

Congress Alone Has the Power To Declare War

Rep. Walter B. Jones (R-N.C.) held a press conference Dec. 19, in Washington, “regarding a letter that he and a bipartisan group of congressmen sent to President Obama strongly urging him to come to Congress before committing American troops to combat in Syria,” as stated in his announcement the previous day.

Jones was joined at the press conference by Rep. Charles Rangel (D-N.Y.), Col. W. Patrick Lang (ret.), Lt. Col. Tony Shaffer (ret.), and Jeffrey Steinberg of EIR.

Here is a transcript of their remarks.

Rep. Walter Jones: My name is Walter Jones, and I represent the Third Congressional District in North Carolina. It’s the home of Camp Lejeune Marine Base, Cherry Point Marine Air Station, and Seymour Johnson Airforce Base. We have over 65,000 retired military in our district, veterans and retirees.

The reason we’re having this press conference today, is that I am very concerned, going back to March 19 of 2011, when President Obama bypassed Congress to bomb Libya. Yes, Qaddafi was an evil man, but how many evil men are there around the world? If you decide to bomb another country and do not come to Congress, then, in my opinion, that is wrong. Because we have a Constitution in this country that gives the authority to Congress to declare war.

I think about the fact that the President went into Libya—the chaos and the tragedy of that action. I would agree that Qaddafi was an evil man. He needed to be removed, but not by our country, by going in and deciding to bomb Libya. It has led to chaos in Libya. It has led to the death of an ambassador, three of our military, who were trying to protect the ambassador.

And one other point, very quickly: I was so taken aback when I was listening to CSPAN, driving home in



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Rep. Walter Jones holds up a statement from Veterans for Peace opposing military intervention in Syria, at his press conference Dec. 19.

eastern North Carolina, on the radio, when—I’m going to paraphrase—when Senator [Jeff] Sessions from Alabama asked Secretary of Defense [Leon] Panetta if he would come to Congress and ask for a declaration of war, or at least support of a resolution, to send troops overseas—and I’m paraphrasing now—Panetta basically said that he would go to our foreign friends first, before he would consult the Congress.

Where is the Constitution? Where is the role of Congress? We have really become quite inept, when it comes to sending our young men and women to war.

Letter to the President

So that’s the reason that six members of Congress—myself, Ron Paul [R-Tex.], Mo Brooks [R-Ala.], Michael Michaud [D-Me.], Justin Amash [R-Mich.], and Charlie Rangel—signed a letter to the President. And I read just the first paragraph:

“We are writing to strongly urge you *not* to once

again lead our nation into war without authorization from Congress. Your recent threat of ‘consequences’ about Syria using chemical weapons is eerily reminiscent of the calls for war with Iraq to deal with their ‘weapons of mass destruction.’ We would like to remind you that the power to declare war remains vested in the United States Congress. No resolution from the United Nations or NATO can supersede the power carefully entrusted with the representatives of the American people.

“If your administration believes committing American troops to Syria is essential, the case must be presented to Congress. Outside of an actual or imminent attack on America, the only precursor to war can be the authorization of Congress. We call on you to abide by our Constitution, and rely on our country’s representatives to decide when war is necessary. There is no greater responsibility than to send our sons and daughters to war. That responsibility remains with the United States Congress.”

I must say that I sincerely believe that the President, if he’s going to send our troops, or a number of our troops, to Syria, it must come to Congress for a debate, and hopefully, a vote of “yes, we agree,” or “no, we do not agree.” That’s the purpose of the letter.

One other point, and then I’m going to introduce Jeff Steinberg. Veterans for Peace oppose intervention in Syria. I hope you will get a copy of this [VFP statement opposing U.S. military intervention in Syria—ed.]. I am not a veteran, so any time a veteran of any war speaks out, I want to say thank you, first, for your service to our nation, and second, I want to say, thank you for getting involved in this policy decision. Because no one understands better than someone who’s been to war, the pain of war.

And it reminds me, quite frankly, of a—Rudyard Kipling wrote a book about the epitaph of war, or a poem. And his son was killed in World War I. Prior to that, Kipling had been a very strong supporter of empires around the world, built by England. But when he lost his son, it changed his whole attitude. And the one sentence quote: “If any question why we died, tell them that our fathers lied.”

