace Action and United For Peace & Justice's websites)

On January 17, Rep. Barbara Lee (D-CA) introduced with six other co-sponsors the "Iran Diplomatic Accountability Act of 2008." The new resolution, H.R. 5056, is the first of its kind to call for the appointment of a high-level United States representative or special envoy for Iran for the purpose of easing tensions and normalizing relations between the United States and Iran. The "Findings" section of the resolution takes into account the conclusions of the most recent National Intelligence Estimate on Iran. While the resolution finds that serious concerns remain over Iran's intentions regarding its nuclear program, it also concludes a diplomatic solution that includes direct, unconditional, bilateral, and comprehensive talks with the Government of Iran is the only way to resolve long-standing tensions between the United States and Iran.

Following the release of the new **Government Accountability Office report** on the efficacy of sanctions, Rep. Christopher Shays (R-CT) introduced on January 18 a new resolution, H.R. 5084, to require the Secretary of State to conduct ongoing assessments of the effectiveness of sanctions against Iran. H.R. 5084 was referred to the House Committees on Foreign Affairs, Financial Services, Oversight and Government Reform, Ways and Means, and Agriculture. The text of the resolution is not yet available, but I will post it when it is.

On January 12, Representatives Walter Jones (R-NC) and Jack Murtha (D-PA) introduced **H.J. Res. 14** requiring Congressional authorization prior to a military attack on Iran, absent a national emergency created by an attack by Iran. The resolution currently has 66 co-sponsors. It is unclear whether the co-sponsors will try to introduce it as an amendment to must-pass legislation in 2008 and also unclear if it will come up for a vote as a stand alone measure.

Senator Robert Byrd (D-WV) introduced **S.Res.39** expressing the sense of the Senate on the need for approval by the Congress before any offensive military action by the United States against another nation. Though the resolution does not specifically mention Iran, it is meant to prevent a military conflict without prior Congressional approval. Senator Byrd

introduced the resolution as amendments to several must-pass bills in 2007, but none of the amendments ever came to a vote on the floor.

Representative Barbara Lee introduced **H.R. 770** on January 31 to prohibit the use of funds to carry out any covert action for the purpose of causing regime change in Iran or to carry out any military action against Iran in the absence of an imminent threat, in accordance with international law and constitutional and statutory requirements for congressional authorization. It was subsequently referred to the Committees on Foreign Affairs, Armed Services, and Intelligence. The resolution currently has 19 co-sponsors and unclear if it will come up for a vote in 2008

Senator Jim Webb (D-VA) introduced **S. 759** on March 5 to prohibit the use of funds for military operations in Iran without Congressional authorization. It currently has three co-sponsors.

On July 19, Rep. Mark Udall (D-CO) introduced **H.R. 3119**, the House companion legislation to Senator Jim Webb's S. 759. The bill currently has 27 co-sponsors. It is unclear whether the co-sponsors will try to introduce the bill as an amendment to must-pass legislation in 2008 and also unclear if it will come up for a vote as a stand alone measure.

On October 25, Representatives Walter Jones (R-NC), Wayne Gilchrest (R-MD) and Ron Paul (R-TX) and Bill Delahunt (D-MA) announced **H. J. Res. 53**, a bill to restore the constitutional checks and balances over declaring war. Although the bill does not specifically mention Iran, it is clearly meant to **reassert the Congressional war-making power to prevent such a conflict.**

On October 25, Senator Dick Durbin (D-IL) introduced **S. Res. 356**, which currently has 13 co-sponsors, more than any other Senate **resolution on preventing war with Iran**. Current co-sponsors are: Akaka, Bingaman, Brown, Byrd, Clinton, Dodd, Dorgan, Feinstein, Johnson, Murray, Sanders, Stabenow and Whitehouse. The bill has been referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations, but the Senators may look for other opportunities in 2008 to introduce it to must pass legislation. Senator Durbin's goal is to attract a large group of co-sponsors in order to make it clear that many Senators are wary of a military conflict with Iran, at least not without prior Congressional approval.

Presidential candidate Senator Barack Obama (D-IL) introduced **S.J.Res. 23** on November 2 to clarify that the use of force against Iran is "not authorized by the Authorization for the Use of Military Force Against Iraq,

any resolution previously adopted, or any other provision of law.” The resolution was subsequently referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations and it does not have any co-sponsors. Representative Neil Abercrombie (D-HI) introduced the House companion legislation, **H.J.Res. 64**. It was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs and currently has 16 co-sponsors. Neither resolution is likely to come up for a vote in 2008.

