

**NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
OF
THE AMERICAN LEGION
October 14-15, 2020
Virtual**

Resolution No. 22: Addressing the ‘Forever War’

Origin: National Security Commission

Submitted by: National Security Commission

WHEREAS, Nearly two decades after the fall of the World Trade Center and the attack on the Pentagon, American troops continue to wage war in Iraq, Afghanistan and lesser-known corners of the world; and

WHEREAS, Our servicemembers accomplished their original objectives in Afghanistan long ago at great cost — psychological, physical and spiritual; and

WHEREAS, The war on terrorism — the “forever war” or “endless war,” as many call it — has been used as the basis for an ever-expanding range of military actions; and

WHEREAS, James Madison wrote to Thomas Jefferson in 1798 “The Constitution supposes, what the History of all Governments demonstrates that the Executive is the branch of power most interested in war.... It has accordingly with studied care, vested the question of war in the Legislature”; and

WHEREAS, Congress has mostly abdicated their Article I responsibilities to authorize and oversee military actions by extensive, potentially permanent delegations of congressional war powers; and

WHEREAS, The post-9/11 Authorization for Use of Military Force (AUMF) has now been in effect for over twice as long as the 1964-1971 Gulf of Tonkin Resolution which gave U.S. President Lyndon B. Johnson authorization, without a formal declaration of war by Congress, for the use of conventional military force in Southeast Asia; and

WHEREAS, The Pentagon’s 2018 National Defense Strategy lays out a world where great-power competition, rather than counterterrorism, will drive the department’s decision-making and force structure; and

WHEREAS, Even a growing number of foreign policy officials have begun to advocate a drawdown in the Middle East and Central Asia because of what they call the opportunity costs to America’s mission of balancing against the “revisionist powers” of China and Russia; and

WHEREAS, The emphasis on bolstering a deterrent posture in Asia and Europe should have an attendant downward impact on the U.S. military’s activities in the Middle East, Africa, and the Western Hemisphere; and

WHEREAS, From global pandemics to weak and fragile states, America faces an unprecedented number of complex global threats that cannot be solved by military power alone; and

WHEREAS, A disproportionate flow of resources is going to military and intelligence solutions along with a more general sidelining of diplomacy amid a continuing “militarization of foreign policy”; and

WHEREAS, Addressing the root causes of violent conflict overseas through development and diplomacy helps protect Americans and helps reduce the need to send our servicemembers into harm’s way; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By the National Executive Committee of The American Legion in regular meeting assembled virtually on October 14-15, 2020, That The American Legion urges a renewal of a proper constitutional balance to American foreign policy decision-making by encouraging Congress to repeal and replace outdated Authorizations for Use of Military Force; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion advocate for the importance of a civilian-led approach of elevating development and diplomacy alongside a strong defense in order to build a better, safer world.