I mention that today, not to say that the Administration is lying—I want to make that clear to the press here today—but Iraq was an unnecessary war. The continuation in Afghanistan is unnecessary, and we do not need to get involved in the Syrian situation. Diplomatically? Okay. But let’s not jeopardize one soldier,



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Rep. Charlie Rangel: “It’s actually reached the point that Presidents just don’t give a darn about the Congress.”

one Marine, one Navy [man], one airman—it’s just not worth it.

With that, again, I want to close. I’m not going to read from this [VFP statement]—we’ve got handouts. I hope you will pick up the “Veterans for Peace oppose military intervention in Syria.” I hope you will pick that up.

And I timed it just right, as I conclude: Come here, Mr. Rangel.

This is a man that I have the utmost respect for. He has been a friend of my father, who served here 26 years ago, for 26 years; he’s extended that friendship to me, and I don’t know a man. . . He’s a veteran of the Korean War, and his being here today means so much to our nation, to our concern about sending our young men and women to war, without Congress taking action, that I am pleased to introduce—and after Mr. Rangel speaks, Jeff Steinberg will come forward—I am pleased to introduce Charlie Rangel. God bless you, sir.

‘We’re Here To Uphold the Constitution’

Rep. Charles Rangel: Well, I’d like to thank you for relieving some of the guilt that we as members of Congress should have. Knowing that, day after day, week after week, your bold voice will be heard, makes it difficult for a lot of us. Because we’re here to uphold the Constitution. There are no courses in school, in universities, that allow *any* President to send our young men and women off into harm’s way, without coming to the Congress.

Now, that's the way it is, and that's the way it has been; and yet, we have so many tens of thousands of families that have lost their loved ones since World War II. And it's actually reached the point that Presidents just don't give a darn about the Congress.

That may not be too bad, but how do we go to the funerals of our constituents? What do you say when you look in the casket, and see a young man or a young woman, and the family clings to you, because you're so . . . you're a symbol of the United States government. They want so badly to hear that their son or their daughter was a patriot, was a hero.

And you know, once that flag goes up, of course you are a hero. But how do you answer the question as to why they were there? Why were they *there*? And that's the painful stain that we have on our history.

Now, it's very simple. I am just as patriotic as the next guy, and when someone says that our nation is in trouble, that our national security is threatened, the way I look at it, it's time to call up our troops, and have a draft. That's the way I look at it. And if you cannot find it in your heart, to ask every American to step forward and make some sacrifice, then we should not be involved in it! It means clearly it's not in our national security interest.

I challenge anybody to come to this country and enjoy all of its benefits, and then, we get into trouble, and you say, "Hey, I'm with the United States of America, but don't ask for an increase in taxes, and don't put my son or grandson in jeopardy, and, for God's sake, don't put *me* in jeopardy." That is wrong, and that is un-American.

So what is my colleague saying? Don't go off and fight wars? He doesn't even say don't go off and fight wars for oil. He just says, if it's important enough to go to war, come to the Congress. And you know what that means? It means, come to the American people. Is that asking too much? To say before anyone gets hurt, wounded, or dies, that we ask our people back home, "Do you think it's worth it?"

And so let me thank you, and your dad, and everyone for coming out—it's remarkable the small number of people. I couldn't even find this room. Honestly, when I saw Cannon [Office Building], I thought it was in 345, the big room. And if sending men and women off to combat is this important, and I end up in saying, where are the ministers? Where are the rabbis? Where are the imams?

Because I hear their voices with same sex mar-

riages—it's a terrible thing, the world's going to come to an end. I hear their voices with men who like men, and women who like women, and that's going to break up marriage in the United States, what's left of it. And I know they bless guns, wherever the guns go, and I know the chaplains, they carry guns too, just in case some of the enemy gets in God's works' way—you shoot them.

But on this issue, human beings that are born, I would like to believe that they would think it's outrageous, immoral, unconstitutional.

Jeffrey Steinberg: Thank you all for being here. I just want to take a couple of minutes to introduce two distinguished speakers.

First of all, Col. W. Patrick Lang, a retired U.S. Army colonel, Special Forces veteran, who then went on to a long and distinguished career in the Defense Intelligence Agency. And Col. Lang at one point was in charge of all DIA operations in the entire Middle East and North Africa. He's probably visited every country in the region on many occasions; and since his retirement from the DIA, he's been involved in consulting with various government agencies, and continues to keep a very intensive focus on the events in the region, in a very outspoken way. He has a blog, *Sic Semper Tyrannis* [<http://turcopolier.typepad.com/>], which is one of the most widely read blogs, with very in-depth participation from retired and active duty U.S. military personnel. And it's worth going to.

