

A ‘Symbiotic Pathology’ Threatens U.S. Survival

by Nancy Spannaus

Nov. 17—“A symbiotic pathology between Executive overreach and Congressional abdication,” identified by Sen. Tim Kaine (D-Va.) in a Nov. 12 speech at the Woodrow Wilson Center in Washington, D.C., threatens to destroy the United States in the very short term. Specifically, this symbiosis is leading toward a lethal escalation of the Obama Administration’s war in Southwest Asia, as well as confrontation with Russia and China; both policies could result in nuclear war.

The pathological players are the lawless, narcissistic President Obama, on the one side, and the pro-war fascist wing dominating the Republican Party, on the other. The only hope for the United States, and the world, is that a grouping of American patriots comes forward to dump *both* these players, and restore constitutional government and principles in the country. Under such conditions, the United States could be brought into an alliance with the anti-war, pro-development global coalition being led by the BRICS nations, and a lasting war avoidance policy based on cooperation around high-technology development could be put in place.

The War in Iraq and Syria

The U.S. policy and deployment in Iraq and Syria, in the war against the Islamic State (IS/ISIS/ISIL), is one of the major items on Congress’s agenda during the current lame duck session. President Obama himself, on the day after the election, announced his intention to send an additional 1,500 troops to Iraq, bringing the total number to 3,000 in his current illegal, undeclared

war. A bill authorizing expenditures of \$5 billion for this deployment is expected to be submitted by the Administration.

What is not clear, however, is whether the Administration intends to submit an Authorization for Use of Military Force (AUMF) for the war in Iraq and Syria during the lame duck session. During a hearing at the House Armed Services Committee on Nov. 13, Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel said he didn’t know specifically whether the White House was going to send up an AUMF for Congressional approval. In fact, there is every reason to believe that Obama—relying on the insane pro-war sentiment that dominates the Republican Party majority in both Houses of the new Congress—will wait until the new Congress convenes on Jan. 3, 2015, as House Speaker John Boehner has called for.

Should he wait for the new Congress, Obama could count on warhawk Republicans such as Senators John McCain (R-Ariz.) and Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.), as the Republicans will take control over the Senate. Both have excoriated the President for failing to pursue an even more rabid policy of regime change globally, not only with Syria, but also against nuclear power Russia.

There are ongoing discussions between Congress and the President on what to do about an AUMF and the course of the war. Several resolutions have previously been introduced into the Congress, calling for authorization of the use of force, with varying restrictions. What has *not* been done, despite an overwhelming vote July 25 by Congress that Obama should “not deploy or



Sen. Tim Kaine: When Congress doesn't debate, "you not only violate the Constitution, but you force people to risk their lives without a consensus that the mission is in the national interest." Rep. Walter Jones asked Defense Secretary Hagel and JCS Chairman Dempsey to provide written opinions on how the war would end and what the U.S. hopes to accomplish. Rep. John Garamendi: "Bottom line here is the obligation that we have under the Constitution to declare war."



maintain United States armed forces in a sustained combat role in Iraq without specific statutory authorization for such use," is to challenge the President on his defiance of that vote—his ongoing war deployment in Iraq and Syria.

That deployment is, in fact, an impeachable offense.

Voices of Sanity

Yet precious few Republicans, many of whom are willing to talk about impeachment, are raising their voices against expanding the Iraq war policy. In the lead is Sen. Rand Paul (R-Ky.), who has declared unequivocally that "this war is now illegal," and demanded that Congress fulfill its duty to act. On the House side, the lead voice is Rep. Walter Jones (R-N.C.), who co-sponsored the July 25 resolution, and has opposed the Executive branch's usurpation, by both Republican and Democratic Presidents, of Congress's constitutional responsibility to declare war.

Representative Jones took a slightly different tack in his questioning of Secretary of Defense Hagel and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Martin Dempsey at the Nov. 13 House hearing referenced above. He characterized President Obama's strategy in Iraq as resembling that of then-Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld in 2002-03, in that it got the U.S. into a war that wasn't nec-

essary (and also under false pretenses—ed.). Jones also reminded Hagel that, as a Senator, Hagel had opposed Rumsfeld's war in 2002, and also the "surge" in 2007.

After citing James Madison on the exclusive authority of Congress to declare, and judge the causes of, war, Jones went on to say that he hopes Congress "will look seriously at what is our responsibility."

Then Jones asked Hagel and Dempsey to provide, in written statements for the record, their opinions

on how this war would end and what end the U.S. hopes to accomplish. "Please explain to the American people and to this Congress how this war is going to end someday, whether we are advisors or we're fighting. And I hope to God we're not fighting, and I hope we do not give the President a new AUMF," Jones said.