Following the passage of the **Kyl-Lieberman amendment** to the Fiscal Year 2008 Defense Authorization bill expressing the sense of Senate that the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps should be labeled a terrorist organization, Senator Jim Webb (D-VA) initiated and **sent a letter to Bush signed by 30 senators** emphasizing “that no offensive military action would be justified against Iran without the express consent of Congress.” Meanwhile, Senator Chuck Hagel (R-NE) **sent a personal letter to Bush on October 17** embracing a more comprehensive approach, urging the president to “offer direct, unconditional and comprehensive talks with Iran.”

Sanctions and Divestment Bills

Representative Mark Kirk (R-IL) introduced **H.R. 2880** to enhance the Iran Sanctions Act by expanding economic sanctions against Iran to include the importation of refined petroleum. The bill has currently has 34 co-sponsors and has been referred to the Committees on Foreign Affairs, Financial Services, Oversight and Government Reform, and Ways and Means. It is unclear whether the resolution will come up for a vote in 2008.

On July 31, the House passed **H.R. 957** by a vote of 415-11. The **resolution adds to the list of those that can be sanctioned** for making investments that increase Iran's ability to develop its petroleum resources.

On July 31, the House of Representatives passed **H.R. 2347**, the **Iran Sanctions Enabling Act**, by a vote of 408-6, despite opposition from the Secretaries of State and Treasury. The bill will establish a federal list of companies that have direct investments in Iran's energy sector and remove specific legal barriers to enable mutual fund and corporate pension fund managers to cut ties with these listed companies if they choose to do so. The bill also provides federal authority for state and local governments that choose to divest their public pension funds and calls on the U.S. government to list companies with more than \$20 million invested in Iran's energy sector. The Senate companion bill, **S. 1430**, was introduced by Senators Barack Obama (D-IL) and Sam Brownback (R-KS) and

subsequently referred to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs. It is unclear whether it will come up for a vote in 2008, but there are forces pushing for its passage.

On September 25, the **Iran Counter-Proliferation Act of 2007, H.R. 1400**, was voted on **Suspension** and passed 397-16. Four Republicans and 12 Democrats voted against the measure, with 20 Members not voting. It should be noted that during the floor debate of the bill, not a single Member of Congress stood up to speak in opposition of the bill. Though the bill expresses that it is the Sense of Congress that "the United States should use diplomatic and economic means to resolve the Iranian nuclear problem," the bill focuses on imposing broader unilateral sanctions without calling for the implementation of a more comprehensive diplomatic strategy for resolving all outstanding issues with Iran. In other words, the bill focuses on employing bigger "sticks" in dealing with Iran rather than embracing a comprehensive approach.

Representative Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL) introduced **H.Con.Res. 257** on November 13. The resolution expresses concern regarding arms transfers to Iran and Syria by the Russian Federation and entities in the

What to Expect in 2008

In August, the Bush Administration announced its intention to sell up to \$20 billion in weapons to Saudi Arabia and other Gulf Cooperation Council countries and justified the move in part as way to protect allies in the region from a "growing Iranian threat." Such a deal must be approved by Congress and it has the authority to block major arms sales by passing a joint resolution of disapproval. Several House members, including Nadler (D-NY), Weiner (D-NY), Engel (D-NY) Woolsey (D-CA), Lee (D-CA) and Ferguson (R-NY) announced their intention to try to block the sale, but so far Congress has not yet taken up the issue. It is possible they could do so, however, in 2008.

It is likely that Congress will continue to press for further unilateral sanctions on Iran. All of the sanctions bills passed by the House in 2007 still await Senate approval before they can become law. Expect to also see new resolutions that would further expand existing sanctions.

Congress and the Bush administration will also likely continue hyping the threat of the Iranian ballistic missile program and use it as a justification for developing and deploying a missile defense system in Eastern Europe. Though the funding was cut for Fiscal Year 2008, the Administration will more than likely request it for 2009 and some members of Congress will work to ensure it remains in the Defense Appropriations bill.

The release of the **National Intelligence Estimate on Iran** in December gave impetus to a growing movement of **members of Congress** calling on the Bush administration to pursue sustained, direct, unconditional diplomacy with Iran. Congressional efforts in this area should be bolstered as it has been the key missing strategy for resolving tensions with Iran.

After missing the Dec. 31 deadline, North Korea has given no indication when it might submit a full declaration of its nuclear programs, the United States said yesterday (see [GSN](#), Jan. 2). North Korea said today that it provided the United States with a list of its nuclear programs in November, disputing claims that it has missed the Dec. 31 deadline, the Associated Press reported (see [GSN](#), Jan. 3).

Czech Prime Minister Mirek Topolanek said he believes his government will wrap up negotiations on hosting a U.S. missile defense radar base before the Bush administration leaves office early next year, Agence France-Presse reported yesterday (see [GSN](#), Dec. 12).