



Spotlight on Paul Ryan posted October 8, 2012

Top Foreign-Affairs, National-Security Votes of the 112th Congress

(This report covers the 20 top foreign-affairs and national-security votes of the 112th Congress, with a spotlight on the record of Rep. Paul Ryan, R-Wis., who is campaigning both as the GOP vice-presidential candidate and to keep his House seat in Wisconsin.)

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WASHINGTON — Libya is a likely center of attention when foreign policy comes up for discussion in the vice-presidential debate Oct. 11 and the remaining presidential encounters Oct. 16 and Oct. 22.

Libya also has raised partisan ire in Congress, where House Republicans last year mounted challenges to U.S. involvement in the NATO-led mission that helped topple Col. Muammar el-Qaddafi, the country's ruler for 42 years. The House even voted twice on GOP-sponsored bids to cut off funding of the U.S. aerial and intelligence operation while combat raged on the ground below. Both amendments were defeated.

The Senate, controlled by Democrats, conducted one vote in 2011 on President Obama's deployment of U.S. forces to the international coalition, defeating an attempt by Sen. Rand Paul, R-Ky., to declare it unconstitutional. Senators this year rejected an amendment by Paul to end U.S. aid to Libya.

This report on the top 20 foreign-affairs and national-security votes of the 112th Congress covers seven votes dealing with Libya. The report details votes cast on overseas issues by Rep. Paul Ryan, R-Wis., the GOP vice-presidential candidate, a congressional budget specialist whose views on foreign affairs are not widely known.

Ryan's most significant vote in recent years on the broad sweep of U.S. foreign policy occurred on June 10, 2009, in the 111th Congress, when he joined just about every other House Republican in opposing a bill to fund State Department operations. The bill later became law because Democrats controlled both chambers and the White House. In part, the bill enlarged the Foreign Service, provided the first overhaul of foreign aid in 50 years, expanded exchanges between U.S. and foreign students and bolstered arms-control and nuclear non-proliferation programs.

Obama counts America's participation in the NATO force as a major success. No U.S. lives were lost in the operation, which began March 19 and ended soon after Qaddafi was killed

on Oct. 20. America for once was not at the point of the spear in that part of the world, it had no boots on the ground and the Pentagon prepared and followed an exit strategy. And the end result of the NATO intervention was to avert a slaughter of civilians and give Libyans a chance to form a democracy, albeit one they have bungled so far.

But the Republican presidential ticket would rather talk about the incident Sept. 11 in which U.S. Ambassador to Libya Christopher Stevens and three American colleagues were killed in an attack on the U.S. consulate in Benghazi. GOP presidential hopeful Mitt Romney faults the administration for failing to heed diplomats' requests for beefed up security at the compound, and also for being slow to acknowledge that the assault was more than just random violence in response to a made-in-America video that defiled the prophet Muhammad.

In a speech Oct. 8 at the Virginia Military Institute in Lexington, Romney said the attack "was likely the work of the same forces that attacked our homeland on September 11th, 2001."

This report also covers votes on national-security and civil-liberties issues having mainly a domestic impact. They concern extending the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA); renewing parts of the USA Patriot Act; advancing a cyber-security bill over Chamber of Commerce objections; requiring terrorist suspects to be tried in military tribunals instead of U.S. civilian courts and denying Americans charged with terrorism access to the federal civilian courts.

Additionally, the report covers a Senate vote on the annual military budget and a House amendment, backed by a coalition of Tea Party members and liberals, that sought unsuccessfully to freeze military spending.

The report also covers votes on withdrawing U.S. troops from Afghanistan; repealing the congressional authorization for the 2003 invasion of Iraq; toughening U.S. economic sanctions on Iran; urging the U.N. to return a U.S. dues overpayment and cutting off aid to Libya, Egypt and Pakistan in response to the killings in Benghazi and mob actions against U.S. facilities.

Here are summaries of the 20 issues along with a listing of how Ryan voted on each one. For contrast, votes by House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., are shown alongside Ryan's.