"But this, again, looks like we're going down the same road that Secretary Donald Rumsfeld told us we had to do, we *had* to do, and yet we had no end point to that as well."

No Legal Authority for War

Barack Obama, even more flagrantly than George W. Bush, claims that he can launch war on his own authority, and has done so repeatedly—from Libya, to Syria, and even to Russia, which he has attacked through sanctions and supporting "color revolutions"—against all standards of international law.

Apparently believing that an illegal war started by a Democratic President is more acceptable than an illegal war started by a Republican one, the Democratic Party has generally given Obama a free ride. The only other explanation of its behavior is cowardice.

Senator Kaine, however, has become increasingly outspoken against the President, with whom he previously had a close relationship. Kaine's Nov. 13 speech

at the Wilson Center featured a sharp attack on both the President's unconstitutional war in Iraq, and the deadly abstention by Congress on the issues of war and peace.

After describing the constitutional requirement and the legal importance of Congress—not the President—deciding whether to commit the nation to war, Kaine said that in his view, “from about mid-August to now, there has not been legal authority that is sufficient to authorize this mission. . . . We have been engaged in a war that is not about imminent defense of the United States, without legal authority . . . there is currently no legal authority to support the action against ISIL unless and until Congress comes in, has the debate, and votes. That’s why I’ve introduced a resolution in the short term. We should deal with it right away.”

Kaine then went into his discussion of the “symbiotic pathology between Executive overreach and Congressional abdication that has put us in a situation where Presidents like President Obama—and you can go all the way back—are more prone to start things unilaterally, without Congress.”

“How dare we,” Kaine said, “ask people to risk [their lives and sanity in war] if we’re not willing to do our job to have a debate in front of the American public and then put our thumb-print on the mission and say, ‘This is in the national interest’? What, we’re afraid of having that debate? We don’t want to say it’s in the national interest, but still go risk your life? That seems to me to be the height of public immorality. . . . What could you do that would be more publicly immoral than ordering people to risk their lives without having a discussion about whether the mission is worth it or not? That’s what’s really at stake, and, when you don’t have Congress have the debate, you not only violate the Constitution, but you force people to risk their lives without a consensus that the mission is in the national interest.”

During the question-and-answer period at the Wilson Center, Kaine intimated that, if Congress did not get a vote on the war authorization, he and “some others” would take what action they could to stop the war.

The illegality of the war was also challenged last week by Rep. John Garamendi (D-Calif.). In the House Armed Service Committee hearing, Garamendi asked General Dempsey whether the United States is engaged in a war in Iraq and Syria. When Dempsey answered, “Yes, we are at war with ISIL,” Garamendi said, “Since that is the case, would you, Secretary, please provide in writing the most recent legal authority for the United

States to conduct such a war?” He went on to note that there had been talk about the War Powers Act, but that this seems to be no longer the case, as we’re now past the 90 days within which that Act requires the President to seek authorization from Congress, and the U.S. is still at war.

“Bottom line here,” Garamendi said, “is the obligation that we have under the Constitution to declare war. . . . We ought not wait until the next Congress.”

- Who Wants War?

According to Sen. Chris Murphy (D-Conn.), in a statement on MSNBC Nov. 11, “There’s a growing recognition on both sides of the aisle” that an AUMF debate “must happen.” Murphy himself thinks this must occur in the lame duck session, because “it’s impossible at this point to ignore the constitutional imperative,” and because “it is incumbent upon us as a nation to make sure that we . . . never go into war divided.”

According to a *Politico* story of Nov. 14, Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Robert Menendez (D-N.J.) is working with the incoming chair, Sen. Bob Corker (R-Tenn.), to draft a bill authorizing the war.

Meanwhile the international political climate is being shaped to try to assure that war goes ahead to the specifications of the British Empire—with a new beheading by IS, and the leaking of stories about the Obama Administration’s convergence with the policies of Turkey and Saudi Arabia, toward escalating war against Syrian President Bashar al-Assad (who has the only credible on-the-ground fighting force to confront IS). *EIR*’s sources report, however, that no decision has yet been made on such a policy shift, and the military command strongly opposes it.

Nor can a decision for war, made between Obama and the warmongering Republicans, be separated from the overall British imperial policy of confrontation against all nation-states—and especially the strengthening alliance of the BRICS. All-out war in Southwest Asia would mean war against Syria and Iran, as stepping stones to attacks on Russia—as Moscow well understands.

Real American patriots are needed to break this “symbiotic pathology,” before it’s too late. The only way to destroy IS is for the United States to ally with Russia, China, Syria, and Iran—and simultaneously break the control of the British Empire’s game. That means dumping the policies of Obama and the war-hawk Wall Street Republicans now.