

## **Statement of Principles**

All Americans have a stake in decisions to go to war, bypass ordinary laws through emergency declarations, or sell weapons to foreign regimes. That is why the founders of the United States created a system that would ensure that the collective judgement of Congress and the President would apply to vital questions of national security.

However, the system of checks and balances enshrined in the Constitution is broken. This is a bipartisan problem, created through generations of presidential power grabs, and by Congress's failure to do its job. As a result, it has become practically impossible for the public to have their say in debates that have huge implications both for the American people and for international peace and security.

In recognition of this problem, we, the undersigned organizations, commit to the following principles and will be working towards structural reforms that restore the balance of national security powers between the President and Congress.

- Military interventions, emergency declarations, and arms sales are areas where the President may act only with authorization or approval from Congress.
- In genuine emergencies where Congress has no time to act, the President may proceed without congressional approval—but only for a limited period of time.
- These national security powers must be used for clearly defined purposes, subject to regular review by Congress, and only as a last resort.

We look forward to working with those who will rise above partisanship and parochial interests to restore these fundamental checks and balances.

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Brennan Center for Justice at NYU Law School  
Bring Our Troops Home  
Center for American Progress  
Common Defense  
Concerned Veterans for America  
Demand Progress  
Foreign Policy for America  
FreedomWorks  
Friends Committee on National Legislation  
Indivisible  
International Crisis Group  
Niskanen Center  
Open Society Policy Center  
Project On Government Oversight  
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