Secondly, Lt. Col. Tony Shaffer, [had] a 25-year distinguished career in the U.S. Army, in various assignments, combat assignments and intelligence assignments, and he too subsequently went to work for the DIA for a number of years, and as well, has been very active and outspoken since his retirement, in exposing some of the problems that have come up in the course of the recent series of undeclared wars.

So, with that, I'd like to invite Col. Lang to come up.

'This Is Late 2002 Again'

Col. W. Patrick Lang: Good morning, folks. I've been afflicted with something called Bell's Palsy over the last year, so if I'm a little indistinct, please bear with me.

I spoke at a town meeting gathering in Lexington, Va., in the late, late part of 2002—that's where my alma mater is located—and I told people in the audience that if you're not paying attention, perhaps you don't know that the train has already left the station. That we are al-



Col. Patrick Lang (ret): “The picture being painted in the West of how close the Assad government is to falling, is grossly exaggerated.”

ready on our way to war in Iraq. And a number of people still remember my saying that. They thought it was a strange thing for me to say at the time, but it turned out to be correct.

Well, in my opinion, this is late 2002 again. It has come again to us. Because you can look across the spectrum of think-tank-generated opinion at various meetings in Washington—which I am sometime invited to—or at the general tenor of stuff in the mainstream media, and it all kind of says the kind of thing that was being said in late 2002. There is a great deal of exaggeration going on. But a couple of things need to be pointed out about this.

One is that, in contradiction to what is being said in all this propaganda, in fact, the outcome in Syria is not at all certain. If you read foreign newspapers, you might have seen in the British newspaper *The Independent* a few days ago, an article by a man named [Patrick] Cockburn, who wrote from Damascus about what actual conditions are like on the ground in Syria, based on having been there for two weeks. He said that he got in a car and drove 100 miles north to the city of Homs without any interference whatever; he didn’t see anything of the war going on; he talked to people in and around the city, which has, in the past, been a hotbed of Sunni activism; and came to the conclusion that the picture being painted in the West of how close the Assad government is to falling, is grossly exaggerated.

And this is an extremely significant fact.

The other thing is, the government of the United States is clearly embarked on a course which, if followed, will lead to military intervention in Syria. How can I tell that? Well, it is our stated policy that regime change is the desired policy of the United States. That’s been established for some time now.

Recently we recognized the various groups of the Syrian opposition, as being the official government of Syria. Based on that kind of a proceeding, even though there’s no UN action on this that I can think of at the moment, it would be possible for that government to ask for our intervention, and we could claim that it is a legitimate action.

The next thing about this that is interesting, is that among the coalition of groups that are fighting the Assad government, is one called the Jabhat al-Nusra, and this is an offshoot of al-Qaeda worldwide, the very essence of our enemy spread across the world, projected into Syria. They’re among the leading fighters against the Assad government.

The United States has condemned this group as a foreign enemy, but, in spite of that, the leaders of the rest of the guerrillas fighting Assad, have come forth across the world to demand that we rescind that kind of condemnation of al-Nusra, because they are in fact their friends. So the other thing that’s clear here, is that if the Assad government falls, we have no idea really at all, what kind of government would succeed it, at all.

When you consider all of this put together, you have to ask yourself why these two gentlemen from the House of Representatives are not completely correct, especially in a situation in which the outcome is uncertain, and what the successor regime might be, how inimical to our interests it might be. Why on Earth would the government not go to the Congress for approval for deployment of U.S. forces?

And as things are going now, it seems inevitable to me that if we continue on this path, the U.S. government will feel that, rather than be defeated in this policy at this point, it will have to use military force. Which would probably take the form of air intervention and a no-fly zone, direct resupply of the rebel groups, things of that kind.

I don’t think that after what has happened in Iraq and Afghanistan, they are likely to try to occupy Syria with a COIN [counterinsurgency—ed.] campaign. That has proven not to be a not enterprise.



Lt. Col. Tony Shaffer (ret.): “We need to look again at what’s in our interest as the American people.”

I will be quiet now. I leave this to my colleague. Thank you.

‘Syria Is Not a Threat’

Lt. Col. Tony Shaffer: Good morning. I’m Tony Shaffer. Thank you for this opportunity to speak.

