

WITHOUT A DOUBT, WORSE THAN NIXON

[NB: check the byline, thanks. /~Rayne]

On March 18, 1969, the U.S. military launched a secret program authorized by then-president Richard Nixon. Code named Operation Menu, the U.S. bombed targets in Cambodia until May 26, 1970.

The program was never authorized by Congress; information about the bombings were withheld from both Congress and the American public.

It was a gross abuse of executive power and the basis for drafting an Article of Impeachment against Nixon. The article did not receive adequate support in Congress because a number of members of Congress felt they had not done enough to restrain Nixon with regard to the Vietnam War, and public opinion had not yet shifted firmly against Nixon because of the Watergate scandal.

Three of six Articles of Impeachment did receive approval, however; the unauthorized bombing of Cambodia emphasized the abuses of power delineated in the approved articles.

Fortunately for Nixon, Republican members of Congress took him aside and told him they had the votes to impeach and remove him if he didn't resign. Nixon resigned on August 9, 1974, avoiding hearings and heightened scrutiny of his abuses of his office.

Donald Trump authorized the bombing of Iran. His secretary of defense did not restrain him by requiring an Authorization for Use of Military Force. Neither of them made much effort to keep the mission secret as it launched Saturday as Trump posted about it to his personal Truth Social account.

Congress was not informed of the operation in order to debate an AUMF. Congress received testimony from Trump's director of national

intelligence Tulsi Gabbard on March 25 in front of the Senate Intelligence Committee, in which she said,

... The IC continues to assess that Iran is not building a nuclear weapon and Supreme Leader Khamenei has not authorized the nuclear weapons program that he suspended in 2003. The IC continues to monitor closely if Tehran decides to reauthorize its nuclear weapons program.

In the past year, we have seen an erosion of a decades-long taboo in Iran on discussing nuclear weapons in public, likely emboldening nuclear weapons advocates within Iran's decision-making apparatus. Iran's enriched uranium stockpile is at its highest levels and is unprecedented for a state without nuclear weapons. ...

There were exchanges with the media and public between the administration about Gabbard's statement regarding the enriched uranium stockpile. If the status of that stockpile had changed with a firm move toward arming a weapon occurred, there has been no effort to communicate that with the Senate Intelligence or Armed Services Committees.

The American public was lied to by Trump who announced this past Thursday, "Based on the fact that there's a substantial chance of negotiations that may or may not take place with Iran in the near future, I will make my decision whether or not to go within the next two weeks."

Trump waffled publicly about U.S. military action against Iran, saying, "'You don't know that I'm going to even do it,'" Trump told one reporter. "I may do it. I may not do it. Nobody knows what I'm going to do. ... " I have ideas as to what to do, but I haven't made a final [call] ... I like to make a final decision one second before it's due, you know?"

Trump failed to request approval from Congress before making that final call some time between Thursday and Saturday.

~~It's possible the call had already been made and~~ Trump's apparent indecision was a head fake. An analyst with Haaretz seemed to think this was a possible strategy. EDIT: The Atlantic published an article at 12:29 a.m. ET Sunday in which they reported Trump had already decided to bomb Iran *on Wednesday*, before his public statement about a two-week window of decision.

Head fake or no, Trump violated the Constitution's Article I, Section 8 which grants Congress the power to declare war. It is not a power granted to the executive who "shall take Care that the Laws be faithfully executed" under Article II, Section 3.

Trump has already repeatedly failed under the Take Care clause. This first strike against Iran conducted without Congressional approval should be a road too far.

The blowback from this may be enormous, beginning with global economic effects due to instability in the fossil fuels market and may include terrorist or overt military strikes against U.S. targets, perhaps by way of surrogate networks Gabbard also testified about on March 25.

Trump is without a doubt worse than Nixon. He should be impeached – again, yes – and this time removed from office.