In the House

1. Afghanistan Withdrawal Members on May 17, 2012, defeated, 113-303, a bid to bar fiscal 2013 funding for war in Afghanistan except for actions necessary to conduct the "safe and orderly withdrawal" of U.S. troops and contractors. A yes vote was to start withdrawing U.S. forces from Afghanistan well ahead of President Obama's timetable. (HR 4310)

Ryan voted no. Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., voted no.

In the Senate

1. Cyber-Security Impasse Senators on Aug. 2, 2012, failed, 52-46, to reach 60 votes for ending Republican blockage of a bill (S 3414) setting up a voluntary system to help companies fend off cyber-attacks that could spread chaos throughout the United States. FBI Director Robert Mueller told Congress the possibility of cyber-attacks rivals terrorist threats as an imminent danger to the U.S. A yes vote backed the bill over U.S. Chamber of Commerce objections that it was a government overreach into the private sector.

In the House

2. 2013 Military Budget Members on July 19, 2012, approved, 326-90, nearly \$606 billion in military appropriations for fiscal 2013, including \$87.7 billion for war in Afghanistan and other theaters and \$35.1 billion for military healthcare. A yes vote was to send the Senate a budget containing a 1.7 percent military pay raise. (HR 5856)
Ryan voted yes. Pelosi voted yes.

3. Defense-Spending Freeze Members on July 19, 2012, voted, 247-167, to freeze the core defense budget for fiscal 2013 at the 2012 level of \$518 billion. Exempted from the freeze were military healthcare, payrolls and war in theaters such as Afghanistan. Eighty-nine Republicans and 158 Democrats backed the measure. A yes vote was to trim the 2013 defense budget (HR 5856) by as much as \$1 billion.

Ryan voted no. Pelosi voted yes.

4. Iran Sanctions Members on Aug. 1, 2012, voted, 421-6, to toughen U.S. economic sanctions on Iran. A yes vote was to pass a bill (HR 1905) denying access to U.S. financial markets to any global entity whose investments or purchases boost Iran's nuclear program.

Ryan voted yes. Pelosi voted yes.

5. Government Spy Powers Members on Sept. 12, 2012, voted, 301-118, to renew the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act through 2017. The law allows the National Security Agency to spy without specific warrants on phone calls, emails and other contacts between foreigners that pass through telecommunications switching points in the U.S. A yes vote was to pass HR 5949.

Ryan did not vote. Pelosi voted yes.

6. U.N. Dues—U.S. Security Members on Feb. 9, 2011, failed, 259-169, to reach a two-thirds majority needed to pass a Republican bill (HR 519) directing the United Nations to return \$179 million in U.S. dues overpayments. The bill was opposed on grounds it would sink a State Department plan to divert \$100 million of the \$179 million to security improvements at U.N. headquarters in New York City. A yes vote was to pass the bill.

Ryan voted yes. Pelosi voted no.

7. Mass-Transit Terrorism Voting 187-234, members on June 2, 2011, defeated a Democratic motion to set aside an additional \$75 million in the fiscal 2012 homeland-security budget (HR 2017) for programs to protect intercity and commuter rail lines and bus services from terrorist attacks. Funding to protect these transportation modes

In the Senate

2. Foreign Aid Cutoff Senators on Sept. 22, 2012, refused, 10-81, to end U.S. aid to Pakistan, Egypt and Libya in response to anti-American rioting there and the murder Sept. 11 in Benghazi of U.S. Ambassador to Libya Christopher Stevens and three other Americans. A yes vote backed the aid cutoff during debate on HJ Res 117.