Yesterday, I listened to SecDef Panetta very hard. As a matter of fact, I was driving, and he had made comments at the National Press Club, and he called for Congress to “do the right thing.” And what he really meant was, to write a blank check so they could do whatever they want. I would find it almost insulting from a former colleague, that they’re calling on you just to blindly fund what they’re doing. And that’s, I think, part of the problem here. We’re talking about a complete lack of accountability.

What Pat [Lang] said is absolutely correct, and let me go through some other factual issues here, that I believe are at play, that we need to be concerned about.

First, the strategy. The strategy that SecDef Panetta laid out yesterday—I did listen hard, and I didn’t hear anything about how Syria fits into any of that, any of the so-called reasonable cuts they want to make, and focus they want to do on 21st-Century security.

Let me be very clear here, and this is something I’ve said in other interviews: The chances of an American citizen having a terrorist attack—it’s infinitely greater that it will be a cyberattack than any terrorist attack.

I’m not saying that terrorism and al-Qaeda are not a

threat. I’m saying that we’re not focusing on the things which really mean something to the American people. There are real threats out there; we’re not focusing on them. Syria is not a threat.

There are issues there that we can deal with, we should deal with, but again, it’s not something we, as the American military, should be intervening in.

Within the context of the current situation, we have to look at what happened in Libya. Libya was a functioning country, for better or for worse, run by a madman, absolutely. *But*, the fact is this: He had weapons of concern; he gave some of those up. My old friend Congressman Curt Weldon [R-Pa.] was involved in that years ago. And the idea was, Qaddafi could turn the page. As a matter of fact, he was actually helping us in the war on terror. And yet, somehow, we decided, well, it’s time to cash it all in. And now we’ve left that country in chaos, where militia—literally—are the ones running the show. I don’t know how that’s good governance. I don’t know how it’s in our best interest to create that level of havoc.

Of the 20,000 surface-to-air missiles which Qaddafi had, about 15,000 are still floating around out there. Let me be very clear about this threat. These missiles are not military grade. Most aircraft now could easily fend off an attack of an SA-7. They have countermeasures. Civilian aircraft do not. So, frankly, the only thing these things—these 15,000 surface-to-air missiles—could be used for, is terrorist attacks against civilian airliners. So, this is what we let loose, and is still out there as a dangling participle in the larger question of national security.

Within the context of the strategy, of what we’re trying to do as a country, again, I don’t know what’s there for us. I look back—I’m a Reagan conservative—and I look back on the lessons from Lebanon, and the Marine barracks. As tragic as that was, we got the message pretty quick: We probably shouldn’t be hanging around somewhere we’re not wanted. And I think that’s what we’re doing here.

There are some other recent lessons which we have not learned well, which we need to look at more closely. Afghanistan. The very networks we used against the Soviets during the Cold War, the Haqqani network in particular, is now being used to great effect against us. And somehow we don’t get that message. And we’re doing the same thing here. We’re stirring up trouble. We’re actually looking at allying ourselves with groups who, as soon as they get our support, and they win,

they're coming after us.

Again, how is that in our interest to do that? The moment you take one side, you've alienated someone else.

So, again, we should look at this as strategy. What does this really mean? What will be the secondary and third-order effects of our decisions to intervene, or use military action? It's not in our interest to do so.

Our job, as a government, as a military, is to protect the American people.

Another thing is constitutionality. Let me hit that real quick. And I'm with Rep. Walter Jones here, and Rep. Rangel, two dear friends. I consider [myself] very close to their attitude about the Constitution.

Accountability. There should be a debate. I'm a warrior. My job has been, for better or for worse, to defend the country for the past 30 years; and ultimately, a warrior's job is to *not* fight, if you can avoid it. But if you're called upon to fight, to do it effectively, efficiently, and quickly: to get the job done so you minimize [the loss of] innocent life.

Part of the deal should be, as Rep. Rangel brought up, is, how do we talk to the parents of kids who have fallen in combat? What is that justification? This is why *Congress*, for better or for worse, has to be part of that debate. It's their job. It's the Constitutional duty of this body to look at why we're doing what we do. They write the freakin' checks. They're our Board of Directors. Therefore the Board of Directors should have full access to all issues relating to the good order and discipline of our military actions in this nation. There's no wiggle room on this. It's very clear.

And this is why it's so important that these members—and their courage should be recognized for what it is. It's doing the right thing when others will not.

So, this is something we all should call upon, the better of our politicians, the better of our leaders, for accountability. I'm not saying we shouldn't fight—as a matter of fact, I've devoted my life to fighting good fights. The idea here is that we should have a debate that involves everybody, the American people, for any military action we decide to take.

