



IN OPPOSITION TO THE POST-9/11 USE OF FORCE ACT



REP. BARBARA LEE
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I know that this resolution will pass, although we all know that the president can wage war even without it. However difficult this vote may be, some of us must urge the use of restraint. There must be some of us who say: Let's step back for a moment and think through the implications of our actions today. Let us more fully understand their consequences.

... We must be careful not to embark on an open-ended war with neither an exit strategy nor a focused target. We cannot repeat past mistakes. In 1964, Congress gave President Johnson the power to "take all necessary measures" to prevent further aggression. In so doing, this House abandoned its own constitutional responsibilities and launched our country into years of undeclared war in Vietnam.

Senator Wayne Morse, one of the two lonely votes against the Tonkin Gulf Resolution, declared: "History will record that we have made a grave mistake in subverting and circumventing the Constitution of the United States." I believe that with the next century, future generations will look with dismay and great disappointment upon a Congress which is now about to make such a historic mistake.

Senator Morse was correct, and I fear we make the same mistake today. And I fear the consequences. I have agonized over this vote. But I came to grips with it in the very painful yet beautiful memorial service today at the National Cathedral. As a member of the clergy so eloquently said: "As we act, let us not become the evil that we deplore."

