



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on January 9, 2014

Rand Paul Bill to Repeal Iraq War Authorization

Senator Rand Paul (R-Ky.; shown) continues to fight to restore constitutional limits, his latest endeavor being a bill to [repeal](#) the Authorization for Use of Military Force (AUMF) that allowed the U.S. invasion of Iraq — a law which remains on the books two years after the war was declared over by President Obama.



Paul is in the process of seeking co-sponsors for his bill and is relying on President Obama's support to bolster the bill's chance of passage.

In a letter to his colleagues, Paul explained the purpose of his proposal:

This bill will ensure that our chapter of action in Iraq is officially closed, and that any future President seeking to engage in the region will be required to come to Congress to gain authorization and support, as is Constitutionally required. I look forward to a bipartisan process that will close this chapter in our military history, and honor the sacrifices of those that have served.

This is not the first time that Paul launched an effort to repeal the AUMF. In 2011, he [introduced](#) an amendment to a defense authorization bill, observing at the time,

On several occasions this year, Congress has been ignored or remained silent while the President committed our forces to combat.

It is my intention to urge Congress to reclaim its constitutional authority over the decision to go to war, or to end a war — it is one of the body's most important powers. It is right that we wrest it back from a President who has shown he cannot be trusted to obey the Constitution or powers prescribed to Congress in it.

His measure failed in a 67-30 vote. According to senators from both parties, the White House had been opposed to the repeal of the AUMF.

Paul's decision to pursue this new measure follows an announcement January 7 by National Security spokeswoman Caitlin Hayden that "The Administration supports the repeal of the Iraq AUMF," according to Yahoo News.

The announcement seems to mark a transition of the White House's position. In May 2013, President Obama promised that he would work with Congress to rewrite the AUMF for Afghanistan, but stayed silent on the Iraq war law.

But Tuesday, a senior administration official told Yahoo News,

The Iraq AUMF is no longer used for any U.S. government activities and we therefore would fully support any move to repeal it.

However, we have not prioritized proactively seeking to repeal it, because the effect would be



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entirely symbolic and we have many more pressing priorities to take up with Congress.

President Obama often cites the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq as one of his crowning achievements, but analysts note that the presence of the Authorization for Use of Military Force on the books could leave the door open for further military troops in Iraq, particularly in the wake of the bloody chaos in the region.

Press TV reports, “The recent internal conflicts in Iraq, including deadly clashes between the Iraq army and al-Qaeda-affiliated militants in the city of Fallujah, have war hawks calling for the U.S. to go back to Iraq.”

For instance, interventionist Senators John McCain (R-Ariz.) and Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.) called the recent events in Iraq “tragic” and “predictable,” adding,

While many Iraqis are responsible for this strategic disaster, the administration cannot escape its share of the blame. When President Obama withdrew all U.S. forces ... over the objections of our military leaders and commanders on the ground, many of us predicted that the vacuum would be filled by America’s enemies and would emerge as a threat to U.S. national security interests. Sadly, that reality is now clearer than ever.

During remarks made to reporters in Jerusalem on January 5, Secretary of State John Kerry [said](#) the United States will help Iraq’s government in its fight against al-Qaeda-linked militants who have overrun the cities of [Fallujah](#) and [Ramadi](#), but added that we will not send troops back to Iraq.

In addition to his legislation to repeal the AUMF, Senator Paul has also announced that he will be filing a class-action lawsuit against the Obama administration over the National Security Agency’s unconstitutional domestic surveillance programs. This latter announcement provoked Rep. Peter King (R-N.Y.) to attack Paul, asserting, “Rand Paul does not know what he’s talking about...and is really spreading fear among the American people.”

Many analysts, however, recognize Paul to be countering the true fearmongers. Policy Mic [opines](#):

Whether or not one agrees with Paul, those in Congress and the media who promote foreign wars, suspension of civil liberties, and authoritarian government are the real liars and fearmongers. As journalist Glenn Greenwald has shown [in great detail](#), virtually every justification made by NSA defenders has been a lie or great exaggeration. Fearmongering is standard, with the omnipresent Islamic terrorist bogeyman hiding under every bed. Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.), one of the NSA’s most vocal supporters, even [invoked the 9/11 attacks](#) to justify illegal surveillance.

And let’s not even get started on the foreign wars, [especially in Iraq](#), which King and his allies support. It’s hard to find a better example of emotional manipulation, propaganda and lies than when the U.S. [tries to sell](#) an unnecessary, aggressive war.

Whether Paul’s legislation has the strong bipartisan support needed to pass remains to be seen. But the Kentucky senator’s courage and willingness to support a constitutionally sound foreign policy despite Republican opposition may well help make him a viable presidential candidate in 2016.

Photo of Sen. Rand Paul: AP Images



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