Last point: cost. When you look at the cost of this, again, I could almost—let me be totally blunt: If we were going to invade Syria and enrich the American people with wealth beyond imagination, you know, maybe I could see that. But it's not going to happen. There's no such thing as a good war for purposes of profit. I think we learned that out of Iraq.

So, we need to look again at what's in our interest as the American people. What will happen? What will happen if we do something for one side, and the other side takes offense to that?

So, again, to close up. To look at the issues for what they are, we need to look at accountability for action, look at why we do things when we do them, bringing in Congress to debate the issues. And if the call is, after a rigorous debate, to go, then we go. We salute smartly and move out, and do what's necessary to defend the American people.

But in the meantime, that debate has not been had, in any of the past conflicts, within the past four years. Frankly, even a little bit beyond that, if you think about it. The idea is, we have to have Constitutional government, where the Constitution is followed; members whom we elect represent us, represent our interest, and are also held accountable; and they, then, by extension, hold the Executive branch accountable to everything it must do, or fails to do.

It is in our interest as American people to continue this as tradition, because it's the right thing to do. Thank you.

'I Did Not Know We Had Bombed Libya'

Jones: I'd like to make one quick comment, and then we will take questions for Mr. Lang, Col. Shaffer, Jeff Steinberg, Charlie Rangel, and myself.

Let me just, real quickly: It was so sad that, as a member of Congress on the Armed Services Committee—which I am—that the Saturday after we went in, or the day after we went into Libya, I got a call from a local press. I did not even know we had bombed Libya. As a member of Congress on the Armed Services Committee, I did not even know we had bombed Libya, until I got the press call.

This again, is what Mr. Rangel and all the speakers have said. We have a Constitution, and I will never forget when Mr. [Defense Secretary Robert] Gates appeared before the Armed Services Committee, Randy Forbes [R-Va.], who's a fine member of Congress on the Armed Services Committee, asked Mr. Gates—he said, "May I ask you a question? If Libya fired missiles on America, as we did on Libya, would we in America call that an act of war?"

He got no answer.

This is what's wrong with Washington. We are not asked to do our Constitutional duty. So, with that, any questions?



LPAC/Chris Jatzat

Left to right: Col. Pat Lang; Rep. Charlie Rangel; Rep. Walter Jones; Lt. Col. Tony Shaffer; Jeffrey Steinberg.

A Wider Conflict?

WND [World Net Daily]: Given that Syria is an ally of Iran, and also an ally of Russia, if the U.S. does support some form of military intervention in Syria, could it lead to a wider conflict with the Russians, the Chinese, and/or the Iranians?

Rangel: I'm glad you asked such a complicated question, because I haven't the slightest idea. You never know, when you're introducing troops, or weapons, what the reaction's going to be from the other side. And it's that reason why we have to explore and be given answers to those questions that you're raising, as to what is the downside in introducing our kids to that type of danger. And so, I can't answer. These are the questions that the Congress should always be asking anyone, any President, who says we should be prepared to introduce troops.

Jones: I'll speak very quickly. This is the whole issue: We do not understand the unintended consequences of our actions. And this goes way back to the Iraq War. And we have been *neutered* as members of Congress, when it comes to a commitment of our young men and women to die. It's just sometimes unbelievable.

Lang: Well, the paradigm that's being used in the government now, is that U.S. intervention would lead to a rapid fall of the Assad government, and then a coherent, friendly government would be installed. Nobody

knows that to be true at all.

In fact, if you know anything about the history of warfare—look at the beginning of World War I, things like that—once things begin to slide, and come apart, you have no idea where it will end up. But it is likely you would have a prolonged war, because *the Assad government is not about to fall at all*. It has considerable means to continue. And the Russians and the Iranians are so far standing firm behind them [emphasis added].

So, we have no idea what it would lead to. It

could lead to a prolonged regional war. It could lead to something even more dangerous, in fact.

Steinberg: I think that the question that you posed, in terms of Iran and Russia, is not only very much to the point, but it's something that is clearly on the minds of many of the military and political leaders in Russia, and has also been one of the reasons why there's been very strong opposition to any direct U.S. military involvement in Syria, coming from within the ranks of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. And one of the reasons for that, is that they look around the broad global strategic scene, and they see Syria as a potential danger point of conflict with Russia, at a point that there are many vital issues where U.S.-Russian cooperation is actually essential.

