



Written by [Thomas R. Eddlem](#) on November 24, 2014

Obama Secretly Authorizes U.S. Combat Extension of Afghan War

The Obama administration has secretly extended U.S. armed forces participation in ground combat operations in Afghanistan through 2015, the *New York Times* [reported](#) November 22. The president had publicly promised back in May that the U.S. ground forces' combat role would be completed at the end of the current calendar year.

"Mr. Obama's order allows American forces to carry out missions against the Taliban and other militant groups threatening American troops or the Afghan government," said the *Times*, citing several anonymous sources. The Obama administration now plans "a broader mission than the president described to the public earlier this year, according to several administration, military and congressional officials with knowledge of the decision." Obama would also continue to authorize airstrikes and drone strikes across the war-torn nation.

The president had claimed in a May 27, 2014 [Rose Garden speech](#),

Together with our allies and the Afghan government, we have agreed that this is the year we will conclude our combat mission in Afghanistan.... America's combat mission will be over by the end of this year.

Starting next year, Afghans will be fully responsible for securing their country. American personnel will be in an advisory role. We will no longer patrol Afghan cities or towns, mountains or valleys. That is a task for the Afghan people.

According to at least one anonymous political insider [quoted](#) by the *New York Times*, White House civilian officials opposed going back into a combat role in Afghanistan, but "the military pretty much got what it wanted." Of course, by "the military" the officials meant the desk jockeys in the Pentagon, not the ground troops. Ground soldiers have for six years donated almost exclusively to peace candidates for president, such as former Representative Ron Paul of Texas, an [anti-war candidate who received more money in the 2012 primaries from military families than all the other GOP candidates combined](#).

Despite the fact that the anonymous Obama administration officials couched the new, expanded war plans in terms of defending U.S. forces on the ground (which are nominally limited to training Afghan forces), a senior military official [told](#) the *New York Times*, "Our plans are to maintain an offensive capability in Afghanistan."





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The decision to return to Afghanistan means that Obama has reversed his position on the Iraq and the Afghanistan wars, both of which he had promised to end when he campaigned in 2008. Now, more than six years into his presidency, the Nobel Peace Prize-winning president has yet to bring peace to a single nation. Additionally, he has extended American wars to Libya (now concluded) and Syria (ongoing) by executive fiat.

As a senator campaigning for the presidency in 2007, Obama stated that he was against carrying out wars by executive fiat without the explicit consent of Congress. Here is an excerpt from an interview with him in the *Boston Globe* dated December 20 of that year:

Question: Does the Constitution empower the president to disregard a congressional statute limiting the deployment of troops — either by capping the number of troops that may be deployed to a particular country or by setting minimum home-stays between deployments? In other words, is that level of deployment management beyond the constitutional power of Congress to regulate?

Obama: No, the President does not have that power. To date, several Congresses have imposed limitations on the number of US troops deployed in a given situation. As President, I will not assert a constitutional authority to deploy troops in a manner contrary to an express limit imposed by Congress and adopted into law.

President Obama has repeatedly violated the above campaign promise by deploying troops for longer than 60 days without congressional consent in Libya, Syria, and Iraq, in direct violation of the [War Powers Resolution of 1973](#). Redeployment of combat troops to Afghanistan marks a fourth War Powers Resolution violation. The Resolution requires the president to withdraw all troops from harm's way if Congress has not explicitly authorized the foreign deployment by affirmative legislation. Congress did not authorize the wars in Libya or Syria, and authorized the wars in Afghanistan only to go after al-Qaeda terrorists (now removed from the nation) and in Iraq to go after weapons of mass destruction (never found in any militarily significant quantity).

Just as the president has ignored his campaign promises and constitutional responsibilities with his executive wars, he has also violated both the U.S. Constitution and his campaign promises with respect to executive orders. In the above-mentioned interview with the *Boston Globe* in 2007, Obama declared,

While it is legitimate for a president to issue a signing statement to clarify his understanding of ambiguous provisions of statutes and to explain his view of how he intends to faithfully execute the law, it is a clear abuse of power to use such statements as a license to evade laws that the president does not like or as an end-run around provisions designed to foster accountability. I will not use signing statements to nullify or undermine congressional instructions as enacted into law.

Not surprisingly, Politifact.com [labeled this campaign promise as “promise broken”](#) even before the president's recent imperial decree on granting amnesty to as many as five million immigrants who violated congressionally enacted statutes with respect to immigration.



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