3. Presidential War Powers Voting 90-10, senators on April 5, 2011, tabled (killed) a challenge by Sen. Rand Paul, R-Ky., to President Obama's authority to involve the U.S. military in Libya's civil war without prior congressional approval. Paul sought to invoke the 1973 War Powers Resolution to end the deployment. A yes vote was to define the March 19 presidential troop deployment as constitutional. (S 493)

4. USA Patriot Act Senators on May 26, 2011, voted, 72-23, to renew for four years the three sections of the USA Patriot Act that are not in permanent law. A yes vote was to pass a bill (S 990) permitting roving wiretaps on non-citizen terrorist suspects and spying on "lone wolf" suspects not linked to terrorist organizations. The bill also allowed the government to secretly search business records and other files in terrorism probes without first having to show probable cause. (S 990)

5. F-16 Jets for Taiwan On a tie vote of 48-48, senators on Sept. 22, 2011, refused to require the administration to sell 66 new F-16 fighter jets to the Republic of China, or Taiwan, over objections from the People's Republic of China, or mainland China. The amendment sought to counter a possible administration decision to upgrade rather than replace Taiwan's aging fleet of nearly 150 F-16s. (HR 2832)

6. Terrorism Trials Voting 47-52, senators on Oct. 21, 2011, refused to require terrorism suspects linked to al-Qaeda to be tried in U.S. military tribunals rather than federal courts. A yes vote backed military trials over arguments that civilian courts have a long record of successful terrorism prosecutions. (HR 2112)

7. Military Custody, Civil Liberties Senators on Nov. 29, 2011, refused, 38-60, to strip the fiscal 2012 military budget (S 1867) of its requirement that terrorist suspects be held in military custody rather than assigned to the U.S. civil system of criminal justice. A yes vote

In the House

received deep cuts in the Republican budget plan for 2012. A yes vote was to shift \$75 million to transportation-security grants from elsewhere in the bill.

Ryan voted no. Pelosi voted yes.

8. GOP Libya Plan Members on June 3, 2011, passed, 268-145, the softer of two pending bills concerning U.S. participation in the NATO coalition operating in Libyan airspace. A yes vote backed a Republican measure (H Res 92) that gave President Obama 14 days to justify the deployment but which stated no consequences if he failed to do so. A competing measure (below) sought to use the 1973 War Powers Resolution to force an end to the action within 15 days of enactment.

Ryan voted yes. Pelosi voted no.

9. War Powers Resolution Members on June 3, 2011, defeated, 148-265, the tougher of two pending challenges to President Obama's addition of U.S. forces to the NATO-led air war over Libya. A yes vote backed a measure (HCR 51) requiring Obama to end the deployment in 15 days under terms of a 1973 law known as the War Powers Resolution.

Ryan voted no. Pelosi voted no.

10. Libya War Authorization Members on June 24, 2011, defeated, 123-295, a measure (HJR 68) under which Congress would authorize for one year U.S. participation in the NATO coalition supporting rebel forces in Libya's civil war. A yes vote was to authorize U.S. military actions in Libya for one year. (HJR 68)

Ryan voted no. Pelosi voted yes.

11. Libya Funds Cutoff Members on June 24, 2011, defeated, 180-238, a bill to end funding for direct U.S. military involvement in the ongoing NATO-led operation in support of Libyan rebels. A yes vote was to end most funding but continue it for search-and-rescue and aerial-refueling missions. (HR 2278)

Ryan voted no. Pelosi voted no.

12. Libya Funding Ban Voting 199-229, members on July 7, 2011, defeated an amendment to prohibit funding in the fiscal 2012 military budget (HR 2219) for continued U.S. participation in the NATO coalition supporting rebel forces in Libya's ongoing civil war. A yes vote was to stop funding U.S. actions in the Libyan theater.

Ryan voted no. Pelosi voted no.

In the Senate

opposed the requirement on grounds it goes too far by denying constitutional protections to suspects who are American and arrested in the U.S.

8. Repeal of Iraq War Authority Voting 30-67, the Senate on Nov. 29, 2011, rejected an amendment to S 1867 that sought repeal the October 2002 congressional authority for President George W. Bush to invade Iraq, which he did in March 2003. When this vote occurred, President Obama was on schedule to complete the withdrawal of all but a residual force in January 2012. A yes vote was to repeal what is known as the Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Iraq Resolution.

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