The withdrawal from Afghanistan, scheduled for 2014—and Congressman Jones and others in Congress are pressing for that to occur much sooner—will require a great deal of assistance from Russia. There's the war on terrorism. There's the war on drugs. And yes, the Russians are very concerned as well, that the deployment of the Patriot missiles and AWACS systems into Turkey, is not only adjacent to Syria and in the close vicinity of Iran, but it's also very close to the southern border of Russia. And there are disputes over whether or not our ABM deployment is going to be a strategic game-changer in terms of the whole structure of nuclear balance that has prevented a big war from happening since the end of World War II.

So, there are many, many issues on the table here, and it's not just hypothetical. There are voices expressing intensive concern over this. There have been three interviews by top Russian officials, including the Deputy Prime Minister [Dmitri] Rogozin, who was the Russian ambassador to NATO for four years, expressing concern precisely that Syria is a slippery slope towards a larger war, immediately going into Iran, and potentially beyond that.

Shaffer: Just to summarize: We can look at this as a chess game. This is not something where you can simply do A, and then expect B to happen. You're talking about essentially possibilities which go well beyond our ability to probably fully understand.

The other thing I'd like to see us do, is actually be a little smart about letting the Russians take the brunt of anything bad that goes on. One of the things I've noted in several interviews, is, the Russians helped supply all these WMD to the Syrians. If anything happens, we should let the Arab states deal with this, with the Syrians, as well the United Nations deal with Russia, for having supplied this WMD. Let the other folks who always come after us—let the UN and other folks go after the Russians on some of this stuff, and we stay out of it. I mean, they are as responsible as anyone else, for anything bad happening, by the fact they supplied it. It's not our job to be the policeman. Let the UN go in and give them the hard time over stuff.

What Role Should the U.S. Have in Syria?

Jones: We'll take a couple more questions.

Politico: First of all, I'd like to ask you: You suggested that military action in Syria seemed unnecessary. What role would you have the United States play in that situation? Additionally, are you satisfied with the language in the Conference Committee report of the Defense Authorization bill, in the conference committee report on Syria?

Jones: Well, first, I think, as Col. Shaffer just said, that we have, in the national departments, we have a State Department. I think many, many times that maybe because we have a strong military, that too many times we don't do enough when it comes to building relationships around the world, to influence situations like Syria.

I have not had a chance to see the NDAA bill [National Defense Authorization Act], so I can't answer the second part of that question, but as has been said before me, when a nation is financially broke, and here we are talking about a "fiscal cliff"—we don't know if we will

be able to resolve that or not—and we're talking about spending millions and billions of dollars in other countries around the world. It doesn't make any sense to the American taxpayer!

That's why Mr. Rangel and I, and the people behind me, talked about the Constitution, and our responsibility when we commit our young men and women to war: we are not meeting our responsibility; and I blame the Bush Administration for an illegal war in Iraq, and I am disappointed that Mr. Obama would bypass Congress to go bomb Libya, and now set us up to be in a situation where we *might*—hopefully not, but *might* commit troops [in Syria]. So, Congress needs to meet its responsibility.

'There Should Be a Discussion of Impeachment'

Truthdig: What do you think Congress should do if Obama defies your call, and uses military intervention without consulting Congress?

Jones: I think there should be a discussion of impeachment. I really do. I think this has gone on for too long; and I have the greatest respect for Secretary Pannetta, but when I heard him answer Senator Sessions, and say that he would have to consult with our foreign friends before they go to Congress to discuss war, I almost had an accident driving home. I could not believe it. For goodness sake, where is the Congress? *We are three equal branches*. We have not been equal for a long time when it comes to war. I hope it doesn't happen. And I hope this letter that we have sent to President Obama. . .

I respect President Obama. I am a Republican, and I didn't vote for him, but I respect him. He's my President. But I want my President, be it Democrat or Republican, to understand their Constitutional responsibility before they kill our kids.

Lang: I think it's not my place, as a retired officer, to speak on a Constitutional matter like this.

Shaffer: I'll speak, and this is the deal. I took an oath of office, repeated it several times every time I got promoted, so if I'm expected to follow my oath of office, then the President is expected to follow his oath of office.

Jones: Well, let me thank each and every one of you for coming today. Please, with your friends: Do not let the Congress *not* meet its responsibility. If we're going to take any type of movement that could be seen as a military movement, Congress must be part of that discussion.

Thank you for coming, and Merry Christmas.