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# Senate committee closes in on New war resolution vote

By Paul Kane



*Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Bob Corker (R-Tenn.), right with panel member Sen. Tim Kaine (D-Va.).*

Key members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee said Tuesday that they had resolved the biggest stumbling block to writing a new resolution to govern the ongoing war on terrorist groups.

Sens. Bob Corker (R-Tenn.), chairman of the panel, and Tim Kaine (D-Va.) each said that they had reached a compromise on the “sunset” provision of when new war authority would expire, clearing the way for a committee debate to try to replace the existing September 2001 war resolution.

Corker said he probably would unveil the compromise legislation Thursday and then hold a full markup April 19, following a huddle Tuesday morning with Kaine that won over his support. “We wouldn’t be advancing it unless we thought Tim was going to support it. He’s been the driving force on the Democratic side,” Corker said.

Kaine cautioned that there was “one item that we’re still working out” but said that he believed the two sides would reach a deal in the coming days. He described the outstanding issue as unrelated to the length of the authorization for the use of military force, or AUMF, as lawmakers call it.

The resolution comes amid President Trump’s increasing threat of some form of military strike against Syrian government military bases after reports of chemical attacks on citizens there. However, this resolution will not deal with official nation states and instead be limited to terrorist groups such as al-Qaeda, the Islamic State and their affiliates.

The new optimism of getting a war resolution through the Senate committee did not offer broader hope for a long Senate floor debate on the military missions. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) has been reluctant to schedule such a debate.

Neither Corker nor Kaine would describe the details of the emerging legislation, but the breakthrough on the sunset issue was a key moment. Previous negotiations always ended up stuck on Democratic demands to limit the timeline of authorizing the military fight, while Republicans frequently argued for a more-flexible timetable based upon the recommendations of military generals.

The new proposal will be a compromise. “We’ve tried to finesse it so that both sides get a little bit of what they want. It’s definitely a compromise from what I like,” Kaine said.